

Dr. HEMU RATHORE

*College of Community and Applied Sciences,
Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur, Rajasthan.*

Dr. SUMAN SINGH

*College of Community and Applied Sciences,
Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur, Rajasthan.*

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About the Author: Dr Hemu Rathore, a Professor and Department Head at Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology, Udaipur, Rajasthan, holds distinctions with Gold Medals at both UG & and PG levels. Her research centers on empowering farm women via Ergonomics, Drudgery reduction, and technological interventions. Dr. Rathore developed ICT materials to simplify work, designed tools to reduce drudgery, and focused on occupational health and safety in agriculture, improving women farmers' quality of life. With three co-authored books, an App on Drudgery Reduction Tools, and over 40 published papers in National and International journals, she's shared her expertise in research presentations across Malaysia and France.

Dr. Suman Singh, presently working as ICAR Emeritus Professor in the College of Community and Applied Sciences, MPUAT, Udaipur. She holds vast experience working in the field of drudgery reduction of women farmers and ergonomic and technological interventions for mitigating their occupational health hazards. She has many Awards to her credit besides being felicitated as the University's Best Teacher for Academic Excellence. She has two Patents, 4 books, several scientific papers, and ICT materials to her credit.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Indoor Air Quality refers to the good and bad effects of the contents of air inside a structure on its occupants. Good Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) has no unwanted gases or particles in it at concentrations that will adversely affect someone. Poor indoor air quality has gases or particles in excessive concentration to affect the satisfaction or health of occupants.

Indoor pollutant concentrations may be higher or lower than outdoor air concentrations. Outdoor contaminants may be present indoors at a sufficient concentration to affect the occupants, for example, pollen and mould spore from outdoors causes fever and allergies indoors. The contaminant indoor air could damage people's health indoor air pollutants are among the top 5 environmental risks people spend about 90% of their time indoors so the health problems that result from exposure to indoor pollution increase according to the World Health Organization approximately 30% of all commercial buildings have significant indoor air quality problems.

Indoor Radon exposure is estimated to be the second leading cause of lung cancer (American Lung Association). Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) causes an estimated 3000 lung cancer deaths and 35000 to 50000 heart disease deaths of non-smokers as well as 150000 to 300000 cases of low respiratory tract infections in children under 18 months of age (ALA) 1.4 million buildings have indoor problems

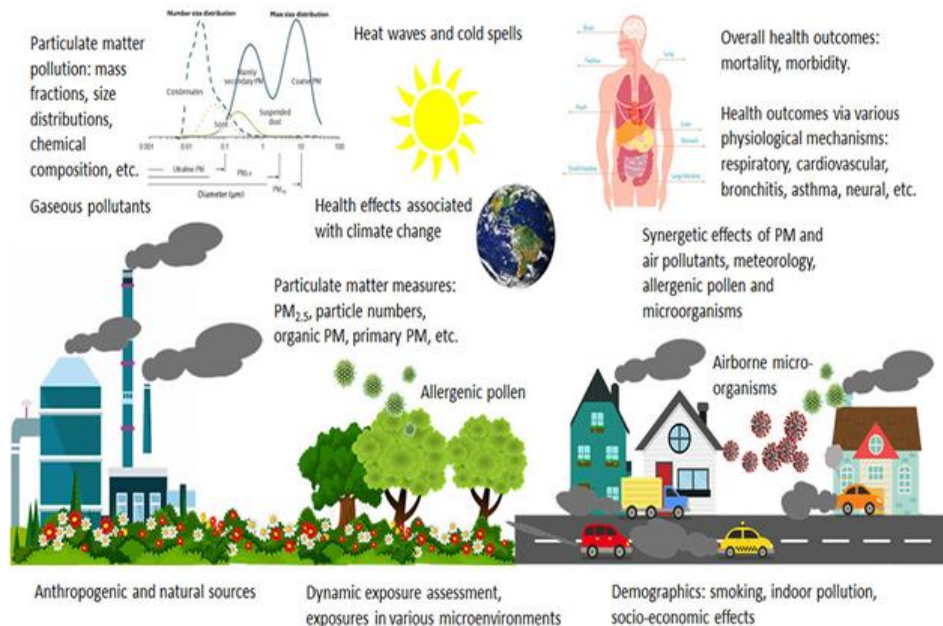


Image source: <https://acp.copernicus.org/articles/22/4615/2022/>

14.2 HOUSEHOLD AIR POLLUTION

Key facts

- Around 2.4 billion people worldwide (around a third of the global population) cook using open fires or inefficient stoves fueled by kerosene, biomass (wood, animal dung, and crop waste), and coal, which generates harmful household air pollution.
- Household air pollution was responsible for an estimated 3.2 million deaths per year in 2020, including over 237,000 deaths of children under the age of 5.

- The combined effects of ambient air pollution and household air pollution are associated with 6.7 million premature deaths annually.
- Household air pollution exposure leads to noncommunicable diseases including stroke, ischemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and lung cancer.
- Women and children, typically responsible for household chores such as cooking and collecting firewood, bear the greatest health burden from the use of polluting fuels and technologies in homes.
- It is essential to expand the use of clean fuels and technologies to reduce household air pollution and protect health. These include solar, electricity, biogas, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), natural gas, alcohol fuels, as well as biomass stoves that meet the emission targets in the WHO Guidelines.

