

United Nations Expert Group Meeting on
The Scope and Content of Social Statistics
9-12 September 2008
United Nations, New York

Coordination mechanisms, Good practices, Areas requiring improvement

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Country paper on national and international coordination, India

Indian statistical system

1. The Indian Statistical System presently functions within the overall administrative framework of the country. The Indian federal structure has influenced the organisation of the statistical system as well. The division of administrative functions between the Government of India and the State Governments is on the basis of the subject classifications under the Union, State and Concurrent Lists as detailed in the Constitution of India. At the Centre, the responsibilities are further divided amongst the various ministries and departments, according to the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961 that are amended from time to time. The collection of statistics on any subject generally vests in the authority (Central Ministry or Department or State Government Department) that is responsible for that subject according to its status in the Union, State or Concurrent Lists. By and large, the flow of statistical information emanates from the States to the Centre except in cases where the State-level operations are an integral part of Centrally- sponsored schemes or data are collected through national sample surveys.

Statistical system at the Centre

2. The collection of statistics for different subject-specific areas, like health, labour and employment, education etc. vests with the corresponding administrative ministries. More often than not, the statistical information is collected as a by-product of administration or for monitoring the progress of specific programmes. Some of the ministries have full-fledged statistical divisions, while others have only a nucleus cell. Large-scale statistical operations like the Population Census, Health surveys, Labour force surveys, Surveys on Social consumption etc. are generally centralised, and these cater to the needs of other ministries and departments, as well as State Governments. In important ministries, officers of the Indian Statistical Service (ISS) and subordinate statistical staff perform the statistical functions. The Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoS&PI) is the nodal agency for a planned development of the statistical system in the country and for bringing about coordination in statistical activities among statistical agencies in the Government of India and State Directorates of Economics and Statistics.

Statistical system in the States

3. The Statistical System in the States is similar to that at the Centre. It is generally decentralised laterally over the Departments of the State Government, with major Departments, such as, health, labour, Education having large statistical divisions for the work of departmental statistics. At the apex level is the Directorate (formerly Bureau) of Economics and Statistics (DES), which is formally responsible for the coordination of statistical activities in the State. The DESs have large organisations at the headquarters, with statistical offices in the districts and, in some cases, in the regions of the State. The statistical activity of the DESs is more or less uniform. Generally, the States do not have a common statistical cadre.

System flow

4. The National system can be described as *laterally* decentralised among the Ministries of the Government of India (GOI), and in every one of them, *vertically* decentralised, between the Centre and the States. The bond between the State departments and the Central Ministries in the field of statistics has always been strong. The main features of the Indian Statistical System can be thus summarised as:

- (a) The Administrative Statistics System is its major component;
- (b) It is laterally and vertically decentralised;
- (c) In it, not only data collection but also compilation, processing and preparation of results are carried out by the States for most of the sectors; and
- (d) It is the State-wise results, which flow to the Centre, and statistics at the all-India level are obtained as the aggregates of State-level statistics.

Central Statistical Organisation

5. The CSO was established in May 1951 with a view to coordinating statistical activities of the different ministries of the Government of India and the State Governments and International Agencies, and evolving of statistical standards, preparation of national accounts; conducting Annual Survey of Industries, Economic Censuses and their Follow-up Enterprise Surveys; constructing IIP and consumer price indices for urban non-manual employees; compiling Social Sector Statistics; imparting training in official statistics; formulating a Five Year Plan programme relating to development of statistics in the States and Union Territories; disseminating various statistical information including those relating to social and environment statistics; undertaking periodic revision of National Industrial Classification, etc. The CSO is also responsible for periodically conducting the Conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations. The Director General heads the CSO, and he functions under the overall control and supervision of the Chief Statistician of India. The Additional Director Generals who are the Divisional Heads of National Accounts Division, Economic Statistics Division, Social Statistics Division and Training Division along with Deputy Director Generals and a team of other officers and supporting staff assist the DG, CSO in his work.

6. Though the CSO has no legal authority to enforce standards and coordination, the work is done through institutional arrangements like inter-departmental meetings of Working Groups, Technical Advisory Committee on various subjects, Standing Committee, etc. in the case of Central Ministries. Coordination with States is through appointed liaison officers, meetings with high-level statistical coordination committees of the State Governments and also through the Conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations (COCSSO), which provides a forum for exchange of views and experiences concerning the development of statistical activities in the country. In the current year, a conference of the Ministers in charge of Statistics in the State Governments is being organised by the CSO in which issues relating to improvement in the quality of data shall be discussed and appropriate action points shall be determined.

