

Enhancing the Visibility and image of Statistical Agencies – Experience of India

**Eighth Management Seminar for the Heads of NSO in Asia
and the Pacific**

3-5 November, 2009, New Delhi (India)

**Central Statistical Organisation (CSO)
Ministry of Statistics and Programme
Implementation
Government of India**

Statistical System

- ✓ Predominantly responsible for collection, compilation, Processing, analysis and timely dissemination of reliable and authoritative information;
- ✓ Ensuring meeting to a large extent users' need, Maintain standards, Quality, and Integrity of the information;
- ✓ Promoting use of Statistics efficiently for informed decision, in all environments; - By Government agency, Trade/Business/Private Organisations/ Associations, Academicians/Researchers, Individual Users/Public at large, etc.
- ✓ Also, serving for accountability of public bodies .

Vision of Indian Statistical System

To be the finest and most creative National Statistical System in the world; and to effectively monitor the programmes and projects for ensuring efficient use of national resources.

.....Ministry of Statistics and PI, Govt. of India

Indian Statistical System : Legal Mechanism

- Indian statistical System has its beginning almost 400 years ago;
- System rests on the Constitutional framework of the country and mandated by several legal provisions; important among ones being the CS Act, 1953; Amended in 2008; PC Act, 1948; Factories Act Registration of Births and Deaths Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Payment of Wages Act, etc, enabling collection of data in all social and economic sectors .
- Though the framers of our constitution envisioned the importance of official statistics and its important role in the development of the modern India; enlisted collection of data in the Concurrent list of the Constitution; **its implementation is being made tighter now, through amendments in the Act,**

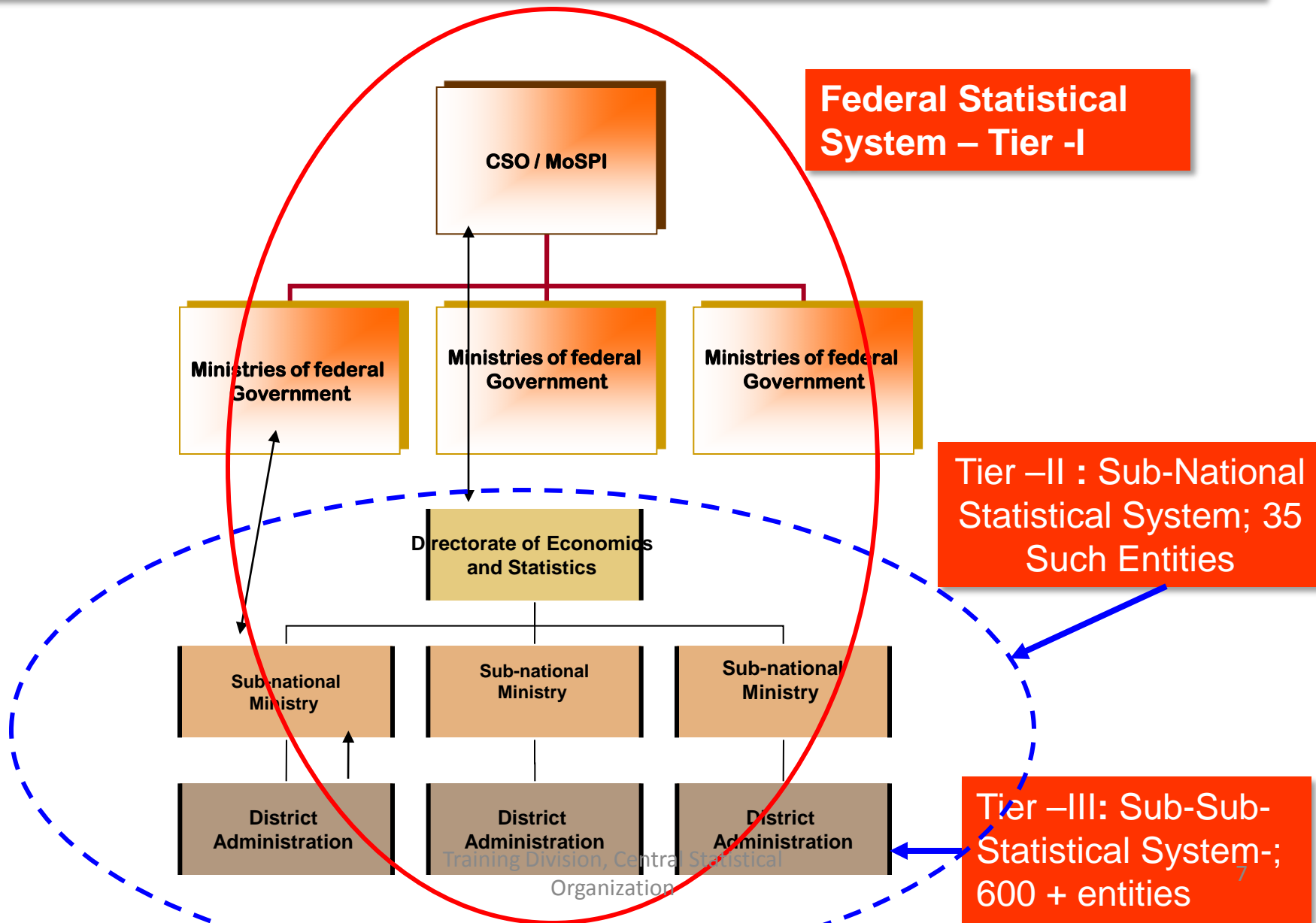
Indian Statistical System: Three Tier System