14.2.1 Sources of Pollutants

Primary Causes of Indoor Air Problems: Indoor pollution sources that release gases or particles into the air are the primary cause of indoor air quality problems. Inadequate ventilation can increase indoor pollutant levels by not bringing in enough outdoor air to dilute emissions from indoor sources and by not carrying indoor air pollutants out of the area. High temperature and humidity levels can also increase concentrations of some pollutants.

Pollutant Sources: There are many sources of indoor air pollution. These can include:

- i. Fuel-burning combustion appliances
- ii. Tobacco products
- iii. Building materials and furnishings as diverse as:
 - Deteriorated asbestos-containing insulation
 - Newly installed flooring, upholstery, or carpet
 - Cabinetry or furniture made of certain pressed wood products
- iv. Products for household cleaning and maintenance, personal care, or hobbies
- v. Central heating and cooling systems and humidification devices
- vi. Excess moisture
- vii. Outdoor sources such as:
 - Radon
 - Pesticides
 - Outdoor air pollution.

The relative importance of any single source depends on how much of a given pollutant it emits and how hazardous those emissions are. In some cases, factors such as how old the source is and whether it is properly

maintained are significant. For example, an improperly adjusted gas stove can emit significantly more carbon monoxide than one that is properly adjusted.

Some sources, such as building materials, furnishings, and products like air fresheners, can release pollutants more or less continuously. Other sources, related to activities like smoking, cleaning, redecorating, or doing hobbies release pollutants intermittently. Unvented or malfunctioning appliances or improperly used products can release higher and sometimes dangerous levels of pollutants indoors. Pollutant concentrations can remain in the air for long periods after some activities.

14.2.2 Factors Affecting IAQ

Several factors can significantly impact Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) in buildings and indoor spaces. Some of these include:

- i. **Ventilation:** Inadequate ventilation or poor air circulation within a building can lead to the accumulation of indoor air pollutants, affecting IAQ.
- ii. **Indoor Pollutants:** Various indoor pollutants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from paints, cleaning agents, furnishings, and building materials, as well as formaldehyde, tobacco smoke, dust mites, pet dander, and mold spores, can contribute to poor IAQ.
- iii. **Humidity Levels:** High humidity levels can lead to mold growth, while low humidity can cause dryness, both of which can affect respiratory health and overall comfort.
- iv. **Building Materials and Furnishings:** Materials used in building construction, carpets, furniture, and upholstery may emit harmful chemicals or particles that impact IAQ.
- v. **Outdoor Air Quality:** The quality of outdoor air can directly affect indoor air when ventilation systems draw air from the exterior. Pollution, allergens, or contaminants present outdoors can infiltrate indoor spaces.
- vi. **Poor Maintenance:** Inadequate maintenance of HVAC systems, air filters, and building components can contribute to poor IAQ by allowing the accumulation of dust, dirt, and pollutants.
- vii. **Occupant Activities:** Activities such as cooking, smoking, using certain cleaning products, or bringing in pollutants from the outside can impact IAQ.
- viii. **Building Design and Construction:** The design and layout of a building, as well as its construction materials and methods, can influence airflow, ventilation, and the accumulation of indoor pollutants.

Addressing these factors through proper ventilation, regular maintenance, using low-emission building materials, controlling humidity levels, and promoting healthier habits among occupants can significantly improve Indoor Air Quality.

Outdoor air enters indoors by:

- i. **Infiltration:** Outdoor air flows into the house through openings, joints and cracks and walls, floors and ceilings and around windows and doors.
- ii. **Natural Ventilation:** Air moves through opened windows and doors.
- iii. **Mechanical Ventilation:** From outdoor vented fans that intermittently remove air from a single room such as bathrooms and kitchen to air handling systems that use fans and that work to continuously remove indoor air and distribute filtered and conditioned outdoor air to strategic points throughout the house.

14.3 SICK BUILDING SYNDROME (SBS)

Sick building syndrome (SBS) is a name for a condition that's thought to be caused by being in a building or other type of enclosed space. It's attributed to poor indoor air quality. However, the precise cause is unknown. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, poor indoor air quality can be found in about 30 percent of new and remodelled buildings.

Sometimes diagnosing SBS can be difficult because of the wide range of symptoms. These can also mimic other conditions, such as the common cold. The key to SBS is that your symptoms improve after leaving the building in question, only to come back when you return to the same location. If you notice recurring symptoms that seem to appear whenever you're in a particular building, you may consider investigating sick building syndrome as the cause.

14.3.1 Importance of IAQ in Maintaining Occupant Health and Well-Being

Maintaining good Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is crucial for safeguarding the health and well-being of occupants within interior spaces. The significance of IAQ lies in several key factors:

- i. **Health Impact:** Poor IAQ can lead to various health issues such as respiratory problems, allergies, headaches, fatigue, and aggravated symptoms for individuals with pre-existing conditions. Clean air is essential for reducing the risk of health-related concerns.
- ii. **Productivity and Comfort:** Improved IAQ contributes to a more comfortable and productive indoor environment. Clean air supports better concentration, cognitive function, and overall comfort, enhancing the occupants' ability to work or engage in activities effectively.
- iii. **Long-term Health:** Prolonged exposure to indoor air pollutants can have long-term health consequences. Good IAQ plays a significant role in preventing chronic health conditions linked to poor air quality.
- iv. **Vulnerable Populations:** Certain groups, such as children, the elderly, and individuals with respiratory or immune system conditions, are more susceptible to the adverse effects of poor IAQ. Maintaining clean air is crucial for their health and well-being.
- v. **Quality of Life:** A healthy indoor environment with good IAQ contributes to an improved quality of life for occupants. It creates a space where individuals feel comfortable, safe, and healthy, positively impacting their overall well-being.