Lateral coordination at the Centre through Statistical Advisers

7. In the process of implementation of the recommendations of the National Statistical Commission (NSC 2001), Statistical Advisers have been posted at various line Ministries in order to improve the mechanism and efficacy of lateral coordination at the centre on statistical matters.

These statistical advisors in the line ministries/departments are responsible for the professional integrity of the statistical activities carried out by the concerned ministries/departments and while doing so, they are expected to also work closely with the apex national statistical agency

Main sources of statistics

8. Administrative Statistics – generally collected by State Governments; consisting of statutory administrative returns and data derived as a by-product of general administration; and other important sources namely, censuses and sample surveys

Social statistics

9. The Socio-economic Statistics include a vast array of information on health and disease, literacy and education, standard of living and poverty, labor force and employment, status of women and gender empowerment, population parameters relevant to fertility, mortality and migration, ecology and environmental protection. A sound system for collection of Social Sector Statistics is vital for the effective development of social policy, for informed decision making on policy issues and for evaluation of the impact of social and economic policies. Reliable data on the above dimensions and use of these in planning, implementation, monitoring and redesigning of various developmental programmes is absolutely essential, if the country has to develop more rapidly than in the past. In the past few years, several new and emerging social issues have been included in purview of social statistics and India has taken new initiatives to prepare statistical framework on these issues. These are MDG indicators, SAARC Social charter, Information relating to Home Based workers, Informal Sector employment, Disability, Climate change and Disaster Management issues.

National and international Coordination in Social statistics

10. The Social Statistics Division of the CSO is responsible for coordinated development of social statistics. This function is carried out either by taking leading roles in various technical committees, working Groups and Expert Groups constituted in the CSO or by associating itself in such Committees and Groups constituted by concerned line Ministries. Besides, the Division coordinates with a number of Ministries and Organizations for compilation of statistical information necessary for bringing out various regular and ad-hoc publications on Social Statistics. A few useful and highly demanded publications being brought by the Division on regular basis are: i) Selected Socio-Economic Statistics, (ii) Women and Men in India (iii) Elderly people in India - Profile and Programmes (iv) Youth in India: Profile and Programmes and (v) Compendium of Environmental Statistics. A number of new **initiatives** in the field of Social Statistics requiring national and international level coordination have been taken during the past few years, which have enhanced and enriched the quality, content and coverage of Social Statistics in the country.

11. **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):** The Central Statistical Organisation is vested with the responsibility of statistical monitoring of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The CSO in coordination with the participating Ministries has been tracking the MDGs, which have been internalized with the policy and programme initiatives of the country. This activity is better coordinated by an Inter Ministerial Committee headed by the Chief Statistician of India (Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation). So far India has brought out two Reports on

MDGs, one for the year 2005 and the other for 2007. The Second India -specific country report on MDGs. viz. 'Millennium Development Goals, India Country Report, 2007', brought out during this year captures inter-alia data/information pertaining to India's challenges, achievements, policies and programmes from both the national and sub-national perspectives.

12. India's approach to the MDG statistics has received attention in the region. A Delegation of senior officers from the National Statistical Office of Mongolia was given a four day orientation programme concerning "India's approach to MDG data" during 17 – 21 December, 2007. Consequently, the Mongolian NSO has shown interest in signing an MOU with the CSO, India for mutual cooperation in development and improvement of statistics in the countries.

13. **Home based workers:** An Independent Group on Home based Workers was constituted by the CSO under the Chairmanship of former DG & CEO, NSSO with active association of a few stakeholders including the UNIFEM. This action has been taken with a view to ensure 'visibility' of HBW in the Indian Data System. The Group has submitted its Report delineating the Concepts and Definitions of HBW and suggesting a Statistical framework for collection, compilation, tabulation, analysis and dissemination of data on HBW.

14. **Gender Statistics:** The CSO in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and field presence of the UNIFEM, UNDP, UNESCAP and the World Bank organised a 5-day Inter-Regional Workshop on Production of Gender Statistics in New Delhi during 6 – 10 August, 2007. Statistical Officers of different levels, mainly female officers, from 25 countries of different economic regions and nine (9) UN resource persons participated in the workshop. The Indian participants included eleven (11) lady officers from some selected Central Ministries and State Governments.