- The authority and responsibility for the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics relating to a particular subject is determined by allocation of the responsibility between the Federal and the sub-national Governments, as per the Constitution.
- The 3-tier System (National, State and District) is a highly de-centralized and enjoys constitutionally mandated independence in its working .
- At Federal level - Central Statistical Organization, functioning within the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) is the Apex Statistical body in the country .

Indian System: CSO and its linkages

- Where as CSO works for planned improvement of overall Statistical system in the country, each of the Ministries at the Federal level have a Statistical Unit, independently collecting, collating and disseminating their statistical products;
- At the sub-national level, a Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES) exists in all the 29 states and 6 Union Territories , heading their respective statistical system;
- Each of the DESs is functionally independent (in terms of budget and supervisory control) from CSO; And is under the state Governments;
- In all State Governments, line Ministries collect, compile and disseminate statistics relating to their allocated job, as per their requirements.

Three Tier Decentralised System : Complex System



Data Flow

- ❑ Most statistical activities are organised at the State level as part of their regular administration and monitoring of Programmes;
- ❑ Majority of national statistics are built up from the administrative records, statistical returns, reports of surveys received from States / Districts;
- ❑ Nation wide sample surveys on socioeconomic indicators – e.g. Consumption-expenditure , Employment-Unemployment, Formal & Informal sectors, health, poverty, prices, labour, Industries, etc. are carried out by the Federal Government on regular basis;
- ❑ States also participates in these surveys with different set of independent samples called state samples;
- ❑ States also participate in censuses on population, agriculture, livestock etc conducted by the Federal Governments;

Coordination within Systems : Institutionalized

- ✓ CSO renders technical advices to the state Statistical bodies, being member of all **Technical Committees on Statistics** of the State Governments ;
- ✓ Enhanced through well established **institutionalised Processes** like **conferences of the central and state statistical organisations**, organised by CSO, on regular basis;
- ✓ On the other hand, **Coordination with the line Ministries of the Federal Governments is much stronger**, mainly through **appointment of senior officers** in these Ministries who are members of an organized service , maintained by the Ministry;
- ✓ Since 2006, **National Statistical Commission (NSC)**, an Independent body, out of the political domain, is responsible for overall supervision and a guiding force of the National System.