Prioritizing and maintaining good IAQ is essential for promoting a healthy and conducive indoor environment, ensuring the well-being and health of the people who occupy the space.

14.3.2 Signs and Symptoms of Sick Building Syndrome

Sick Building Syndrome (SBS) is associated with various signs and symptoms that individuals may experience when spending time in certain buildings or indoor spaces. These symptoms are often temporary and can vary in severity.

Some common signs and symptoms of SBS include:

- i. **Respiratory Issues:** Individuals may experience respiratory problems such as coughing, sneezing, wheezing, shortness of breath, or aggravated asthma symptoms.
- ii. **Eye, Nose, and Throat Irritation:** Irritation in the eyes, nose, or throat, including itching, burning sensations, dryness, or excessive mucus production, might occur.
- iii. **Skin Problems:** Skin irritation, rashes, itching, or dryness can manifest as a result of exposure to certain environmental factors within a building.
- iv. **Headaches and Dizziness:** SBS may lead to frequent headaches, migraines, dizziness, or feelings of light-headedness while spending time indoors.
- v. **Fatigue and Discomfort:** People may experience general feelings of fatigue, tiredness, discomfort, or difficulty concentrating while in the building.
- vi. **Sensory Reactions:** Unpleasant odours, stuffy or stale air, or strong smells might trigger reactions in individuals sensitive to environmental factors.

It is important to note that these symptoms can vary among individuals and may not necessarily be specific to SBS. An increased severity of symptoms might be observed in individuals with allergies or an ongoing respiratory illness. For instance, a higher risk for asthma attacks due to SBS may be noted in people with asthma. It should be emphasized that the impact of SBS varies for everyone.

14.3.3 Causes of Sick Building Syndrome

The term "Sick Building Syndrome" is employed when the precise cause of symptoms cannot be pinpointed. Several potential causes can be inquired about by a medically qualified doctor. Some of the possible contributors to SBS are:

14.4 INDOOR AIR POLLUTION AND HEALTH

Indoor air pollution is a significant concern for public health as people spend a substantial amount of time indoors, especially in urban settings. The quality of indoor air can be affected by various factors, including the presence of pollutants, inadequate ventilation, and lifestyle choices.

Several indoor air pollutants have adverse effects on human health:

- **Particulate Matter (PM):** PM refers to tiny particles suspended in the air, which can be inhaled into the respiratory system. Fine particles (PM_{2.5}) and ultrafine particles (PM_{0.1}) are particularly concerning as they can penetrate deep into the lungs and even enter the bloodstream. PM exposure has been linked to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, exacerbation of existing conditions like asthma, and even premature death.
- **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs):** VOCs are emitted as gases from various household products and building materials. Examples include formaldehyde from furniture, benzene from cigarette smoke, and solvents from paints and cleaning agents. Prolonged exposure to VOCs can lead to irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, headaches, dizziness, and in some cases, more severe health effects like organ damage and cancer.
- **Carbon Monoxide (CO):** CO is a colorless and odorless gas produced by the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels, such as in gas stoves, fireplaces, and heating systems. High levels of CO can lead to symptoms like headache, dizziness, weakness, and nausea. In extreme cases, CO poisoning can be fatal.
- **Radon:** Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that can seep into buildings from the ground. Long-term exposure to elevated radon levels is a significant risk factor for lung cancer.
- **Tobacco Smoke:** Smoking indoors is a major source of indoor air pollution. Secondhand smoke contains numerous toxic chemicals, and exposure to it can increase the risk of respiratory infections, asthma attacks, heart disease, and lung cancer, especially in children and non-smokers.
- **Biological Pollutants:** These include mold, bacteria, viruses, pet dander, and dust mites. These pollutants can trigger allergies and asthma and may cause respiratory problems, particularly in individuals with compromised immune systems.

To improve indoor air quality and protect health, some effective measures include:

- i. Regularly ventilating indoor spaces by opening windows and using exhaust fans.
- ii. Keeping indoor spaces clean and free from mold and dampness.
- iii. Avoiding smoking indoors and creating smoke-free environments.
- iv. Using household products with low VOC emissions.
- v. Regularly maintaining heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.
- vi. Installing air purifiers with appropriate filtration systems.
- vii. Testing for radon and taking measures to reduce its concentration if necessary.
- viii. Awareness of indoor air pollution and implementing these measures can significantly improve indoor air quality and promote better health for occupants.

