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The Lock Hospital and Regulation of Venereal Diseases in Colonial Agra (1877-1883).

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ABSTRACT

The following paper is an attempt to study colonialism and public health measures in late 19th century Agra and interrogates the colonial policy practices of controlling venereal disease through means of segregation and sanitation which profoundly foregrounded Victorian ideals of womanhood by moralizing health issues. Reviewing the annual reports of the Lock Hospital of Agra, the paper accounts in detail the colonial modalities of control of venereal disease among the British army men and the native women prostitutes.

Keywords: *Lal Bazaars*, unlicensed prostitution, diseased women, Lock Hospital Police, Lock Hospital Committee.

Venereal diseases and its incapacitating effects in colonial India worried the British officials. The mortality levels with respect to venereal diseases were much lower than that of cholera, malaria and typhoid; however the regulatory actions of the British officials in lock hospitals highlight the excessive attention paid to the regulation of “native” women, the prostitute in particular, in the garb of public health and preventive measures.

Britain in the eighteenth century had lock hospitals which came to be borrowed in India to regulate venereal diseases. The system came to be borrowed in the colony towards the end of the eighteenth century when the European soldiers contracted venereal disease in large numbers. The incidence of venereal diseases amongst the white soldiers was on a rise. Observing the need for such hospitals, the Governor-general in council sanctioned the construction of “hospitals for the reception of diseased women” at Kanpur, Behrampur, Fatehgarh and Dinapur (Kenneth Ballhatchet 1980: 11).ⁱ Their rationale was to ensure that the spread of venereal disease be brought under control among British soldiers. Nevertheless, it is fascinating to make a note of the fact that the term “Lock Hospital” was not used, even when, it was operational. Patients were not allowed to go until they had been completely cured. Women found to be “disordered” on “the customary days of inspection” were to be admitted in the hospital at once (Ballhatchet 1980: 11-12).ⁱⁱ At this point, the institution of Lock Hospitals was specific to the regiment. Lock Hospitals were approved for only those regiments which complained of a rising incidence of venereal diseases. The military officials could regulate the movement of only the cantonment prostitutes as they exercised control only over the Lock Hospitals. These procedures reveal the vigilance with which the establishment wanted to tackle the crisis of venereal disease.

The measures to control venereal disease started in India in 1816. Through a succession of regulations issued from the Governor-general of India, the medical inspection of women in *lal bazaars* was ordered. Regular examination and forced cure of diseased women were to take place. Diseased women were to be confined in Lock Hospitals till certified treated of venereal diseases. Lock Hospitals were started at sixteen of the most important stations of the military. The employees of a lock hospital consisted of a matron and peons, who were responsible for taking up infected women to the hospitals (Office Memorandum No. 528 1864).ⁱⁱⁱ

The lock hospital committee’s report for Agra 1877 was found unsatisfactory by A. J. Lawrence, Esq. Magistrate, Agra (Lawrence 1878).^{iv} It was not a satisfactory one, partly owing to the views held by the late medical officer of the committee’s duties, partly owing to the pressure of the times, which had no doubt driven village women to prostitute themselves for almost nothing, and partly due to the lax way the regimental police had been working. The committee had been called only when special circumstances arose; the consequence was increase of venereal disease among the European troops. The increase was in each corps. It was established that it was the unregistered coolie woman who diseased the men.

On the 3rd of August 1877 the lock hospital was removed from the building formerly occupied in the Boileauganj area to another in the same locality of a much superior description as regards size, ventilation and arrangement (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital 1878: 6).^v The total average strength of European troops of the Agra garrison during 1877 was 838; and the total number of cases of venereal disease admitted among them during the same period 218, from which latter number must be deducted ten “contracted at other places,” leaving a balance of 208 case contracted at Agra, giving a ratio of 247 admissions per 1,000 of strength (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital 1878: 6).^{vi} When compared with the previous four years the figures show a very great increase in the prevalence of disease.

TABLE 1 – PERCENTAGE OF ADMISSIONS TO STRENGTH

| | 1874 | 1875 | 1876 | 1877 |
|---|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Percentage of admissions to strength | 18.17 | 10.12 | 9.16 | 24.79 |

Source: Table in the Fourth Annual Report on the Agra Lock-Hospital for 1877, No. 16, 28th January, Allahabad NWP & Oudh Government Press 1878. p 6.

