CHAPTER IV
PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

The health status and its determinants are conditioned by or linked to several factors concerning the socio-political and economic features of the Union Territory. The level of development attained by the Territory, its population, occupational pattern, urbanisation and the necessary infrastructural facilities in the form of roads, transport, water supply, education, housing, the living conditions of the people in terms of per capita income, poverty, and social factors like literacy, especially adult literacy, outlook etc., tend to affect the health status. Therefore, a discussion on the socio-economic profile of the region providing a situation analysis on the above facets would serve as a guideline to understand the health status of the people and its determinants. This chapter is an attempt in this direction.

General

Pondicherry, a small charming Union Territory on the East Coast of India, is the 'Window of French Culture' and a land of learning and wisdom. It was an erstwhile French colony and it entered the mainstream of Indian life on November 1, 1954, when the rest of the country was completing the First Five Year Plan. Today, by 1996, the Union Territory of Pondicherry has completed 42 years of her independent existence with remarkable and rapid economic and social progress.

Location

The Union Territory of Pondicherry comprises of four former French settlements namely Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam. Of the four regions, Pondicherry and Karaikal are in the South-Eastern coast of India bounded by Tamil Nadu in the North, West and South, and Bay of Bengal in the East. Mahe region is in the Western Coast surrounded by Kerala State South, East and North, and Arabian Sea in the West. Yanam region is in the bank of River Godavari and surrounded by Andhra Pradesh State on all four sides. While the people of Pondicherry and Karaikal speak Tamil, the people of Mahe speak Malayalam and the people of Yanam speak Telugu. Pondicherry and other
Map - 4.1

Map

Showing Settlements of Pondicherry State

Pondicherry Karaikal Mahe Yanam
regions became an Union Territory with a legislature, with effect from 01-07-1963 after the enactment of the Union Territories Act, 1963 by the Government of India.

**Area and Demographic Status**

The Union Territory of Pondicherry is one of the smallest territories in India with 0.09 percent of India’s total population and 0.01 per cent of its area. It ranks 28th among all States and Union Territories in India in area and 25th in population. The total land area of the Union Territory is 492 sq. kms which is divided into 15 communes, 7 in Pondicherry, 6 in Karaikal, one each in Mahe and Yanam.

According to the 1991 Census, the Territory has a population of 8,07,785 living in 1,62,448 households with an average family size of 4.97. The sex ratio is 979 femals for 1000 males and the density of population is 1642 persons per sq.km. The proportion of scheduled caste population to the total population is 16.25 per cent and the literacy rate is 74.74 per cent in 1991-92. The average growth rate of population is 3.36 per cent which is higher than the All-India growth rate of 2.3 per cent. There is considerable migration of people into the Union Territory of Pondicherry from the neighbouring States which also accounts for the growth of population.

**Economic Status**

The economy of the Territory is very well diversified and over the years it has grown into a vibrant economy exhibiting characteristics of dynamism and progress. The state income, the barometer of economic development has escalated by 54 times from Rs. 12.59 crores in 1960-61 to Rs. 792.77 crores (at current prices) in 1992-93. The per capita income at current prices has increased by 24 fold from Rs.400 in 1960-61 to Rs.8513.00 in 1991-92 which is one of the highest in India and the per capita income in 1992-93 is Rs.9314.00.

**Agriculture**

The total land area of the Territory is 48,581 hectares. The Territory is predominantly agricultural. However, the land under non-agricultural uses has registered a substantial increase over the years in the wake of urbanisation, industrialisation and housing progress. The total net area sown has declined from 32,568 hectares in 1960-61 to 27729 hectares in 1990-91. The total agricultural production of all the food crops was 1,76,412 metric tonnes in 1960-61 and 3,09,735 metric tonnes in 1990-91.

The Territory has achieved self-sufficiency in foodgrains and the per capita availability of foodgrains which determines the nutritional status of the people
Pondicherry Region
has also improved. The milk production in the Territory and the consequent per capita availability of milk has improved substantially over the years.

**Land Reforms**

At the time of merger, Pondicherry faced inequitable distribution of land ownership. There was no security of any kind to the tenants and the rents paid were unreasonably high. After the merger, government began to enact land reform measures in order to promote distributive justice, security of tenure, fixation of fair rent and confirmation of ownership and also a source of income and livelihood which determine the health status. Therefore, the government enacted various Acts in order to promote the interests of the cultivators. These land reform measures have a bearing on the health status.