15. In the Inter Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) meeting on Gender Statistics held in Rome, on 14 December, 2007 it was decided, inter-alia, that **India would chair an Advisory Committee** for capacity development in Gender Statistics. This meeting was organised in the wake of Global Gender Forum held at Rome during 10 - 13 December 2007 where India also participated.

16. **SAARC Gender Data Base:** The CSO is the lead agency to facilitate development of SAARC Gender Data Base. A prototype of the database has been developed along with list of statistical indicators. A National Round Table meeting organised by Ministry of Women and Child Development was held on 21st November, 2007 to deliberate on issues related to various indicators / Statistics as suggested by the member countries. The SAARC Gender Data base (G -data shop) was finalized in the meeting of the Technical Group held in Kathmandu, Nepal on 10 -11 January, 2008 and launched by the SAARC Secretariat in New Delhi on 17th January, 2008 during the biennial meeting of SAARC Ministers in commemoration of Beijing declaration.

17. **SAARC Social Charter:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is designated as the nodal Ministry in respect of the SAARC Social Charter signed by the SAARC Heads of States at the 12th Summit. The Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is the Chairman of the National Coordination Committee (NCC) constituted to facilitate the implementation of the SAARC Social Charter and monitor the performance in achieving the goals. The NCC has representatives of all Ministries and organizations dealing with social issues included in the SAARC Social Charter and the NCC meets at least twice a year. The coordinated activities of the NCC has resulted in two country Reports; one for the year 2005 and the other for 2006-07 on the status of implementation of the SAARC Social Charter in India.

18. Besides, there is an International coordination mechanism through SAARC Secretariat in the form of annual meetings of the heads of the NCCs. As agreed in the 1st meeting of the Heads of NCCs of the SAARC Countries held in Islamabad and the 2nd meeting of the Heads of the NCCs held in New Delhi during 6 - 7 September, 2007, thematic listing of areas of cooperation emanating from the SAARC Social Charter has been undertaken to facilitate streamlining of actions to be taken by the member States in implementing identified areas for regional cooperation.

19. **Devinfo India:** The second Edition of Devinfo India (version 2) is currently under finalisation in collaboration with UNICEF, containing the latest statistics available from some of the major surveys in the country such as National Family Health Survey III, District Level Health Survey, the latest (61st) Round of National Sample Survey, in addition to other administrative data from various ministries and statistical organizations. This user-friendly version is meant to support production of evidence-based presentations of development statistics for all kinds of stakeholders. The Social Statistics Division coordinates with the line Ministries and UNICEF India for updating the Data Base in Dev Info India.

20. **Basic Statistics for Local level Development:** A high powered Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of one of the Members, Planning Commission, recommended a set of basic statistics for use in planning for Local Level Development, along with the institutional mechanism for collection of such statistics. The Report of this Expert Committee was discussed at the 14th Conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations (COCSSO) held in April 2007 in New Delhi and subsequently a Plan Scheme for implementation of the recommendations has been finalised. The Social Statistics division at present is engaged in preparation of a statistical framework including concepts, definition, coding and instructions etc. that may be discussed in a workshop.

21. **Disaster Management Statistics:** The CSO took the lead in the development of a Framework for Disaster Management Statistics in country for the first time. For this purpose an initiation Workshop on “Development of National Disaster Management Statistics” was organised in collaboration with National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) on 27th April 2007. As a follow up, action has been initiated for development of a framework for compilation of hazard and disaster statistics. This envisages coordination with the State statistical Bureaus and other organizations and the line Ministries at the Centre for development of Database on Disaster and Hazards.

22. **Environment Statistics:** Recognising the importance of Environment Statistics as an emerging area, the subject was first discussed in COCSSO and on its recommendation a multidisciplinary working Group comprising the CSO, the Ministry of Environment, State Directorates of Economics and Statistics, and other concerned Central and State Organisations and Research Organizations involved in the related subjects suggested a list of variables for Framework for development of Environment Statistics. Following this the Social statistics Division has been collecting data on Environmental issues from the concerned organizations and bringing out a Compendium on Environmental Statistics on annual basis.