The question which hence, arose was why the amount of venereal disease should for a succession of years gradually diminish, and then in one year suddenly become doubled. A.J. Lawrence (Magistrate, Agra) suggested the following as among the probable causes contributing to the result: -

- a) During the year under review no regimental police were employed for the detection and suppression of illicit prostitution, while in the former years they were.
- b) On account of the scarcity of food, and consequent distress which prevailed in the district, large numbers of starving women were driven to practice unlicensed prostitution, which from the absence of regimental police they had greater opportunities of doing. That the men in the majority of instances have contracted disease from unregistered women may be inferred from the fact that among the former the number of admissions was more than doubled, while a slightly larger number of registered women were found to be suffering from venereal disease than in 1876.
- c) During the year under review the practice of detaining women in hospital while menstruating was discontinued, and this may possibly account for a certain number of cases of gonorrhoea (Lawrence 1878).^{vii}

The cantonment prostitutes in Agra were located in three “*chaklas*” as follows: in the *sadar bazaar*, where a ‘*dhai*’ was appointed and paid by government to exercise supervision over them; in the British infantry *bazaar*, where a woman was entertained by private arrangement to perform the same duty; and in the Chipitolah *bazaar*, where no such provisions were made (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital 1878: 6).^{viii} The city prostitutes had no fixed place of residence, and were subject to no immediate control. As regards illicit prostitution, almost the whole of the venereal disease observed among European troops was due to this cause, and that in very rare instances in which the registered *bazaar* women were found to be affected, they were the victims, and not the propagators of the disease. In Fyzabad, it was invariably noticed that outbreaks of disease among the women was found to be subsequent, and not antecedent, to outbreaks of disease among the men. Therefore, the need to exercise control over unlicensed prostitutes and the men who consorted with them. The former was carried out in the most perfunctory manner and the latter not at all, which came to be seen as the primary cause of the prevalence of venereal disease. It was observed that venereal fluctuation in any station was regulated, not by the frequency of registered women, but by the circumstances favoring or otherwise the practice of unlicensed prostitution.

The temptations to the soldier to have intercourse with unregistered rather than registered women could be various: -

Firstly, he obtained the former at a much lower cost than the latter. Secondly, registered women were forbidden to solicit publicly, while the others were constantly on the watch to waylay the soldier in his weaker moments. Thirdly, there was a greater amount of privacy and “romance” in meeting a woman whom he did not look upon in the light of a regular prostitute than in going to the bazaar with deliberate intent and consorting with women whom he knew were being visited by a number of his comrades (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{ix}

The need of the hour therefore was to institute a system of intelligent and trustworthy lock-hospital police, for exercising supervision over unregistered women, and with regard to the men stoppage of pay while in hospital and while suffering from primary venereal affections (it must be noted that these remained only at the level of suggestions). Such steps had been taken in England with positive results in terms of the diminution of the disease; and it was believed that if a similar system were put in force in India it would have a similar effect. At present the soldier was financially at gain, and on his discharge found himself provided with a store of accumulated pay wherewith to begin a fresh debauch.

Registered women were frequently reported to the medical officer as having communicated disease to certain men, and in such instances after careful examination they were almost invariably found healthy. The only explanation of this circumstance seems to be that men contracted disease from other sources to which they did not wish to confess, and to avoid doing so, attributed the infection to bazaar women whose names they knew. Such a habit not only caused a great amount of trouble and annoyance to the women concerned, but also tended to conceal the true origin of the evil, and some means had to be taken to verify or prove the falseness of their statements. Various suggestions were put forth in this regard, for instance, each prostitute could be provided with a book in which her visitor would be requested to enter his name, with the date and hour of his visit (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^x However, no suitable check could be provided. Registration was carried out efficiently in cantonments among those who practiced public prostitution. In the city, however, only a very small proportion of such women were on the list; 49 names were added and 69 removed from the register in cantonments, leaving a balance of 75 at the end of the year (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{xi} In the cantonment, the number added was 10, and 23 deducted – thus, leaving a balance of 56 (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{xii} The numbers on the register at the beginning of the year for cantonments were 95 and the city 69 (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{xiii} There had thus been a decrease of 20 and 13 in cantonments and the city respectively (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{xiv} Registration fee was not levied during the year. In terms of attendance at periodical examinations – the number of absentees from the cantonment examinations was 22, causing 72 absences. In the city the respective numbers were 32 and 44 (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{xv} In cantonments fines to the extent of Rs. 28 were levied, and in the city to the extent of Rs. 15, making a total of Rs. 43.8 (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{xvi}