**Fisheries**

Fishery sector plays a vital role in the economy. In the Union Territory of Pondicherry, the role of fishery has been very considerable as shown by its increasing share in the State Domestic Product. The total production of the marine fish catch was 12,750 tonnes in 1980-81 and it stood at 29,814 tonnes in 1991-92 and 33,661 tonnes in 1993-94.

**Rural Development**

Rural areas constitute a major part of the Territory and rural development, therefore, is a precondition for Pondicherry’s economic development. In general, rural development denotes a continuous and comprehensive socio-economic process of attempting to improve all aspects of rural life. All programmes aimed at developing agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, irrigation, communication, education, health, supplementary employment and housing come under the category of rural development.

Community development programmes which have been launched in Pondicherry attempt to develop rural economy and society through extermination of poverty, diseases and ignorance. Some of the important schemes implemented under the Community Development Program are: (1) Applied Nutrition Programme (2) Community Development Extension Programme (3) Integrated Children Care Scheme in Rural Areas (4) Special Programme for Rural Employment (5) Scheme for Conversion of dry Latrine into Sanitary Latrine (6) Rural Water Supply Modernization (7) Composite Scheme for Basic Amenities etc.

**Minimum Needs Programme**

Special Programme for direct transfer of basic social services to the rural areas and urban poor which are aimed at improving the living conditions of the people below the
poverty line to ensure the minimum social consumption standards are included in the minimum needs programme. Table 4.1 indicates the outlays provided for various components of the minimum needs programme.

Table 4.1

Proposed Plan Outlays for Minimum Needs Programmes in the Union Territory of Pondicherry 1992-97

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Outlay (Rs. in lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rural Roads</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>2070.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rural Health</td>
<td>1033.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Rural Water Supply</td>
<td>400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rural Sanitation</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Rural Housing</td>
<td>380.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Environmental and Improvement of urban slums</td>
<td>250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>1978.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Public Distribution System</td>
<td>287.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6479.12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The importance of minimum needs programme on the promotion of health needs hardly any emphasis. By improving and enhancing the environmental aspects, they add to the health of the society and its people.

Industries

Industrial development and economic development are positively related. The Government of Pondicherry started the process of industrialisation only in the Second Five Year Plan. The industrial development in Pondicherry has been impressive. In order to promote rapid industrialisation and easy financial facilities the Government of Pondicherry has established the Pondicherry Industrial Promotion Development and
Investment Corporation Limited (PIPDIC) in the year 1974. In 1992-93 there are about 21 large scale, 57 medium scale and 4455 small scale industries.

Education

Education is considered to be a potent input for socio-cultural and economic development of the country. The post merger period witnessed phenomenal expansion in the educational facilities. The number of pre-primary educational institutions has increased manifold. Primary education has attained a place of pride which has enabled the Union Territory to achieve universalisation of primary education to the children. The Territory has also made considerable progress in the sphere of secondary and collegiate education. The professional and technical education have received considerable impetus. Education expenditure has increased from Rs.38.81 lakhs in 1960-61 to Rs.2950.55 lakhs in 1988-89, registering a 76 fold increase. The share of expenditure on education in the over all expenditure is nearly 26 percent and the proportion of State income spent on education is around 6 percent.

One of the significant aspects of growth of education is with regard to girl’s education. The average annual rate of increase in the enrolment of girls was 10.73 percent as against 7.24 percent for boys. The status of women has improved in the wake of progress of education made in the Union Territory and this trend has positively contributed to the over all progress and in particular the health development.

Today, the Government has created a vast network of institutions for promoting education. In 1960-61 there was only one college for over an area of 240 sq.kms., but in 1980-81 there was one college for 55 sq.kms. Today, there is a high school for an area of 6 sq.kms., as against 75 sq.kms., at the All - India level. There is a middle school at a distance of 5 kms. All villages today have an elementary school. Enrolment of students in 558 educational institution has crossed 1.85 lakhs. In terms of per capita facility it can be stated that one institution catered to the needs of 875 persons in 1960-61 but now there is one institution for every 530 persons.