14.4.1 Immediate Health Effects

Indoor air pollution can have immediate health effects on individuals who are exposed to pollutants indoors. Some common immediate health effects along with examples of the pollutants responsible for them:

- **Irritation of the Eyes, Nose, and Throat:**
 - **Pollutants:** Particulate Matter (PM), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), tobacco smoke.
 - **Examples:** Dust, smoke, cooking fumes, cleaning agents, perfumes, and air fresheners can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat upon exposure.
- **Headaches and Dizziness:**
 - **Pollutants:** VOCs, carbon monoxide (CO).
 - **Examples:** Indoor use of paints, glues, solvents, and gas stoves without proper ventilation can release VOCs and CO, leading to headaches and dizziness.
- **Fatigue and Shortness of Breath:**
 - **Pollutants:** Particulate Matter (PM), ozone, allergens.
 - **Examples:** Elevated levels of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀, high ozone concentrations, and allergens like mold spores or pet dander can cause fatigue and shortness of breath.
- **Aggravation of Respiratory Conditions:**
 - **Pollutants:** Particulate Matter (PM), VOCs, allergens, tobacco smoke.
 - **Examples:** Individuals with asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) may experience worsened symptoms when exposed to indoor air pollutants such as cigarette smoke, dust, or pet dander.
- **Increased Risk of Respiratory Infections:**
 - **Pollutants:** Biological pollutants (bacteria, viruses), tobacco smoke.
 - **Examples:** Poor indoor air quality can foster the spread of respiratory infections like colds, flu, and other viral illnesses, especially in crowded and poorly ventilated spaces.
- **Exacerbation of Allergies:**
 - **Pollutants:** Allergens (dust mites, pet dander, pollen), mold.
 - **Examples:** Allergic individuals can experience heightened allergy symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose, and itchy eyes when exposed to indoor allergens and mold spores.
- **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:**
 - **Pollutants:** Carbon monoxide (CO).

- **Examples:** Faulty gas stoves, heaters, and fireplaces without proper ventilation can lead to the accumulation of CO indoors, potentially causing carbon monoxide poisoning, which can be life-threatening.

It is essential to address indoor air pollution to minimize these immediate health effects and create a healthier indoor environment. Proper ventilation, regular cleaning, and using low-emission products are some measures that can help reduce indoor air pollution and promote better health.

14.4.2 Long-Term Effects

Indoor air pollution can also have significant long-term health effects on individuals who are exposed to pollutants over extended periods. Here are some common long-term health effects along with examples of the pollutants responsible for them:

- **Respiratory Diseases:**

- **Pollutants:** Particulate Matter (PM), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), tobacco smoke.
- **Examples:** Long-term exposure to indoor air pollutants like PM2.5 and PM10, VOCs from household products, and tobacco smoke can increase the risk of developing chronic respiratory conditions such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and lung cancer.

- **Cardiovascular Diseases:**

- **Pollutants:** Particulate Matter (PM), carbon monoxide (CO), VOCs.
- **Examples:** Prolonged exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and CO indoors can contribute to the development of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks, strokes, and hypertension.

- **Allergic and Asthma Exacerbation:**

- **Pollutants:** Allergens (dust mites, pet dander, pollen), mold, tobacco smoke.
- **Examples:** Long-term exposure to indoor allergens and mold can worsen allergic conditions, leading to persistent asthma symptoms and frequent allergy flare-ups.

- **Neurological Disorders:**

- **Pollutants:** VOCs, lead, pesticides.

- **Examples:** Some indoor pollutants, such as certain VOCs and lead particles from older paint, have been associated with an increased risk of cognitive impairment and neurological disorders over time.

- **Cancer:**

- **Pollutants:** Radon, VOCs, tobacco smoke.
- **Examples:** Long-term exposure to elevated radon levels indoors, certain VOCs, and tobacco smoke can significantly increase the risk of developing lung cancer.

- **Reproductive and Developmental Issues:**
 - **Pollutants:** VOCs, lead, phthalates.
 - **Examples:** Prolonged exposure to certain indoor pollutants can have adverse effects on reproductive health and may impact fetal development during pregnancy.
- **Cardiovascular and Metabolic Effects:**
 - **Pollutants:** Indoor air pollution from various sources.
 - **Examples:** Studies suggest that prolonged exposure to indoor air pollution, especially in urban environments, may contribute to cardiovascular and metabolic effects, including insulin resistance and obesity.

It is essential to understand and address indoor air pollution to minimize these long-term health effects. Implementing proper ventilation, using low-emission products, keeping indoor spaces clean, and avoiding smoking indoors are critical steps to improve indoor air quality and protect long-term health. Regular monitoring and addressing potential sources of indoor air pollution can help create a healthier indoor environment for everyone.

14.4.3 Strategies for Improving Indoor Air Quality

Improving indoor air quality (IAQ) involves various strategies aimed at reducing pollutants and enhancing ventilation to create a healthier indoor environment.

Here are several strategies to enhance IAQ:

- i. **Effective Ventilation:** Proper ventilation is crucial to ensure a continuous flow of fresh air into the building while expelling stale air. It dilutes indoor pollutants and maintains suitable humidity levels. Utilize natural ventilation when possible and ensure mechanical ventilation systems are well-maintained and functioning efficiently.
- ii. **Source Control:** Minimize or eliminate indoor pollutant sources whenever feasible. Use low-emission building materials, paints, adhesives, and furniture with low VOC emissions. Regularly maintain HVAC systems and promptly fix leaks to prevent mold growth.
- iii. **Air Filtration and Purification:** Employ high-efficiency air filters in HVAC systems to trap particulates and contaminants. Consider installing air purifiers or filtration systems, such as HEPA filters or UV germicidal lamps, to further improve indoor air quality.
- iv. **Maintain Optimal Humidity Levels:** Keep indoor humidity levels between 30% to 50% to prevent mould and mildew growth. Dehumidifiers and humidifiers can help regulate humidity as needed.
- v. **Regular Cleaning:** Regularly clean and vacuum spaces to reduce dust, allergens, and particulate matter. Use environmentally friendly cleaning products to minimize chemical exposure.
- vi. **Increase Ventilation in High-Risk Areas:** Enhance ventilation in areas prone to increased pollutants, such as kitchens, bathrooms, and areas with high occupancy or activities that generate pollutants.