In terms of examination and treatment of women – the cantonment prostitutes were examined once a week, and the city prostitutes once a fortnight, during the year. In the former instance the examinations were made by the medical officer in charge, and in the latter by Assistant – Surgeon Johns in a room hired for the purpose in the city (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 8).^{xvii} The speculum was invariably used at both places of examination, and therefore making it impossible for diseased women to escape detection. The amount of disease in women had not been at all in proportion to the amount of disease among the troops. Although in the latter the number of admissions had more than doubled as compared with the previous year, in the former there had been an increase of only one in the class of venereal affections.

TABLE 2 - A COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF ADMISSIONS FROM ALL CAUSES (NON-VENEREAL AS WELL AS VENEREAL DISEASES).^{xviii}

| Year | 1876 | 1877 |
|--|------|------|
| Strength of both cantonment and city prostitutes | 153 | 148 |
| Admissions from venereal diseases | 73 | 74 |
| Admissions from non-venereal diseases | 93 | 57 |
| Total admissions | 166 | 131 |

Source: Statistics provided by A. Scott, M.B., Surgeon, In medical charge of Lock-Hospital, Agra, Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877. 1st January, 1878. p 9.

The average daily sick figures for 1876 and 1877 were 8 and 11 respectively (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 9).^{xix} The diseases prevalent among the women had not been of a severe type, the duration of treatment being on an average 29 days (Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877: 9).^{xx} One *dhai* was to be attached in the *chakla* in the *sadar bazaar*. In the regimental *bazaar* a woman was entertained by private arrangement to look after the women, while in other localities they were not subject to any such supervision.

During the year 1878 a monthly average of 144 women remained on the register against 148 in 1877 (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 4).^{xxi} The results of the management had been unsatisfactory. For the five years 1874-78, the ratios of venereal cases per 1,000 of the European garrison at Agra had been 181, 101, 91, 247, and 397 respectively (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 5).^{xxii} The Medical Officer reported that the increase of disease had been general in all corps comprising the garrison. Soldiers in cantonments suffered mostly from gonorrhoea. Soldiers in the fort suffered mostly from syphilis. The prevalence was excessive in all months of the year. The causes of the disease prevalence were, primarily, widespread unlicensed prostitution and the insufficiency of the police to deal with it; secondly, the youth of the garrison, and the consequent incontinence of the soldiers and their lax discipline. Often soldiers under the influence of drink were now seen cut of barracks, and many admitted on being questioned that, having drank much, they could not say with whom they had cohabited. Of 46 registered women reported as giving disease, only three were found diseased on examination (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 5).^{xxiii} Of 67 unregistered women examined, 53 were found diseased (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 5).^{xxiv} The attendance of the registered women for examination had been, regular. Women on the cantonment register were examined weekly, on the city register fortnightly. Disease amongst the registered women had doubled since last year, especially from syphilis (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 5).^{xxv} The source of this disease could not be determined, but the women complained that the soldiers did not support them, and probably the disease arose from intercourse of natives and half-caste men with the registered women. In many instances soldiers, having contracted disease from vagrant women, conveyed it to registered women. The syphilis seen in registered women had not corresponded in severity with the syphilis seen amongst the soldiers. The medical officer could not point out for want of experience how illicit prostitution was to be prevented. The existing system of police was considered useless to deal with the evil. According to the medical officer, soldiers who had contracted venereal disease be treated very stringently after discharge from hospital, or, better still, their pay might be stopped while in hospital. Some unregistered women were brought for examination, they had been found so fearfully diseased that the thought of cohabitation by any man with them was disgusting, that the soldier did it accounted for his high living and want of employment (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 5).^{xxvi} The Cantonment Committee concurred with the remarks of the medical officer excepting as regards the soldier's laxness of discipline. They were firmly convinced that disease, to a great extent, was contracted from unregistered women. Of 67 unlicensed women arrested during the year only four were reported by the regimental police (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 5).^{xxvii} The remaining women were arrested by the cantonment police. The committee thought that a greater number of city women and women of the suburbs and villages near cantonments be registered. The Collector noted that, bad as the results were last year, they were worse this year. The regimental police had not improved. Unregistered women were still said to be the cause of evil. An endeavor had been made to effect a complete city register of prostitutes. But the Collector doubted whether the preparation of a register was sufficient, and suggested that the city might be put out of bounds to the soldier. As regards, the registration of women in 36 villages about cantonments which were brought under the action of lock-hospital rules in 1872, no women of these villages had been registered, it was probable the rules had not been applied; their application lay with the Secretary of the cantonment committee (Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the NWP & Oudh for 1878: 5).^{xxviii} The Agra and Muttra reports proved, the effectual suppression of venereal disease would result from increased vigilance and care on the part of the regimental police, and not from extended registration of women. Especially a considerable restriction of the men's right to wander at will through native cities and bazaars had to be effected.

