

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Housing, Health and Education

32.1 INTRODUCTION

The people of a country constitute its most important resource called human resource. If the people are educated, skilled and healthy, they provide a good quality of human resource to the economy. All developmental efforts of the government are for the welfare of the people - to raise their standard of living and improve their quality of life. The human resource of an economy, particularly of an underdeveloped economy, can be improved by providing education, medical facilities and other facilities like housing, sanitation, etc. In this lesson we talk about these various aspects which improve the quality of life namely Housing, Health and Education.

32.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through lesson, you will be able to:

- state the meaning of social infrastructure;
 - explain the need and importance of housing;
 - describe the housing schemes in India;
 - explain the reasons behind housing problems in India;
 - explain the present situation of health facilities in India;
 - explain the trend in life expectancy in India;
 - describe the medical facilities in rural areas;
 - explain the importance of education;
 - throw light on the present situation in India;
 - explain the measures taken to remove the deficiencies in the educational system in India.
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32.3 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Economic infrastructure is essential for improving the productive capacity of the nation. But infrastructure is also required to improve the quality of human resource. What is that? This consists of services like education, medical facilities, sanitation, housing, drinking water supply etc. All these together constitute the social infrastructure of an economy. These facilities help in the development of human resource in an economy.

32.4 HOUSING

House provides shelter. A good shelter is very necessary for comfortable, tension free living. Imagine the situation when you work the whole day but have no place to retire to at the end of the day. Your life will become miserable. A house is not just four walls and a roof. It should be spacious, airy and comfortable. A house provides protection from sunlight, rain, heat, cold, etc. It provides stability to an individual. It helps an individual to indulge in family life, social life. It promotes peace of mind and happiness of an individual which leads to an increase in productivity. Quality of life in slums (or jhuggis) is very low as compared to those people who are living in proper houses. The physical ability to work of an individual is adversely affected if he has no proper place to live in.

Employers of today realise the importance of providing housing facilities to their employees. The government has also realised this and now-a-days Government provides housing facilities to many of its employees. Government has set up colonies for this purpose. Even the private sector provides the facility of housing to their employees. Many private industrial units provide housing facilities for their employees.

Proper housing also includes provision of basic services like water, sanitation, drainage and electricity. Further, the type and location of a house is also very important. It is very hard to live in a place where there is no nearby market to buy the daily needs or there is no proper bus service to go from one place to another. Quality of housing has a direct bearing on the efficiency of human resource.

For a majority of households housing has been primarily a self help activity. But increasing population pressure has made it difficult for the poorer segments of the population to acquire proper housing facilities. It has made it necessary for the state to launch housing schemes for weaker sections of the population.

In India the formulation and implementation of the housing programme is the responsibility of the state governments. The central government however supplements the efforts of the state governments.

(a) Rural Housing Schemes

Several schemes have been started by the government to solve the problem of rural housing. Under the Minimum Needs Programme house sites are allotted and construction assistance

provided to rural landless workers, artisans and weaker sections. This scheme was initiated in 1971.

The Indira Awas Yojna (IAY) was introduced in 1985-86 for the poorest of the poor belonging to Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes and freed bonded labourers in the rural areas. Houses under this scheme are built in clusters so that common facilities can be provided for the clusters.

Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has been financing several rural housing schemes by allocating 15% of its resources to such schemes.

(b) Urban Housing Schemes

Housing schemes started by the government in the urban areas are as follows:

- (i) Social housing schemes for different income groups operated by the States and City level agencies with the budgetary support and loans from HUDCO, LIC and other financial agencies.
- (ii) As part of the Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY), Housing and Shelter upgradation scheme for the urban poor was introduced in 1989 in cities with population between 1 and 20 lakhs.
- (iii) A scheme for Footpath Dwellers Night Shelter was introduced in 1988-89 to provide shelters. Later sanitation facility was extended to the pavement dwellers in the cities.
- (iv) Co-operative group housing societies have been formed for different income groups with the help of loans from LIC, HUDCO and Commercial Banks.
- (v) Various other schemes including ownership housing scheme for central government employees, working women scheme, environmental improvement of urban slums and house improvement scheme, rental housing scheme for employees of public sector undertakings are operated by various state governments.

(c) Causes of Housing Problems

In spite of all these efforts housing problem still remains very serious because of:

- (i) **Increasing population :**
The population of the country is increasing at a very fast rate which causes the increase in demand for housing.
- (ii) **Urbanisation :**
The movement of people from rural to urban areas leads to increase in demand for houses in urban areas.