Visibility of a System

- **Visibility of any system is a correlate of the functions it performs or expected to carry out.**
- **Also, depends - Whether it is meeting the current or emerging demands of the stakeholders?**
- **At the same time, visibility of some organization is inherited and becomes more prominent than others due to its identified role defined under any National statute.**
- **Visibility of a system is a catalyst to Inter-country comparison;**

Image of A System

- ❑ Rests on being known (a brand) : reliable data producer and disseminator;
- ❑ **Reliability** – of course, is function of many factors viz. impartiality, independence , transparent and high quality.
- ❑ Demand for existing data can also enhance the image and visibility;
- ✓ **High visibility may not necessarily mean high order/level of image**

Strategies for improving visibility & Image

- Enhancing the credibility of products through - correct and accurate data sources, appropriate coverage, use of comparable and transparent process, maintaining confidentiality of respondents, timely dissemination;
- Increasing Interaction with the users for assessing their requirement of statistical products and by enhancing its accessibility;
- Having an institutionalized review mechanism for feed back;
- **Use of Media For Promoting use of statistical data, as it influence the way the people perceive and understand the information.**

India: Inbuilt mechanism for Interaction with Users - Meeting User's requirement

❑ Interaction Channels:

- ❑ Governing Council (For all large Scale Surveys, NSSO);
- ❑ Advisory Committee (on National Accounts),
- ❑ Technical Committees (For Prices, Health, Education, other line Ministries);
- ❑ Standing Committees (on industrial statistics) and a Number of such other Committees/Groups, set up in line Ministries

❑ Comprising of eminent academicians, researchers, users, Government & non-Governmental agencies, International Bodies.

❑ Beside there are other channels like Conferences and dissemination Seminars organised by the Data producers in the line Ministries , independent Associations, User Groups etc.

India : High Demand for Statistical Products

- Main users being –
 - Government departments, Parliamentary Bodies, Planning Commission, Reserve Bank of India,
 - Public and Private Business organizations
 - Teaching and Research Institutions
 - International bodies and organisations
 - individual researchers
- ❖ Relevance is determined by the fact whether concepts, definitions and methodology meet user needs - current and future?

India: Quality of Data – coverage, accuracy and comparability

- Considerable importance is attached to quality of data products.
- **By stressing on coverage, following standard processes, enhancing accuracy and comparability-**
 - Surveys and census (NSSO, Health surveys, Population census) follow methodology in accordance with statistical techniques, wide consultations with experts (national and International) from academic fields, users group and in addition to feed back from dissemination;
 - Data collected personally by qualified & trained investigators;
 - Constant Quality monitoring through pre-defined processes at all level, central, zonal and field level
 - Subscribing to the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standards (SDDS)

India: Quality of Products

For all surveys:

- Sub-sample estimates are compared.
- Estimates from earlier surveys and other sources compared
- Non-responses and Standard errors of characteristics under study are analysed and published along with the report.

□ Developing a Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) for all Data products, would be a future Initiative

Consistency and Comparability of Data: Quality aspect

- ❑ Statistics released are internally consistent with the components and source data as well as across time
 - For example: QGDP data add up to the annual GDP
 - estimates at current prices are consistent with the constant price data and deflators;
 - GDI data are consistent with those made by the economic activity;
- ❑ CSO does not make any effort to reconcile the estimates and disseminates the discrepancies
- ❑ At decision makers level, statistics put out by the CSO, are widely accepted, though there may be certain reservations on certain quick estimates that are given early and later firmed up.

Dissemination : Transparency in production of statistics

- Methodologies widely disseminated/published/ presented in various forums and easily accessible to users through Various modes : Hard / soft copy, CDs, on the web-site of the Ministry;
- Survey reports contain tables of analysed data along with their short analysis, details of sampling design, methodology and estimation procedures.
- Revisions in the data are explained;
- Information about the publications and the procedure of obtaining hard/soft copies is put on the website of the Ministry.
- All Press releases are put on the website;
- There is a Division in the Ministry, responsible for publication and dissemination of all reports