During the year 1879 a monthly average of 139 women remained on the register against 144 in 1878 (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 4).^{xxxix} The Medical Officer reported that the newly built lock hospital at Agra was occupied during the year from the 15th of March. It was well situated, and the buildings were well adapted to their intended purpose. Only there was necessity for a better water supply (a well within the enclosure) (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 4).^{xxx} As compared with previous year's results, disease was less amongst the soldiers in 1879, but still remained extraordinarily prevalent (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 4).^{xxxi} The prevalence decreased as the year advanced, 189 admissions having been recorded during the first six months of the year, and only 78 during the last six months (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 4).^{xxxii} The extraordinary prevalence of disease in 1879 was due chiefly to the general prostitution of people impoverished by famine (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 4).^{xxxiii} The sub-committee had met whenever there was anything special to bring before it. No effectual means had yet been devised for the suppression of illicit prostitution. By the native police, 49 unregistered women in all were arrested, of whom 44 were found diseased, but not one woman was arrested by the military police of the 60th Rifles or of the Artillery (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xxxiv} A daily average of seven military police were employed in the former, and one permanent and seven periodically employed police in the latter (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xxxv} Soldiers had given no information leading to the apprehension of the women from whom they contracted disease. No registered woman had been willing to give information as to the source of her disease, and this, it was believed, through fear of the results of informing against Europeans who supported these women. The unregistered women on the contrary, when found diseased, readily gave the information required, and there was no doubt that 20 cases of syphilis, which occurred amongst the soldiers in April, were due to intercourse with a gang of such women (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xxxvi} The registered women had been regular in their attendance for examination. In the cantonment the women were examined once a week, in the city once a fortnight. Disease, as a whole, amongst the women diminished, from 303 cases in 1878 to 262 in 1879 (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xxxvii} But the cases of syphilis were 115 in 1879 against 94 in 1878 (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xxxviii} The cause of all this disease was obscure, but it was likely that the disease may have been conveyed to the women by natives as well as Europeans. The medical officer thought that although the results of lock hospital working had lately been unsatisfactory and disheartening, yet the scheme could not be abandoned without the certainty of enormous increase and severity of disease amongst the soldiers. The cause of recent failure, as regards good results, had been the shameless conduct of crowds of destitute women, so poor as to court sexual intercourse with a soldier for a reward of two and four paise (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xxxix} The medical officer thought it difficult to devise a check for prostitution so cheaply sold, but was of opinion that the occupiers of land where a diseased woman was found ought to be punished, for harboring a dangerous animal. The regimental police or soldiers gave no help towards the detection and arrest of these women. And the native police alone were unable to affect it, or were willing to forego the arrest when affected for two *annas*. To counteract this custom, rewards were offered for the arrests. Further experience had shown conclusively that nearly all the venereal disease contracted from unlicensed women by soldiers was contracted when the soldier was drunk, and, therefore, the medical officer favored the punishment of the diseased soldier by stoppage of his pay while sick, and the subsequent making up of duties escaped during the time of sickness. The Magistrate thought that the record was an improvement on that of last year (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xl} The Artillery appeared to have been most troubled by disease (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xli} The diminution of disease as the year advanced, and the improved prospects of the agricultural classes, seemed to support the view that the impoverishment of the people may have helped to swell the venereal returns (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xlii} The regimental police had been useless for the purpose of arresting unlicensed women. The arrest of such women as a fixed duty of the ordinary police could not be recommended as tending to demoralize the force. Occasional action of the police was advisable, and would be more effective if rewards for arrests were authorized. The medical officers complained that women infesting the vicinity of the soldiers' lines pointed to a faulty regimental police. The Magistrate supposed that under the short service system these police were young soldiers, whereas the duties of regimental police were best performed by soldiers of mature age. Indeed, the general youth of the soldier, and the comparative fewness of married soldiers, probably accounted for much of the prevalent venereal disease. With reference to the medical officer's remark that the sub-committee assembled whenever specially required to do so, the Magistrate remarked that at one time of the year the meetings were regularly held (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xliii} The regularity of the meetings depended on the action of the Cantonment Magistrate. It seemed ridiculous to call meetings without special object, still the Magistrate thought that when the meetings were irregular, the supervision of the work became slack (Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in NWP & Oudh for the year 1879: 5).^{xliv} The Commissioner stated that the reports showed that little or no improvement had taken place since last year. The offer of a small reward for the arrest of an unregistered woman might be effective, but it might be considerably abused. The punishment of the occupiers of lands on which a diseased woman was found was impracticable. The irregularity of the lock hospital committee meetings came to be noticed. The Commissioner again recorded the opinion that success in lock hospital management depended to a great extent on the action of Commanding Officers. The laws and rules of the system strongly supported the means controlling the movements of the soldiers when off duty, and their freedom to meet unlicensed women was reduced to a minimum.