Health

Development of health facilities has occupied an important place in the development efforts of the Government of Pondicherry. According to Seventh Plan proposal of the Union Territory health sector claimed 3.5 percent of the total plan expenditure (i.e.) out of Rs. 17,000 lakhs, Rs.600 lakhs has been earmarked for the health sector. The outlay on health in Second Five Year Plan was just only Rs. 43.57 lakhs. This means that the plan outlay has increased by about 14 times during the last thirty years. The Government is
spending nearly 9 per cent of its budget on health facilities and the per capita expenditure on health was as high as Rs.433 in 1992.

**Health Schemes in Pondicherry**

To control communicable diseases the Government has been implementing the following schemes.

1. National Malaria Eradication Programme
2. Filaria Control Programme
3. Cholera Control Programme
4. Expanded Programme of Immunisation
5. Sexually Transmitted Diseases Control Programme.
6. National Leprosy Eradication Programme
7. Tuberculosis Control Programme
8. National AIDS Control Programme

The government also implements family welfare programme, Employees State Insurance Scheme, Students’ Health Scheme and Multi-purpose workers’ scheme.

The medical input has been so expanded that the facilities and services are available to the people very proximately and no one needs to walk more than two kilometers on an average to reach a medical institution. The growth of medical facilities has outstripped the growth of population so that the number of institutions, number of doctors etc., are more now than in 1961-62. For example, while population has increased at an average annual growth rate of 3.3 per cent per annum, medical institutions have grown at the rate of 9.05 per cent per annum. While population has increased by 1.63 times, the institutions have increased by 3.2 times. While there was 0.1 hospital for 1000 population in 1961-62, there is 0.18 hospital in 1991-92. Thus, the facilities have grown not only absolutely but also relatively.

In the case of communicable diseases, a number of experimental projects have successfully been carried out. For example, the scheme of monthly assistance to leprosy patients is acclaimed to be the first of its kind in the country and the government has received appreciation from planners and administrators at the All India level. Pondicherry is able to prove for the first time that proper environmental management can effectively
control the vector borne diseases like Filariasis and Small Pox were completely wiped out in 1967.

**Labour Force Participation and Occupational Structure**

The Population of the Territory may be classified into working population and non-working population. The working population is otherwise called the labour force. It is the labour force in the population that determines the level of economic development.

The general rate of labour force participation has declined from 37.5 per cent in 1960-61 to 33.10 percent in 1991-92. The labour force participation rate is 33.1 per cent while the urban rate is only 30.1 percent. While the male worker participation rate is 50.6 percent, the participation rate for female is 15.2 percent. Child labour constitutes 1.84 percent of the working population in 1981. The excessive growth in population over the growth in workers was responsible for the declining participation rate. The sluggish growth in the labour force may be due to the inability of the economy to generate additional job opportunities.

In 1991, the agricultural labourers constitute 29.49 per cent of the labour force, the labourers engaged in the primary sector is 39.24 per cent, secondary sector is 19.99 per cent, tertiary sector is 40.77 per cent and in other sectors 22.88 per cent.

**Urbanisation**

The Union Territory of Pondicherry is predominantly urban in character with 64 per cent of the total population (5,16,985 persons) living in areas classified as urban. Pondicherry ranks third at the All India level in the percentage of urban population to the total population next to Delhi 89.9 per cent and Chandigarh 89.7 per cent. The urban population has grown at the rate of 5.9 per cent per year as against 4.6 per cent registered by the entire nation. The urban population in the Territory is extremely distributed in urban agglomeration (Pondicherry Region) where 77.6 per cent of the total urban population of the Territory is concentrated. This urban character of Pondicherry is reflected in the problems facing the region which are urban oriented. For instance, the problems of unemployment, poverty, environment, birth rate, death rate, and infant mortality rate, are more severe in urban than in rural areas.

**Housing**

Housing provides shelter, raises the quality of life and creates conditions which are conducive for the promotion of health, sanitation and education. It also contributes to national income, employment and capital formation. At the time of merger, housing conditions in Pondicherry were very unsatisfactory. The people belonging to weaker sections
suffered a great deal. After the launching of planning, efforts were made to augment the supply of housing. Several schemes were implemented to help the targeted groups as a result of which the housing shortage has been overcome. Further details on housing are provided in Chapter VI.