- As a policy implementation on dissemination, provides Technical assistance to users in processing and making available the relevant metadata.
- Undertaken a time-bound responsibility for preparation of operational manuals and compendiums on all subjects of official statistics, to help develop a standard methods of data collection and compilation, in line with the internationally acceptable methodology.
- Number of Users (domestic and international) have grown at fast rates;

National Data warehouse on official statistics :

- Enables all data users to have an easy access to the published and un-published validated data from a single source;
- Repository Official statistics generated by all Central Ministries/Departments of GOI, State Govts. and Public Undertakings.
- On electronic mode, provides remote access facilities to end users through a network.
- Stated Policy of the CSO on dissemination for providing unit level data or for getting desired tabulation done;
- Facilitates availability of historical data set and statistical tools to help plan for the future.

India: Timeliness

- ❑ There is always a trade-off between punctuality and accuracy; however, **timeliness is ensured on most products;**
- ❑ **Advance Release Calendar(ARC):** All most all releases have an ARC and most releases follow it.

For example

- first estimates of GDP - 2 months before the close of the year
 - revised after 5 months and 12 months, 24 months and 36 months
 - production index – 1, 2 and 4 months
 - consumer price indexes – not revised
- ❑ ARC for data categories covered under the SDDS is disseminated on the Ministry's internet site, and on DSBB of IMF
 - ❑ Present publications / data products meet the demands of the users at large.

India: Review - A continued process

- Earlier, 1978, Inadequacies of data base reviewed periodically by number of Committees, Seminars having both official and non-official members, Researchers, Experts Academicians, etc.
- A National Commission under Prof. Rangarajan, comprising of eleven members from economics and statistical fields (representing user Groups) was set up in 2000 for critical examination of the entire system
- The Commissions report, placed in the Parliament in 2001 contained several recommendations for restructuring the system.
- Most of these are under implementation or have been implemented;
- Some of the main recommendations include setting up of a a high level permanent National Statistical Commission (NSC), Independent of the government and responsible to the Parliament in respect of policy making, coordination and certification of quality of core statistics

Review : NSC main functions Contd.

- to identify the core statistics, which are of national importance and are critical to the development of the economy;
- to evolve national policies and priorities relating to the statistical system;
- to evolve standard statistical concepts, definitions, classifications and methodologies in different areas in statistics and lay down national quality standards on core statistics;
- to evolve national strategies for the collection, tabulation and dissemination of core statistics, including the release calendar for various data sets;
- to evolve measures for improving public trust in official statistics;
- to exercise statistical audit over the statistical activities to ensure quality and integrity of the statistical products;
- to monitor and review the functioning of the statistical system in the light of the laid down policies, standards and methodologies and recommend measures for enhanced performance

Visibility & Image – India perspective

– AUTONOMY

- Statistical Confidentiality
- Identification of information providers is neither mentioned nor supplied to any other person/organisation while supplying Unit level data.

– Mass Media

- Provision of Publicity (Information Officer) of the Press Information Bureau (PIB)
- Press releases and achievement of the Ministry through PIO.
- Press Conference of the Journalists to explain new products, clarifications and other initiatives.
- Media involved in Seminars/Workshops and other specialized meetings.

initiatives vis –a-vis recommendations

- Manpower development to Improve Lateral Coordination at the national and State level
- Formulation of comprehensive “National Strategic Statistical Plan (NSSP)”, a Medium Term Vision, Policy and Strategic Framework document to shape and guide the future course of development of the National and Sub-National Statistical System in the country to produce comprehensive, good quality and relevant economic and social data for policy and decision making.

- Human Resource Development by setting up of a full-fledged National Institute for Training in official statistics - National Academy of Statistical Administration
- Development of Manuals/Compendium on Core Official Statistical subjects.

Future Challenges - Initiatives

- Setting up of a Quality Assurance Framework (Consensus Policy and Implementation Strategies).
- To enhance coordination between CSO and sub-national statistical system;
- Enhancing capacity at the sub National and below levels through infrastructure development and training ;
- At the national level, enhancing analysis and Research in Official Statistics; develop appropriate methods for filling the data gaps and use modern ICT tools for quicker dissemination .

THANQ