During the year 1880 a monthly average of 116 women remained on the register against 139 in 1879 (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 3).^{xlv} The Medical Officer reported a decreased ratio of disease during the past year as compared with previous years. This, however, arose from the ratio of disease in former years having been recorded with reference to the annual daily average strength. This in 1880 was 761. The cases of disease were 307; the resulting ratio was 403 (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 3).^{xlvi} The Medical Officer had calculated the ratio upon the strength during period of occupation, of 1,378 men (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for

the year 1880: 3).^{xlvii} The 4-60th Regiment (525 men) were present only 36 days during the year (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 3).^{xlviii} Towards the close of the year there was an enormous increase of disease amongst the young soldiers of the 5th Regiment. And in every instance it was proved that the disease had been contracted from unregistered women. In 40 instances registered women were accused of causing disease, but the accusation was found to be unjust in 38 and doubtful in two (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 3).^{xlix} The Cantonment Sub-Committee assembled whenever there was anything special to bring before it. The efforts made to check unlicensed prostitution had met with no success. Sixteen soldiers were employed as regimental police, but gave no assistance in this direction. The unregistered women lurked after dark in the ravines near the Fort and in the outskirts of the city. It was calculated that there were 1,000 prostitutes in Agra city, but only 25 of them were registered (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 3).ⁱ Many of these city prostitutes were diseased. Those of their number who were registered were old, ugly, poor, ragged. Until more attractive women were registered, the soldier could not well be punished for preferring the unregistered class (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 3).ⁱⁱ The Medical Officer recommended the establishment of a *chukla* or brothel, so that the registered women could be brought together. Now they resided wherever they pleased, and the soldiers found this an excuse for wandering all over the city at all hours of the day and even at night. Of 10 unlicensed offenders arrested, 8 were seriously diseased (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 3).ⁱⁱⁱ Amongst the registered women there was less disease in 1880 than in 1879 (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 4).^{liii}

For the improvement of the scheme the Medical Officer recommended improved police arrangements for the check of illicit prostitution, an increase to the number of registered women, and the establishment of a *chukla* (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 4).^{liv} The Cantonment Magistrate recorded the satisfaction of the Cantonment Committee at the comparatively favorable results recorded for 1880. To check the increase of disease lately established, a special police force had been appointed for the arrest of unlicensed offenders, the city had been placed out of bounds, and the soldiers restricted to passage on the main roads near the Fort. The Magistrate and Collector stated that disease amongst the soldiers was comparatively rare until a large detachment of young soldiers arrived from the front with their pockets full of money. These men were about at all hours, not in the city, but off the roads lying between the Fort and the barracks. These places were placed out of bounds after the close of the year. The Magistrate thought ordinary city prostitutes did not permit visits of soldiers. The *chamar* and coolie women of villages neighboring the city and cantonments were the source of the disease complained of. The city registration had been increased. The register ought to have included more names before, but the Assistant Magistrate was weak in accepting excuses. According to the Magistrate, the military authorities should have communicated with the Magistrate when the city registration was believed to be inefficient. A joint, continuous action of the Civil and Military authorities was essential for success in this matter. The Commissioner was of opinion that, having regard to the great increase of disease at the end of the year, there was not much cause for the satisfaction expressed by the Cantonment Committee, for it was clear that no definite check had been given to the spread of venereal disease amongst the soldiers (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 4).^{lv} As usual, the Medical Officer thought blame rested upon the civil authorities on account of insufficient city registration, and the Magistrate thought blame rested upon the Military authorities on account of imperfect police arrangements (Seventh Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880: 4).^{lvi} Soldiers frequently visited the city before it was put out of bounds, and it was pretty sure they knew some of the women there. These women needed to be registered.

