

Colombo Hospital

The Colombo Hospital was situated in the Fort which originally came within the fortification built by the Dutch after their capture of Colombo from the Portuguese.

The declared intention of the Dutch in establishing the Colombo hospital, as well as the other hospitals, was to look after the health of the officers and other staff serving under the Dutch East India Company. The preamble to the instruction issued to the steward of the hospital states that it has been considered that it is a duty of the Company to restore the health of its officers who are on board ships as well as in the out posts. The Dutch East India Company intended to provide a sufficiently large hospital in Colombo to cater to the local Dutch population as well as floating population. The influx from ships would have been considerable as sickness was rife during long sea voyages.

The British, who succeeded the Dutch had similar provisions in their hospitals in Colombo for the benefit of their sailors and nationals. Early in their rule the British introduced a system of voluntary Organizations known as Friend in need Societies. These were charitable institutions which sponsored by the Anglican Church. These Societies were subsequently established in Kandy, Jaffna, Trincomalee, Galle Negambo and Moratuwa. Some years after their establishment, the Societies in Colombo Kandy, Jaffna and Trincomalee set up hospitals or dispensaries in their towns. These catered to the poor, who were provided with free treatment.