23. **City Group (Delhi Group) on Informal Sector Statistics:** The ‘Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics’ commonly known as the ‘Delhi Group’ was set up in 1997 as one of the city groups of United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) to address various methodological issues involved in the treatment of the informal sector. The Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and

Programme Implementation, Government of India is the Chairman of the Delhi Group. The Group, since its inception in 1997, has been providing an international forum for exchange of country experiences in the estimation of employment in the informal sector, its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and statistical standards being used in different countries. The Social Statistics Division functions as the secretariat of this City Group and coordinates with member countries and international organizations for preparation of Agenda Notes, research papers, minutes of the meetings and related matters.

24. **Disability Statistics:** In India, the sources of statistics on disability are surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and Decennial Population Censuses. The disagreement between Census 2001 and estimates of NSSO 58th round on the subject of disability had drawn considerable attention of the data users and an effort was made to understand the reasons for this mismatch. Analysis of the variations in definitions of different types of disabilities as given by NSSO and the Census was attempted.

25. India was represented in the meeting of the Group in Rio-de-Janeiro, Brazil during September 2005. Subsequently a cognitive test was carried out by an institute in Maharashtra, India, under the aegis of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation where 112 respondents were interviewed and the data collected was handed over to the Washington Group for analysis. The next meeting of the Washington Group was held at Dublin and India participated actively in the meeting.

26. Alongside, the ESCAP/WHO disability project conducted during 2004-06 had received active participation from India. A pilot survey was carried out in Meerut, India as part of the project. The UN Disability Convention adopted in 2006 as well as the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for persons with Disabilities (Standard Rules, 1993) and the 2002 Biwako Millennium Framework for Action Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (BMF) adopted by UN ESCAP, stress the need to develop valid reliable and internationally comparable disability statistics. Built upon the outcome of the project, the follow-up activities seeks to promote better disability data collection by developing standard measurements and improving national technical capacities. Training Manuals are being designed and finalized taking into account country specific needs.

27. In the national arena, process has been initiated for conducting a pilot survey for the 'Collection of Disability Statistics' following the ICF framework. The schedules to be canvassed and instructions for carrying them out have already been drafted in the ICF framework suitable to Indian conditions and training is being imparted to the field workers/functionaries.

Best practices

28. Consultation with data users and data source organizations, associating subject experts and academicians in various Expert groups, Working Groups, Steering Groups in developing Concepts, Definitions, Methodologies and bringing out statistical products, dissemination through seminars, workshops and discourses, encouraging research on social issues in developing statistical methodologies and data bases, and conferring awards for meritorious work are some of the best practices being followed in the arena of Social Statistics. A few of the specific examples of best practices are discussed here:

- (a) A number of Seminars have been organized in the past few years on engendering statistics, women empowerment, environment statistics, social development indicators etc. More recently, a seminar on 'Dimensions of Human Deprivation' was organised at University of Gauhati in September 2007. Around 50 Experts from Central and State Governmental Organisations, Non-Governmental Organizations, Universities and other fields had actively participated in the seminar during which 12 technical papers on themes such as human deprivation, education of Muslim girls, perceived hunger and MDG indicators on Women's Health & Empowerment were presented and deliberated upon.
- (b) Eight pilot studies on Natural Resource Accounting had been commissioned to reputed institutes such as Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR) and North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong for Land and Forestry Sectors, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), New Delhi, for Air and Water Sectors, Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe), New Delhi, for Natural Resource Accounting in GOA, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi for unsustainable mineral extraction, and Madras School of Economics (MSE), Chennai for Land and Water Resources. A Technical Monitoring Committee (TMC) constituted under the Chairmanship of Prof. Amitabh Kundu, Dean of Center for Social Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), provides technical guidance to the consultants and reviews the progress of these projects. Eminent subject specialists from other research institutes of the country, practicing statisticians and economists working in concerned line Ministries are members of the TMC.
- (c) The Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) has been promoting research studies and seminars in official statistics by way of providing financial assistance and data support in respect of studies and surveys contributing to bridge the data gaps in official statistics, surveys and studies contributing to the development of methodologies for improving official statistics, Studies and surveys to assess/ evaluate the existing statistical reporting systems including coverage, content and timeliness , methodological studies, pilot studies, case studies which complements and can provide value addition to official statistics, conferences, seminars and workshops having adequate relevance to official statistics, and statistical studies on social sectors, namely gender, health, education etc. Besides, financial assistance is provided to research institutions/organizations/NGO for Studies and surveys in official statistics. Travel grant is made available to university lectures and professors for presenting research papers in seminars and workshops abroad. An Empowered Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Statistician of India assisted by a Screening Committee under the Chairmanship of DG (CSO) approves the proposals for Research Studies and Travel Grants. Among the Research projects commissioned during the past few years, mention may be made of two studies commissioned to the Indian Institute of Statistics (ISI), a premier Institute having world fame, for development of appropriate statistical framework on Social Development Index and alternative methodology for poverty estimation.
- (d) In recognition of the notable contribution made by (late) Professor P C Mohalanobis in the fields of economic planning and statistical development, the Government of India has declared 29 June, which coincides with his birth anniversary, as the statistics Day to be celebrated at the national level every year. The objective is to create public awareness among the people, specially the younger generation for drawing inspiration from Professor