(iii) Resource constraint :

The available resources with the government are not sufficient to meet the requirement of housing for the entire population and hence the increase in the number of slums.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Services like housing, health, education, sanitation and drinking water supply constitute social infrastructure.
- For comfortable and tension free living proper housing is very important.
- Physical dwelling unit is not the sole element of housing; equally important is the provision of basic services like potable water, sanitation, drainage and electricity.
- Government has started specialised schemes to improve rural housing.
- Specialised schemes have also been started to improve the state of urban housing.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 32.1

State whether the following statements are true or false:

- (i) Transport, communication, power, water constitute the social infrastructure of an economy.
 - (ii) Improvement in facilities like education, health, housing, drinking water supply is necessary for improving the quality of life.
 - (iii) Indira Awas Yojna was started for providing houses to the weaker sections of the society.
 - (iv) Housing and Shelter Upgradation Scheme for the urban poor was introduced for the cities with population of 50 lakhs and above.
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32.5 HEALTH**Need for good health**

It is an old saying that "Health is Wealth". This aptly summarises the importance of health for an individual. Health represents a state of physical and mental wellbeing. Without good health, we will not be able to enjoy the good things of life. It is also not possible to earn a good living when one is not healthy.

In general it can be said if we have healthy people in a society, it will contribute greatly to its efficiency and productivity. There is a direct relationship between good health and economic growth.

Situation at the time of Independence

Prior to Independence, due to lack of medical and health facilities death rate, infant mortality rate were very high. The health situation in India was not satisfactory. It is very distressing to note that India had long been the land of epidemics, small pox, cholera, malaria, typhoid,

tuberculosis and many other diseases which took a heavy toll of life due to insufficient medical facilities, sheer ignorance and poverty of the masses. Infant mortality was 219 per 1000 and life expectancy was merely 32 years till 1951.

Present Situation

Planned development has resulted in vastly improved health facilities. This is supported by the following data:

- (i) The number of doctors and hospitals has increased by more than three times and that of nurses more than eight times.
- (ii) The number of medical colleges has increased from 28 before the start of the first Five Year Plan to more than 106 at present.
- (iii) Small pox has been totally eradicated. The country was declared free from this disease in April, 1977.
- (iv) As a result of expansion of medical and health facilities death rate has come down from 27.4 per thousand in 1951 to 9.3 per thousand in 1993.
- (v) Life expectancy at birth has also improved considerably. It was 54 years in 1981 and stands at 60.8 years in 1992-93.
- (vi) Greater care of women due to change in the society's attitude towards women has also contributed to higher life expectancy of the female population in India.

Life Expectancy in India

While poverty of the Indian people is at the root of phenomenon of short life span, the discovery of wonder medicines to control epidemics like plague, cholera, influenza or small pox, the general improvement in medical assistance, increase in number of hospitals, doctors, nurses, medicines and better control of diseases have all helped to save life. Even then, the present level of life expectancy in India does not compare favourably with the levels obtained in developed countries of the world.

Table 32.1
Life Expectancy at Birth in India

(in years)

Period	Males	Females	Overall
1950-51	32.4	31.7	32.1
1970-71	46.4	44.7	45.6
1990-91	58.6	59.0	58.7

Steps taken to improve life expectancy in India

Increase in life expectancy rate was mainly the result of the following steps taken by the Government:

- (i) National programmes were launched for the control of small pox, malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy and blindness.

- (ii) Programmes have been undertaken to control other communicable diseases including diphtheria, whooping cough, polio, etc. through better sanitation and immunization.
- (iii) Public awareness programme - through newspapers, magazines, public hoardings, radio, television, etc. the Central Health Education Bureau informs the people about proper immunization, preventive measures against epidemics and diseases and also the primary health facilities available in their neighbourhood. You yourself must have read and seen about the way Government informs the general public about proper vaccines for the children or why a balanced diet is necessary.

Medical Facilities in Rural Areas

The rural health system is a three tier structure of Sub Centres, Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs). There are at present approximately 22,000 primary health centres, 1.5 lakh sub centres and 2400 community health centres and at village level 6.5 lakh trained dais and 4.2 lakh village health guides besides a large number of rural dispensaries.

It is proposed to expand these facilities further in a phased manner so as to have one primary health centre for every 30,000 population (20,000 in hilly and tribal areas), one sub centre for every 5,000 population (3,000 population in hilly and tribal areas) and one community health centre for about one lakh population by the year 2000 A.D.

But lack of buildings, shortage of manpower and inadequate provision of medicines, supplies and equipment constitute major impediments in the achievement of these objectives.