- vii. **Introduce Plants:** Indoor plants can help improve air quality by naturally filtering and absorbing certain pollutants. Certain plant species can remove harmful compounds and enhance overall air quality.
- viii. **Educate Occupants:** Educate occupants about IAQ and encourage good practices, such as proper ventilation, minimizing the use of pollutants indoors, and maintaining cleanliness.
- ix. **Regular Maintenance:** Conduct regular inspections and maintenance of HVAC systems, air ducts, filters, and building structures to ensure optimal performance and reduce the likelihood of indoor air issues.
- x. **Monitoring and Testing:** Periodically test and monitor indoor air quality using sensors or professional assessments to identify and address potential issues promptly.

Implementing these strategies can significantly enhance indoor air quality, creating a healthier and more comfortable indoor environment for occupants.

14.4.4 Design Considerations for Better Indoor Air Quality

Designing spaces with better indoor air quality (IAQ) involves considering various factors during the planning and construction phases. Here are some design considerations for achieving better IAQ:

- i. **Natural Ventilation:** Design spaces to maximize natural ventilation. Incorporate operable windows, skylights, and strategically positioned openings to allow for cross-ventilation and fresh air circulation. Proper airflow reduces the buildup of pollutants and helps maintain a healthier indoor environment.
- ii. **Building Layout:** Optimize the building layout to minimize potential pollutant sources. For instance, locate areas with high pollutant emissions (such as printing rooms, and copiers) away from areas where people spend most of their time.
- iii. **Material Selection:** Choose low-emission building materials and finishes to reduce the release of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other harmful chemicals. Look for products with low formaldehyde content, including paints, adhesives, carpets, and furniture.
- iv. **HVAC System Design:** Design HVAC systems to provide effective air distribution and filtration. Opt for high-efficiency air filters that capture airborne particles, and design ductwork to minimize air leakage and ensure proper ventilation rates.
- v. **Humidity Control:** Incorporate humidity control measures into the building's design. Implement systems like vapor barriers, proper insulation, and moisture-resistant materials to prevent condensation, mold, and mildew growth.
- vi. **Outdoor Air Intake:** Position outdoor air intakes away from potential sources of pollution, such as exhaust vents, loading docks, or areas with heavy traffic, to prevent outdoor pollutants from entering the building.
- vii. **Thermal Comfort:** Design for thermal comfort to reduce the need for excessive heating or cooling, which can affect IAQ. Optimize insulation, glazing, and shading to regulate indoor temperatures effectively.

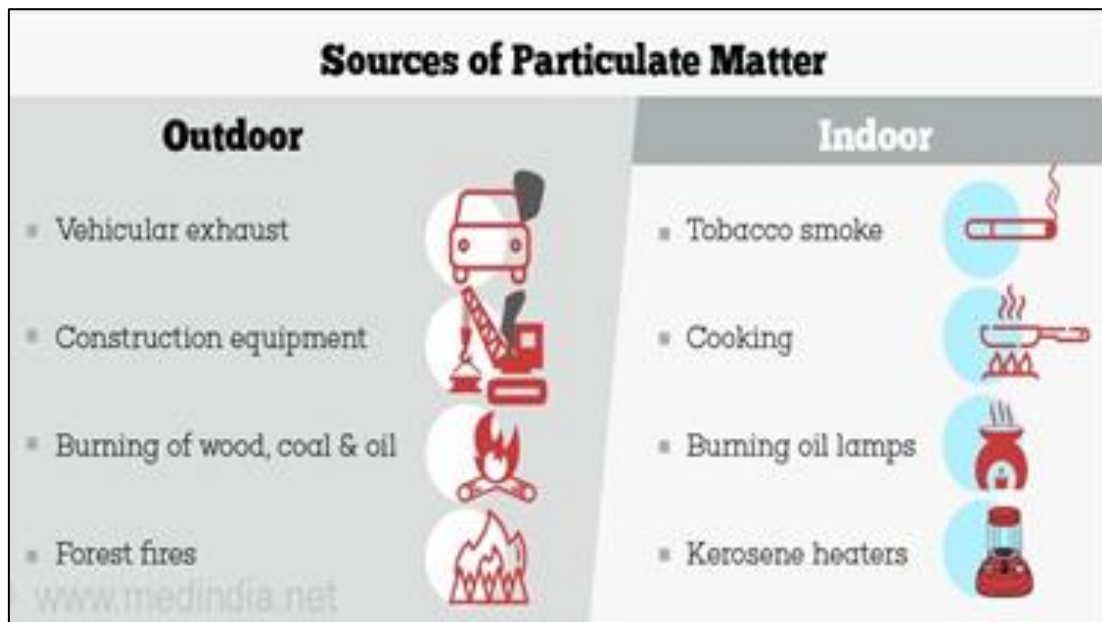
- viii. **Daylighting:** Maximize natural daylighting to reduce reliance on artificial lighting. Use daylight-responsive lighting controls and light-coloured interior finishes to improve visibility and reduce the need for energy-consuming lighting systems.
- ix. **Occupant Engagement:** Involve occupants in the design process and educate them about good IAQ practices. Encourage behaviours like proper ventilation, use of low-toxic cleaning products, and reporting of IAQ concerns.
- x. **Maintenance Accessibility:** Design systems and spaces with easy access for maintenance and cleaning. This ensures that HVAC systems, air filters, and building components can be regularly inspected and maintained to uphold optimal IAQ.