During the year 1881 a monthly average of 133 women remained on the register, against 159 in 1880 (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 4).^{lvii} The Medical Officer reported favorably concerning the lock hospital accommodation, but no well had yet been made for the supply of water, which had to be brought from a distance. The Medical Officer recorded a ratio of only 163 cases of venereal disease per 1,000 of garrison strength (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 4).^{lviii} This very favorable result arose from the fact that, for the calculation, the daily average strength of the garrison had been taken to be 1,592 (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lix} The true daily average of strength for the year was 1,114, and the ratio of cases 232 per 1,000 (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lx} A large majority of the soldiers' venereal affections must have been contracted from unlicensed women, as out of 56 instances of reported infection by registered women; only in eight were there any grounds for the charge (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lxi} The Lock Hospital Committee met whenever there was anything special to bring before it. Measures taken to check unlicensed prostitution met with little success during the year. Twelve men were employed by the regimental authorities as a regimental police, but they could be of little use (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lxii} The unlicensed women did not live in the *sadar* or regimental *bazaars*, but lurked after dark about the outskirts of the city and near the fort. It was calculated that more than 1,000 prostitutes lived in the city, of which only 59 were registered (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lxiii} These registered persons were generally old and ugly. A younger and cleaner variety was desirable. The registered women were divided into two sets—one of the city, an average of 59; the other of cantonments, average 74 (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lxiv} The city women were examined once a fortnight and were irregular in attendance, 171 cases of absence having been reported (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lxv} The cantonment women were examined once a week, and were more regular in attendance. Amongst the city women there was increased disease during the year. Amongst the cantonment women there was less disease in 1881 as compared with 1880. Registration was to be extended amongst city women—a measure strongly urged, as likely to be beneficial in arresting the progress of venereal disease generally in the station. A matron was employed at the hospital. The Cantonment Magistrate reported, that the Cantonment Committee desired to support the suggestion, of the Medical Officer;

favoring an increased registration of city women known to the police as receiving the visits of soldiers. The results for the year were favorable, and they showed that success was due to the efforts of the local authorities to check disease. The Magistrate of the District forwarded the report, with the remark that it was a more satisfactory document than usual. The satisfactory result was due to the employment of a regimental police. The Magistrate was of opinion that the city prostitutes numbered about 300 (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lxvi} Of the 59 registered, the majority were young, some old (Eighth Annual Report of the Working of The Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1881: 5).^{lxvii} The Commissioner of the Division recorded a decided improvement in result for the past year, but thought it unsatisfactory that the Sub-Committee should assemble only when anything special had to be brought before it. So far as could be ascertained from the papers, no action at all was taken by the Committee during the year. The Commissioner agreed with the Medical Officer in thinking that the number of registered city women should be increased. He thought the Cantonment Magistrate ought to supervise this work. The registration of a more attractive class of women did not appear to have been attempted during the year. There were frequent changes of management that year, which could not have had a beneficial effect.

Thus, to conclude the Lock Hospital Annual Reports of Agra provide important data that help understand the colonial politics of venereal disease control as well as resistance from below, mainly from the prostitutes.

References:

ⁱ Ballhatchet, Kenneth. *op cit.* p 11.

ⁱⁱ *ibid.* pp 11-12.

ⁱⁱⁱ Office Memorandum No.528, Military Department, dated nineteenth December 1863; GOI, Home files, legislative branch, March 1864, No.11-13, Part B. NAI (National Archives of India).

^{iv} Letter from A.J. Lawrence, Esq., Magistrate, Agra to Commissioner, Agra Division. No. 16. Dated the 28th of January, 1878. NLS.

^v Fourth Annual Report on the Agra Lock-Hospital for 1877, No. 16, 28th January, Allahabad NWP & Oudh Government Press 1878. p 6. NLS.

^{vi} *ibid*

^{vii} A.J. Lawrence, Esq., Magistrate, Agra. Annual Report on the Agra Lock-Hospital for 1877, No. 16, 28th January, 1878. p 6. NLS.