To solve these problems Eighth Five Year Plan approach was to consolidate rather than expand the existing network so that their performance is optimised.

It also advocates to develop mechanism to make the rural health services responsive to the needs of the rural masses and accountable to the community. Panchayati Raj system would become an effective instrument for active community participation in the health programme.

Urban Health Programme

More than one quarter of the population in the country now lives in urban areas. In metropolitan and large cities about 40% of the urban dwellers live in slum areas. Their health status is as bad as, if not worse than, in rural areas. But infrastructure for primary health care in urban areas is not sufficient.

There are few big hospitals where proper medical facilities are available. But generally government facilities are inadequate. Most people have to depend on private doctors. Medical treatment is costly. But the good aspect is that treatment is available. The treatment in government hospitals is nearly free but there is always a question mark on quality of treatment.

POINT TO REMEMBER

- Good health determines the skill and productivity of persons.
- At the time of Independence, the health picture in India was not satisfactory. Many suffered from small pox, malaria, leprosy, blindness and other communicable diseases on account of lack of medical facilities.
- After Independence, several programmes were started to control and eradicate communicable diseases. Other diseases like cholera, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, etc. have been controlled through better sanitation and immunization.
- For promoting rural health, there is a three tier system of community health centres, primary health centres and sub centres.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 32.2

State whether the following statements are true or false:

- (i) Good health of the people of a country is an indication of good production capacity of the people of that country.
- (ii) Small pox has been completely eradicated from the country.
- (iii) Target of providing medical facilities to all the citizens in the country has been achieved.
- (iv) In the year 1980-81, expected life in the country was 58.7 years.

32.6 EDUCATION**(a) Need for Education****1. Education improves the quality of people**

Educated population is an asset for the country. Education develops basic skills and abilities, increases efficiency and makes us modern in outlook. Education also promotes a scientific temper and a spirit of enquiry, which are essential for understanding the complexities of a modern technological world.

2. Brings change in attitudes towards life

Education also develops human personality and all round development. An educated person can adapt himself to modern ideas quite rapidly. It brings about a change in the attitude of people towards work, towards life. It makes man able to break traditions and do away with blind disbeliefs.

3. Change in attitude towards women

Education has helped to bring about a change in attitude towards female child although gradually people have stopped discriminating between a girl child and a boy.

It has also brought about a change in career attitude towards female. Their education today is also considered as important as that of a boy. Early marriage is no longer favoured for females today.

4. Change in status of women

The role that women play in rural areas has also changed. Although women are not formally educated, informal education is provided through media - radio, television, etc., so that they no longer live in purdah and become aware of their rights. Women can even rise to the post of village sarpanch these days and they are even contesting elections.

5. Change in attitude of women towards work

Education also changes their attitude towards work. They have become more career conscious. Women today are doing everything; you find women as doctors, chartered accountants, managers, IAS officers, scientists, engineers, teachers, lecturers, etc. This has brought about a change in the social set up and social relations and also an improvement in the quality of life.

6. Necessary for adopting modern techniques

As already said an educated person can adapt himself to modern ideas quite rapidly. Skilled manpower, which is so important for manning our industries and also for using modern agricultural practices, comes through technical education.

7. Helpful in controlling population

Through education people become aware of the problems arising out of over population and adopt the norm of small family willingly. They can appreciate the fact that if they want to maintain a better standard of living then they have to cut down on the size of their family. They then become more willing to adopt family planning methods.

8. Removes blind beliefs

Educated people have a preventive attitude towards disease. They do not consider it a supernatural phenomenon and are willing to take advance precautions to avert disease.

Present State of Education

Before Independence

At the time of Independence, the situation with regard to education was not a happy one. There was widespread illiteracy and the level of education was less than 15 per cent. Facilities in terms of school buildings, laboratories, libraries, play grounds, etc. were inadequate. Very few facilities for professional courses in commerce, management, architecture, town planning, agriculture and physical education existed. There were very few medical colleges. In the year 1951, there were only 28 medical colleges with approximately 2700 students studying there.

After Independence

After Independence comprehensive plans were prepared to raise the level of education in

the country. There exists a positive relationship between education and economic development. For instance, skilled labour can be provided through technical and professional education. Education, as explained above, also brings about an improvement in the quality of life of an individual by enriching it.

The number of primary schools has increased from 2.10 lakh in 1950-51 to 5.81 lakh in 1994-95. During the same period the number of upper primary schools rose from 0.13 lakh to 1.6 lakh. As a result of this, Indian elementary education has become one of the largest education systems in the world.