By integrating these design considerations into the planning and construction stages, designers and architects can create spaces that promote better indoor air quality, supporting the health and well-being of occupants.

14.5 INDOOR PARTICULATE MATTER

Indoor particulate matter (PM) refers to tiny particles suspended in the air inside buildings. These particles can be solid or liquid and vary in size, ranging from a few nanometers to several micrometers in diameter. Indoor PM can originate from various sources, both indoors and outdoors, and can have significant effects on indoor air quality and human health.

14.5.1 Sources of Indoor Particulate Matter



The sources of Indoor Particulate Matter:

- **Cooking:** Cooking activities, especially frying and grilling, can release fine particles and aerosols into the air.
- **Combustion:** Combustion of fossil fuels, such as burning wood, coal, gas, or oil for heating, cooking, or using fireplaces, releases particulate matter.
- **Tobacco Smoking:** Smoking indoors generates significant amounts of particulate matter, including harmful chemicals like tar and nicotine.
- **Household Products:** Certain household products like air fresheners, cleaning agents, and aerosol sprays can emit particulate matter and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).
- **Building Materials:** Construction materials, carpets, and furniture may release particulate matter and potentially harmful compounds, such as formaldehyde.
- **Outdoor Pollution:** Particulate matter from outdoor sources, such as vehicle emissions and industrial activities, can infiltrate indoor spaces through ventilation or open windows.

14.5.2 Health Effects of Indoor Particulate Matter

The health effects of indoor particulate matter depend on the size of the particles. Fine particles, particularly PM_{2.5} (particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers or smaller), are of particular concern as they can penetrate deep into the respiratory system and even enter the bloodstream. Coarse particles (PM₁₀), while less harmful, can still irritate the respiratory tract.

Health effects of indoor particulate matter include:

- Respiratory Irritation:** Inhalation of PM can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, leading to symptoms like coughing and sneezing.
- Aggravation of Respiratory Conditions:** People with asthma or other respiratory conditions may experience worsened symptoms, such as increased asthma attacks, due to exposure to indoor PM.
- Cardiovascular Effects:** Fine particles can enter the bloodstream and may increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes, and other cardiovascular problems.
- Decreased Lung Function:** Long-term exposure to high levels of PM can lead to reduced lung function and the development of chronic respiratory diseases.
- Premature Death:** Exposure to high levels of indoor particulate matter has been associated with an increased risk of premature death, particularly in vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and individuals with pre-existing health conditions.

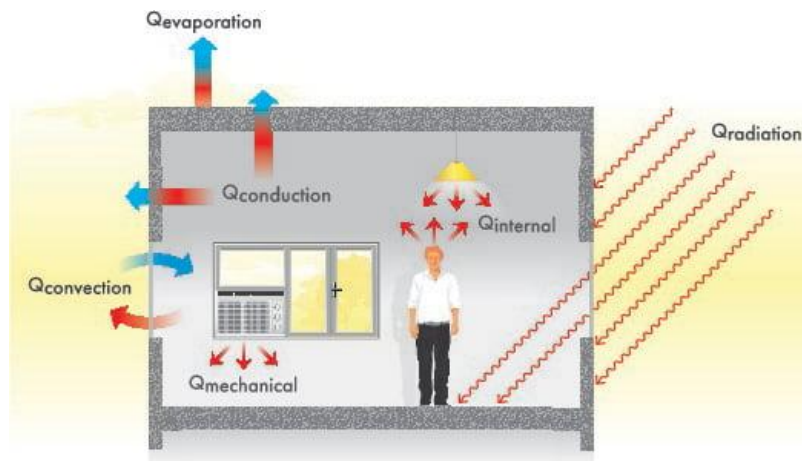
To improve indoor air quality and reduce exposure to indoor particulate matter, it is essential to ensure proper ventilation, avoid smoking indoors, use air purifiers with HEPA filters, and choose household products with low emissions. Regular cleaning and maintenance can also help minimize indoor particulate matter levels.

14.6 THERMAL COMFORT

Thermal comfort refers to the condition in which an individual feels physically comfortable with their thermal environment. It is a subjective perception influenced by various factors, including air temperature, humidity, air velocity, radiant temperature, clothing insulation, and activity level. Achieving thermal comfort is essential for promoting well-being and productivity, as extreme temperatures can lead to discomfort, stress, and health issues.