^{viii} Fourth Annual Report on the Agra Lock-Hospital for 1877, No. 16, 28th January, Allahabad NWP & Oudh Government Press 1878. p 6. NLS.

^{ix} Reid, M.B., A. Scott (Surgeon, In medical charge of Lock-Hospital), Annual Report on the Agra Hospital for 1877. Agra, the 1st January, 1878. NLS.

^x *ibid* p8

^{xi} *ibid* p8

^{xii} *ibid* p8

^{xiii} *ibid* p8

^{xiv} *Ibid* p8.

^{xv} Reid, A. Scott (M.B., Surgeon, In medical charge of Lock-Hospital), Annual Report on the Agra Hospital for 1877. Agra, the 1st January, 1878. NLS. p8

^{xvi} *ibid* p8.

^{xvii} *ibid* p8

^{xviii} Statistics provided by A. Scott, M.B., Surgeon, In medical charge of Lock-Hospital, Agra, Annual Report on the Agra Lock Hospital for 1877. 1st January, 1878. p 9. NLS.

^{xix} *ibid* p 9.

^{xx} *ibid* p 9.

^{xxi} Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1878. From the Secretary to Government NWP & Oudh. Sanitation Department. Dated the 28th of August, 1879. p 4. NLS.

^{xxii} *ibid* p5

^{xxiii} *ibid* p5

^{xxiv} *ibid* p5

^{xxv} Fifth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1878. From the Secretary to Government NWP & Oudh. Sanitation Department. Dated the 28th of August, 1879. p 5. NLS.

^{xxvi} *ibid* p5

^{xxvii} *ibid* p5

^{xxviii} *ibid* p5

^{xxix} Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-West Provinces and Oudh for the year 1879. From the Secretary, NWP & Oudh to the GOI – Home, Revenue and Agricultural Department. Home Department 1880. Dated the 17th of August, 1880. p 4. NLS.

^{xxx} *ibid* p4

^{xxxix}*ibid* p4

^{xxxix}*ibid* p4

^{xxxix}*ibid* p4

^{xxxix}Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-West Provinces and Oudh for the year 1879. From the Secretary, NWP & Oudh to the GOI – Home, Revenue and Agricultural Department. Home Department 1880. Dated the 17th of August, 1880. p 5. NLS.

^{xxxix}*ibid* p5

^{xxxix}*ibid* p5

^{xxxix}*ibid* p5

^{xxxix}*ibid* p5

^{xxxix}*ibid* p5

^{xl}Sixth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-West Provinces and Oudh for the year 1879. From the Secretary, NWP & Oudh to the GOI – Home, Revenue and Agricultural Department. Home Department 1880. Dated the 17th of August, 1880. p 5. NLS.

^{xli}*ibid* p5

^{xlii}*ibid* p5

^{xliii}*ibid* p5

^{xliiv}*ibid* p5

^{xlvi}Seventh Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880 by C. Planck, Surgeon-Major, Sanitary Commissioner and Superintendent General of Vaccination, NWP & Oudh dated the 24th of March, 1881. p 3. NLS.

^{xlvi}*ibid* p3

^{xlvi}*ibid* p3

^{xlvi}*ibid* p3

^{xlvi}*ibid* p3

^{li}*ibid* p3

^{li}Seventh Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880 by C. Planck, Surgeon-Major, Sanitary Commissioner and Superintendent General of Vaccination, NWP & Oudh dated the 24th of March, 1881. p 3. NLS.

^{lii}*ibid* p3

^{liii}*ibid* p4

^{liiv}*ibid* p4

^{liv}*ibid* p4

^{lvi}*ibid* p4

^{lvii}Eighth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880 by Charles Planck, F.R.C.S.E., F.S.S., Dy. Surgeon-General, Sanitary Commissioner, NWP and Oudh, dated the 27th of April, 1882. p 4. NLS.

^{lviii}*ibid* p 4

^{lix}*ibid* p 5

^{lx}*ibid* p 5

^{lxi}*ibid* p 5

^{lxii}Eighth Annual Report of the Working of the Lock Hospitals in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh for the year 1880 by Charles Planck, F.R.C.S.E., F.S.S., Dy. Surgeon-General, Sanitary Commissioner, NWP and Oudh, dated the 27th of April, 1882. p 5. NLS.

^{lxiii}*ibid* p 5

^{lxiv}*ibid* p 5

^{lxv}*ibid* p 5

^{lxvi}*ibid* p 5

^{lxvii}*ibid* p 5