

ABSTRACT

Infrastructure functionally stimulates and structurally transforms an economy. Human development, a much talked about approach towards attaining all-round development of an economy, is stated to get an impetus from the availability of basic infrastructure in adequate quantity. Poor and unequal distribution of infrastructure may lead to low and unequal human development across regions. The present study, thus, examines the spatial disparities in infrastructural facilities and human development across 30 districts of Odisha, and consequently finds out the impact of infrastructure on human development in the State. The study indicates that not only the status of the State with regard to its infrastructure base and human development is dismal, but also there persists glaring disparities across districts. Considering four time periods and 30 districts from 1993 to 2007, the study applies panel data model to examine the effects of composite infrastructure index and individual components of infrastructure on human development and on its three important dimensions namely income, education and health. The study concludes that there exists a close linkage between infrastructure and human development in the State. The individual infrastructure variables that remain crucial under economic infrastructure are telecommunication, postal services, village electricity and banking. Under social infrastructure, availability of schools, pupil-teacher ratio and provision of drinking water facility are found to be critical. Road length is found exerting negative impact on human development, thereby questioning its coverage and quality in the State. Provision of irrigation has mixed results as it creates positive effects on income, while its effects on health and overall human development turn out to be negative.

Key words: Economic infrastructure, education index, health index, human development, income index, social infrastructure.