Nutrition

The food grains production reveals that the total cereals production and pulses mainly green gram, black gram and other pulses show an increasing trend. The supply of fish has increased considerably. The per capita consumption of milk in the Territory is 33 grams per day. The supply and production of cereals and pulses shows that the nutritional improvement is quite sufficient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.2</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production of Cereals and Pulses in the Union Territory of Pondicherry, 1960-61 and 1990-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in metric tonnes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodities</th>
<th>1960-61</th>
<th>1990-91</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total Cereals</td>
<td>41,249</td>
<td>60,071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Pulses</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The production of fish has increased by 4.3 times since 1961-62. The actual production of fish has gone up from 8,727.90 metric tonnes in 1961-62 to 35,345 metric tonnes in 1991-92.

The Government also implements various feeding programmes to improve the nutritional status of the people. Noon meal programme is available to children upto fifth standard to improve the nutritional status and enrolment of the children. Social welfare activities organised by the State Social Welfare Board, Social Welfare Department and the Harijan Welfare Department contribute to the health of the children and lactating mothers. Extension of children Act 1960, establishment of a Children Welfare Board, implementation of special nutritional programmes for enhanced health of children are some of the measures...
undertaken in this regard. Under the programme of Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) and Special Nutritional Programme (SNP), Balwadies, Anganwadies and Creches have been organised. Under the ICDS programme noon meals in the form of rice, ragi, wheat, vegetables and vitamin tablets are provided.

Public Distribution System

The public distribution system in Pondicherry is another important factor in the promotion of health status. The public distribution of foodgrains through fair price shops and co-operative societies has an effective coverage of the entire population. While rice, sugar, wheat, edible oil are still being distributed maida, sooji, gram and dhall have since been decontrolled. Non-controlled commodities such as dhall, bengal gram dhall, black gram dhall, tamarind, chilies, coriander, and soap are supplied through fair price shops. No consumer has to travel more than three kilometers to lift his commodities from the fair price shop.

Sanitation

With the expansion of town and rapid urbanisation, the sewage system has become unmanageable. There has been considerable expansion of the town in the post merger period into the low lying areas which were either paddy fields or coconut groves. In all these areas where new residential colonies have sprung up, real estate dealers had not cared to provide sewage canals. This has led to water stagnation in many low lying areas. Some of the old irrigation tanks have become sewage pools. The growth of slums and the pavement dwellings have created problems of environmental sanitation. Pondicherry Slum Clearance Board is trying to improve the sanitary conditions. The Programme for Environmental Improvements in Urban Slums was launched in 1980. The public toilets are not properly maintained. There has been steady intrusion of commercial establishments everywhere. There has been considerable industrial pollution in the wake of rapid industrialisation of the Territory.

Ecology and Environment

Recognising the importance of conservation and protection of environment in the Union Territory of Pondicherry, Department of Science and Technology and Environment has been functioning since 01.01.1993 and two schemes viz., (1) Environment Education/Awareness Campaign and (2) Setting up of Department of Environment/State Pollution Control Board have been implemented by this Department to achieve the above said objectives.
Urban Basic Services for the Poor

With a view to improve the environmental conditions in the town and its surrounding slums and to spread basic amenities to the slum population, Government of India launched a novel programme called Urban Basic Services (UBS) programme in 1985 merging the then existing urban community development programme, low cost sanitation programme and small and medium town development programme. As a large number of slums were concentrated in the town of Pondicherry, it was selected for the implementation of UBS programme for the year 1986-87. The UBS programme is an action plan jointly sponsored by the Government of India and the UNICEF designed to enhance the survival and development of children and women of low income families in selected urban slums.

This scheme was revised in 1990 and in its place a new scheme entitled “Urban Basic Services for the Poor “ is being implemented. This scheme is implemented in Pondicherry and Karaikal Municipalities in 1991. The revised scheme provides basic social services such as non formal education, health care, and nutritional supplementation to the urban poor and activities geared at promoting communal harmony, national community participation and civic consciousness are also organised. The activities are: pre-school learning opportunities, nutritional supplementation, immunization, health check-up, personal hygiene and community sanitation, non-formal education, adult education, assistance to the aged, assistance to the handicapped, assistance for juvenile delinquents, assistance for rehabilitation of alcoholics, drug addicts, assistance for sports, cultural activities and promotion of civic consciousness.