14.6.1 Factors Affecting Thermal Comfort

- i. **Air Temperature:** The temperature of the surrounding air directly influences how comfortable an individual feels. The recommended indoor air temperature for thermal comfort typically falls within a range of 20-26°C (68-79°F) in most settings.
- ii. **Humidity:** Humidity affects the body's ability to evaporate sweat, impacting how well it can cool down. Relative humidity levels of 40-60% are generally considered comfortable.
- iii. **Air Velocity:** Air movement can enhance or reduce the feeling of thermal comfort. Gentle air movement is often preferred, but high-speed drafts can cause discomfort.
- iv. **Radiant Temperature:** Radiant heat from surrounding surfaces can influence perceived comfort. Sitting close to a cold or warm surface can affect thermal comfort even if the air temperature is within the desired range.
- v. **Clothing Insulation:** The type and amount of clothing worn affect how the body loses or retains heat. Individuals wearing heavier clothing may feel warmer at lower air temperatures.
- vi. **Metabolic Rate:** The level of physical activity and metabolic rate influence heat production and the body's need for cooling.



Thermal comfort refers to the perceived feeling on the human body as the result of the effect of heat and cold sources in the environment.

Source: <https://www.ecophon.com/en/about-ecophon/functional-demands/thermal-comfort>

14.6.2 Strategies to Achieve Thermal Comfort

- i. **Effective HVAC Systems:** Properly designed and maintained Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems help maintain consistent indoor temperatures and humidity levels.
- ii. **Zoning and Individual Control:** Providing individual control over the indoor environment allows occupants to adjust temperature and air movement to their preferences.
- iii. **Proper Insulation and Glazing:** Good insulation and energy-efficient windows contribute to stable indoor temperatures and minimize heat loss or gain from the outside environment.
- iv. **Thermal Mass:** Using materials with high thermal mass, such as concrete or brick, can help stabilize indoor temperatures by absorbing and releasing heat slowly.
- v. **Natural Ventilation:** Where appropriate, using natural ventilation can bring in fresh air and provide a sense of comfort for occupants.
- vi. **Design Considerations:** Orienting buildings to maximize natural light and heat gain, as well as utilizing shading devices, can help regulate indoor temperatures.
- vii. **Adaptation:** Encouraging individuals to dress appropriately for the season can help them adapt to changing thermal conditions.

Promoting thermal comfort in indoor environments not only enhances occupant well-being and productivity but also contributes to energy efficiency by reducing the need for excessive heating or cooling. Striking the right balance between individual preferences and energy efficiency is key to achieving thermal comfort in different settings.

14.6.3 Factors Influencing Thermal Comfort

The key factors that contribute to thermal comfort are:

- i. **Air Temperature:** The most obvious factor is air temperature. It's what we typically associate with feeling hot or cold.
- ii. **Relative Humidity:** Humidity affects how our bodies dissipate heat through sweat evaporation. Higher humidity can make us feel warmer, while lower humidity can enhance evaporative cooling.
- iii. **Air Movement:** Air circulation, whether from fans or natural breezes, helps regulate body heat by promoting sweat evaporation.
- iv. **Radiant Temperature:** The temperature of surrounding surfaces also impacts our comfort. Cold surfaces can make us feel chilly even if the air temperature is comfortable.
- v. **Clothing Insulation:** The clothing we wear influences how our bodies interact with the environment. More clothing traps heat, while less clothing allows for better heat exchange.

- vi. **Metabolic Rate:** Our level of physical activity affects how much heat we generate. Higher activity levels may require cooler conditions to prevent overheating.
- vii. **Air Exchange in an Interior Space:** From both structural and hygienic points of view, a consistent exchange of air in interior spaces is essential. Poor ventilation has particularly drastic effects in rooms with a high occupancy rate. It is often necessary that numerous air exchanges occur every hour to adequately remove carbon dioxide generated by exhalation.

14.6.4 Importance of Thermal Comfort

Thermal comfort is significant because:

- i. **Occupant Well-being:** Maintaining optimal thermal comfort is essential for our physical and mental well-being. Extreme temperatures can lead to discomfort, stress, and even health issues.
- ii. **Productivity and Performance:** Comfortable environments enhance cognitive function and concentration, leading to better work performance and productivity.
- iii. **Energy Efficiency:** Striking a balance in thermal comfort reduces the need for excessive heating or cooling, contributing to energy savings and sustainability.
- iv. **Indoor Air Quality:** Thermal comfort can influence occupants' behavior, affecting indoor air quality. Proper comfort levels discourage actions that compromise IAQ.
- v. **Building Design and Attraction:** Comfortable spaces attract and retain occupants, positively impacting the design and occupancy of buildings.

14.6.5 Standards and Guidelines

Several guidelines and standards are followed to ensure optimal thermal comfort in buildings in India. Some key guidelines include:

- i. **Indian Standard 15251 (IS 15251):** This standard provides guidelines on indoor environmental quality to achieve thermal comfort in buildings. It focuses on parameters like temperature, humidity, air speed, and radiant temperature.
- ii. **National Building Code (NBC):** Part 8 of the National Building Code of India covers guidelines for the design of climate-responsive buildings. It addresses thermal comfort by specifying requirements for insulation, ventilation, and shading to regulate indoor temperatures effectively.
- iii. **Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC):** The ECBC sets minimum energy efficiency standards for commercial buildings in India. It includes provisions for building envelope design, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to ensure thermal comfort while reducing energy consumption.
- iv. **GRIHA (Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment):** GRIHA is a national rating system for green buildings in India. It considers thermal comfort as a crucial aspect and provides guidelines for passive design

strategies, natural ventilation, shading, and insulation to enhance thermal comfort while minimizing energy usage.