Mohalanobis about the role of statistics in socio-economic planning and policy formulation. The Day is celebrated by organising seminars, symposium, essay writing competition etc.

- (e) Social Statistics Division implements a scheme 'Awards and Fellowships for Outstanding and Meritorious Research Work in Statistics' to encourage independent and high quality research work in the field of Applied Statistics particularly on issues and problems relating to the Official Statistical System in the Country. For this two national level Awards, one for a young statistician working in the field of theoretical statistics and the other for a statistician who has made a life time contribution in the field of applied statistics are instituted and are conferred in alternate years on the occasion of the Statistics Day celebration. Besides, to encourage the college level students of statistics, annually, an Essay Writing competition is held and eleven (11) prizes are given away on the occasion of the celebration of Statistics Day. It is worth mentioning that India has instituted an International Award in the memory of Professor P C Mohalanobis, which is conferred in the conference of International Statistical Institute.
- (f) CSO has recently introduced a scheme of Internship for Post Graduate and Research students to facilitate them to study the prevailing system of official statistics in the country, with specific reference to data collection, processing, analysis, publication and dissemination needs.

Suggested new areas of activities in social statistics

- (i) A time use survey had been conducted in 1998-99 on a pilot basis. Gaining experience from this pilot survey, a National Classification of Activities for Time Use Studies (NCATUS) to support and facilitate conduct of time use studies has been developed. It provides classification of activities of (i) self employed/ unpaid family members, (ii) Employees, wage earners etc. for Pay (iii) Production of goods for exclusive home consumption (Non-ISNA) (iv) Domestic work and family care which fall in general production boundary but not in the production boundary of SNA1993 (Extended SNA) (v) personal care and self maintenance (Non-SNA). It will be necessary to conduct a survey using the NCATUS in the near future.
- (ii) Studies for developing methodologies to estimate contribution of women to the GDP. Surveys on Home Based Workers and Time Use studies may provide inputs.
- (iii) Crime statistics, particularly statistics on crime against women, is a weak area. Though thousand of cases are registered under Indian Penal Code every year, the reported cases are much smaller than the actual number. The official statistics on crime is recorded by state police agencies on a voluntary basis and invisible nature of domestic crime never find place in official crime statistics. Also police being a prime recording agency as well as nodal agency for law and order implementation tend to show under reporting. Other major limitation in the official crime record is that, the non-availability of detailed breakup between rural and, urban which is absolutely necessary for analyzing geographical influence. Understanding the complexities of gender biased crime requires study of the patterns of violence directed towards women and the underlying mechanisms that permit the emergence and perpetuation of these patterns besides age, sex composition, socio-economic

background, employment etc. This is particularly important to evaluate the cause and effect of crime. Such a data gaps in crime against women has significant policy implications and prioritizing the areas of intervention at various levels and calls for building a strong database on a priority basis particularly on invisible crime.

- (iv) CSO, as a coordinating agency, should maintain a pool of eminent experts in different subject areas. This would be useful for getting comments on various statistical matters quickly and also for constituting various committees and working groups on technical matters. Periodically, technical monographs on different subjects piecing together recommendations relating to various issues connected with the meetings of the various technical committees are required to be published for wider circulation. CSO should acquire membership of the important national as well as international statistical associations and institutions and participate in the conferences arranged by them so as to develop expertise in the field of official statistics. In order to gain exposure to the methodologies adopted by other countries for compiling official statistics, arrangement should be made to get publications, journals and related documents brought out by the US Bureau of Census, Statistics Canada, Australian Bureau of Statistics, etc.