Transport

Roads are the most important form of transport. After the merger, the Government took systematic efforts to improve road conditions. Today, the Union Territory has a network of roads connecting National Highways, State High Ways and major districts of the neighbouring States. The total length of the roads maintained by the Public Works Department has increased from 330 sq.kms., in 1961 to 589 kms., in 1992-93, length of the roads maintained by the Municipality is 334 kms. and of the commune panchayats is 1453 kms. in 1992-93. Different means of public transport are in existence namely cycle rickshaw, scooters, buses, cars, taxies, jeeps, tractors, and trailers. However bus is the most common mode of transport.

Energy and Power

The Union Territory is mainly dependent on electricity, coal, kerosene, petroleum, light speed oil and high speed oil. The Territory has recorded considerable progress in the
consumption of electricity in the last 30 years, due to the progress made in industrialisation and growth of agriculture.

Economic Planning

Modern governments have now realised that development can come only through planning. Following the foot-steps of Soviet Russia, Government of India has launched the process of planning in 1951. Pondicherry was brought under the planning process towards the end of First Five Year Plan. Over the last 38 years (1954-1992) the Government has invested considerable amount of financial resources with a view to accelerate the tempo of development in this Territory. Now the Union Territory of Pondicherry is in the midst of the VIII Five Year Plan period (1992-97). Several plan schemes have been taken up in different sectors of economic activity. The VIII Five Year envisages a larger outlay and very ambitious schemes. While the plan outlay for the First Plan (1951-56) was Rs.73.96 lakhs the outlay for VIII Plan (1992-97) is Rs. 80,000 lakhs.

Government Finance

After the merger, there has been continuous increase both in the revenue and expenditure of the Government. The sources of government revenue are current revenue, capital receipts and borrowings, land revenue, stamps and registration fees, state excise, sales tax and taxes on vehicles. Non-tax revenue is obtained from inter-state receipts, dividends from enterprises, fees, fines and the recoveries. Grants-in-aid is another source of non-tax revenue.

In the year 1960-61, the revenue receipts was Rs. 179.25 lakhs and in the revised estimates of the year 1990-91, it was Rs.20155.35 lakhs, an increase of about 112 times. There has been remarkable growth in the public expenditure of the Government in the wake of planning and the spread of the message of welfare State. The total public expenditure both in the revenue and capital accounts was Rs.294.18 lakhs in the year 1962-63 and it has increased to Rs.25170.00 lakhs in the revised estimates of 1990-91, an increase of about 85 times. Social and Community services absorbed 48.29 percentage of the total expenditure in 1990-91 which reflects the concern of the Government to promote the welfare of people especially, the down trodden. Among the social and community services, education claims a major share in public expenditure, followed by medical and public health, other social and community services such as housing, urban development and family welfare.
Unemployment

Although the Territory has made remarkable progress due to various programmes implemented by plan process it also faces a number of problems. Two main problems are unemployment and poverty both of which have serious implications for health status of the people of Pondicherry.

Unemployment is one of the major problems facing the Union Territory. A tentative estimate in 1988 showed that 31.7 per cent of the total population was unemployed. The State Government has provided the lion’s share of employment and the employment in private sector is almost stagnant. Educated unemployment is one of the serious problems of the Territory. The growth of population, lack of industrial development, lack of manpower planning and irrelevant education system have mostly contributed to the surging unemployment problem of this Territory.

Poverty

Though the Union Territory of Pondicherry has achieved remarkable strides in economic development, a large section of the people remains below the poverty line. The growing poverty of the people is caused by many factors. They are the rapidly growing population, the declining trend in the labour force participation, high concentration of labour force on agriculture, small size of holdings and skewed distribution of holdings, growth of landlessness among agricultural labourers, lack of industrial development, presence of large number of people belonging to backward classes and unequal distribution of benefits of development to the people.

The Government has taken a number of measures to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. The programmes implemented are: 1) Employment Programmes 2) Scheme for Asset Creation 3) Land ceiling Programme 4) Provision of House sites and Financial Assistance 5) Minimum Needs Programme and 6) General Development Programme.

The above profile shows that over the period the Union Territory of Pondicherry has acquired commendable amount of socio-economic inputs which provide the necessary infrastructures for a smooth and better transition in health status. These inputs help the society to provide preventive, curative and promotive aspects of health development. In other words, the growth in socio-economic infrastructure has been instrumental for both health transition and development. The linkages between health and non-health sectors are becoming clearer and sharper in Union Territory of Pondicherry over years which form the subject matter of Chapter VII.
REFERENCES