- v. **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE):** BEE develops and promotes energy efficiency standards and labeling programs. They provide recommendations for efficient cooling systems, insulation materials, and energy-efficient building designs to enhance thermal comfort without excessive energy consumption.

These guidelines focus on various aspects of building design, construction, and operation to ensure thermal comfort while promoting energy efficiency and sustainability. Compliance with these standards helps architects, designers, and builders create buildings that offer comfortable indoor environments suitable for diverse climatic conditions in India.

14.7 CARBON FOOT PRINTS – CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND PRECAUTION

A "carbon footprint" is a measure of the total greenhouse gas emissions, primarily carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other carbon compounds, that are directly or indirectly associated with an individual, organization, event, product, or activity. It quantifies the impact of human activities on the environment in terms of their contribution to global warming and climate change.

The concept of a carbon footprint is based on the understanding that certain human actions, such as burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas) for energy, deforestation, industrial processes, transportation, and agriculture, release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat, leading to the warming of the Earth's surface and causing climate change.

The carbon footprint is typically expressed in units of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), which aggregates the impact of different greenhouse gases based on their global warming potential over a specific time frame (usually 100 years). It allows for a standardized measurement of the total impact of various emissions.

Calculating and managing carbon footprints is a crucial step in environmental sustainability efforts. By identifying the major sources of greenhouse gas emissions, individuals, businesses, and governments can develop strategies to reduce their carbon footprint. This may involve adopting energy-efficient technologies, transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving transportation systems, practicing sustainable land use, and making more environmentally conscious choices.

Reducing carbon footprints is not only beneficial for the environment but can also lead to cost savings, improved energy efficiency, and enhanced public relations for organizations that demonstrate their commitment to combating climate change. Efforts to lower carbon footprints play a significant role in global efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change and work toward a more sustainable future.

14.7.1 Causes of Carbon Footprints

- **Burning Fossil Fuels:** The combustion of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas for electricity generation, transportation, and industrial processes releases large amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere.
- **Deforestation:** Cutting down forests reduces the Earth's capacity to absorb CO₂ through photosynthesis, leading to increased carbon emissions.
- **Agriculture:** Agriculture contributes to carbon footprints through activities like methane emissions from livestock and rice paddies and nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizers.
- **Industrial Processes:** Certain industrial activities, such as cement production, release significant amounts of CO₂.
- **Waste Generation:** Landfills and waste decomposition produce methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

14.7.2 Consequences of High Carbon Footprints

- **Climate Change:** Excessive carbon emissions contribute to global warming and climate change, leading to rising temperatures, sea level rise, extreme weather events, and disruptions in ecosystems.
- **Ocean Acidification:** Increased CO₂ levels in the atmosphere also dissolve into the oceans, causing ocean acidification, which harms marine life and coral reefs.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Climate change resulting from high carbon footprints threatens biodiversity as ecosystems struggle to adapt to the changing conditions.
- **Health Impacts:** Air pollution from carbon emissions can lead to respiratory problems and other health issues.

14.7.3 Precautions to Reduce Carbon Footprints

- **Renewable Energy:** Transitioning to renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydroelectric power can significantly reduce carbon emissions from electricity generation.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Implementing energy-efficient technologies and practices in homes, industries, and transportation can lower energy consumption and carbon emissions.
- **Afforestation and Reforestation:** Protecting existing forests and planting new trees helps sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts.
- **Sustainable Agriculture:** Adopting sustainable agricultural practices reduces emissions from farming activities and preserves soil health.
- **Waste Management:** Implementing proper waste management practices, including recycling and composting, helps reduce landfill methane emissions.
- **Transportation Choices:** Opting for public transportation, carpooling, biking, or walking instead of using personal vehicles can cut down carbon emissions from transportation.

Understanding and mitigating carbon footprints is crucial for combatting climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for our planet. By taking individual and collective actions to reduce carbon emissions, we can help limit the adverse consequences of global warming and create a more environmentally friendly world.

End of Chapter Exercise

1. Create a list of common indoor air pollutants mentioned in the chapter (e.g., volatile organic compounds, carbon monoxide, particulate matter) and describe their sources and potential health effects. Then, research and identify additional indoor air pollutants not mentioned in the chapter.
2. Select a real-life case study involving indoor air quality issues (e.g., a building with poor ventilation leading to health problems). Analyze the case, discuss the immediate and long-term effects, identify the primary causes, and suggest solutions to improve indoor air quality.
3. Engage in a class debate or discussion on the topic of environmental justice and its relationship to indoor air quality. Discuss how disadvantaged communities are disproportionately affected by poor indoor air quality and propose strategies to address this issue.
4. Visit a local commercial space or residence and assess its ventilation system. Write a report detailing your observations, including the adequacy of the system, potential issues, and recommendations for improvements based on the principles discussed in the chapter.
5. Research recent trends and innovations in architecture and interior design related to indoor air quality. Create a presentation or poster summarizing these trends and innovations, highlighting their potential benefits and challenges, and suggesting how they can be incorporated into residential or commercial spaces.
6. Create an infographic summarizing the main points from the chapter. Use visual elements like icons and graphs to illustrate concepts such as pollutant sources, health effects, and solutions.

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