It was provided in the Indian Constitution that all children between the age of 6 to 14 years will receive free and compulsory education within 10 years of its enforcement. But even today this target has not been achieved.

One major cause of low level of literacy in the country is the high rate of drop outs (particularly girls) from school. Dropping out and non-attendance of children at the primary stage are due to:

- (i) Poor school facilities;
- (ii) Unrelated curriculum;
- (iii) Poor methods of teaching and
- (iv) Poverty.

There is a lot of pressure on higher education. Almost everybody who has passed senior secondary school in India wants to go in for higher education. The higher education system in India is such that it churns out degree holders, all of whom demand white collar jobs which are in short supply in India thereby creating unemployment among the educated persons.

There is also the problem of brain drain when our scientists and engineers go abroad in search of better opportunities which results in wastage of our resources. These people have to be encouraged to come back to the country to help in our economic development.

(b) Measures to remedy the defects of the Educational System

1. Restructuring educational system

The National Policy on Education (NPE) adopted in 1986 stressed the need for restructuring educational system, to improve its quality at various stages, develop science and technology and to expand opportunity in the field of education.

2. Promotion of literacy

For promoting literacy, the Sixth Plan provided for mass education through programmes of elementary education (formal and informal). The Seventh Plan also aimed at eradicating illiteracy in the age group of 15 - 35 years by 1990 through non-formal education. Although these targets have not been achieved but still some ground has been gained.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) has been mandated to make 10 crore persons literate in the age group of 15 - 35 by the end of Eighth Five Year Plan. The total literacy campaign has become the principal strategy of the NLM in the eradication of illiteracy throughout the country.

3. Improvement in primary education

For solving the problem of high drop out rates the New National Policy on Education calls for improvement in primary schools all over the country. The programme is known as Operation Black Board.

A free Mid Day Meal Programme was launched from 15th August 1995, intended to give a boost to universalization of education, increasing enrolment, retention simultaneously.

4. Technical education

In respect of higher education and technical education the emphasis is on improvements in quality and standard of education.

Evaluation of measures

The above measures are likely to and have improved the situation. The overall literacy rate has shown an improvement in the last decade. It has improved from 44% in 1981 to 52% in 1991 (see table 32.2). The male literacy improved from 56% to 64% and female literacy from 30% to 39% during the same period.

Table 32.2
Literacy Rate in India

(in percentage)

Year	Persons	Male	Females
1951	18	27	9
1971	35	46	22
1981	44	56	30
1991	52	64	39

A lot has been achieved but a lot more has to be achieved. If the country moves at this rate in the coming decades as well, then it would be possible to remove illiteracy before long. The situation regarding female literacy is more discouraging.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Human resource development concerns the quality of people and this can be improved through education.
- Education directly improves the quality of people by promoting efficiency and productivity.
- At the time of Independence, literacy rate was 25% which has increased to 52% at present.
- The main reason for the rise in the level of literacy are the high expenditure on education during the plans and other programmes like adult education, free compulsory education for children between the age group of 6 to 14 years, Operation Black Board, etc.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 32.3

Fill in the blanks from the words given in the bracket.

(easily, quality, economic development, 42, efficiency, 52)

- (i) Education directly improves the _____ of people by promoting _____ and productivity.
- (ii) Educated person can adapt himself to modern ideas _____.
- (iii) There exists a positive relationship between education and _____.
- (iv) Overall literacy was _____ percent in 1991.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is the meaning of housing? What is its importance?
2. Write a note on rural and urban housing plans.
3. What are the reasons of housing problems in urban areas?
4. Why is good health necessary? What was the situation of health facilities at the time of Independence?
5. What is the present position of health facilities in India?
6. What change has taken place in life expectancy rate in India after Independence? What are the steps taken by government to raise life expectancy in India?
7. Write a note on medical facilities in the rural areas of India.
8. Explain the need and importance of education.
9. Write a note on situation of education in India at the time of Independence?
10. What are the measures taken by the government to remove deficiencies in education system in India?

ANSWERS

Intext Questions 32.1

(i) False (ii) True (iii) True (iv) False

Intext Questions 32.2

(i) True (ii) True (iii) False (iv) False

Intext Questions 32.3

(i) quality, efficiency (ii) easily (iii) economic development (iv) 52

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Read section 32.4
 2. Read section 32.4 (a) & (b)
 3. Read section 32.4 (c)
 4. Read section 32.5
 5. Read section 32.5
 6. Read section 32.5
 7. Read section 32.5
 8. Read section 32.6
 9. Read section 32.6
 10. Read section 32.6 (b)
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