

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

# ACTION TAKEN REPORT

ON

# SIXTY-FIRST REPORT

OF

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

ON

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2018-19)

OF

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME

IMPLEMENTATION

**REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN ON THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN THE SIXTY-  
FIRST REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

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Statement showing Action Taken on the recommendations/observations contained in the Sixty-first Report of the Standing Committee on Finance

### **OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Budgetary Allocations**

1. The Committee find that for the financial year 2015-16 BE, RE and Actual Expenditure of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Plan/Scheme without MPLADS) were Rs. 402.50 crore, Rs. 200.04 crore and Rs. 192.93 crore respectively, while the corresponding figures for the financial year 2016-17 were Rs. 250 crore, Rs. 250 crore and Rs. 223.92 crore. For the fiscal 2017-18 the corresponding figures have been 168.28 crore, Rs. 161 crore and Rs. 90.09 crore (expenditure upto December 2017). Furthermore, the budgetary allocation for the year 2018-19 is Rs. 208 crore which is an increase of 23.6% over the corresponding allocation for the previous fiscal i.e. 2017-18. However, if the current budgetary allocation is compared with that of the years 2015-16 and 2016-17 which were Rs.402.50 crore and Rs. 250 crore respectively, the current allocation is just 51.6% and 83.2%, respectively. Surprisingly, when the Ministry was able to utilize Rs. 223.92 crore in 2016-17 and the final figures of utilisation of the allocation for the year 2017-18 is yet to come, the budgetary allocations for the last fiscal and the current one have faced reduction over the preceding years of 2015-16 and 2016-17. Now that our country is progressing towards all round development with intense pace with focus on data availability and data analytics, the role of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

has become much more crucial, momentous and consequential in terms of providing basic inputs in the form of authentic and comprehensive data and survey reports for

policy formulation and implementation. In this era of enhanced technology, the Ministry is needed to excel in the realms of scientific sampling methods, surveys conducted, quality of statistics released, methodology involved and scrutiny of statistics generated. In the given backdrop the Committee expect a more dynamic role from the Ministry. Infact, strengthening and modernisation of statistical system is a prerequisite for a strong and effective statistical armoury of the country for which it is necessary to step up allocations to the Ministry. The Committee thus recommend that the budgetary allocations of the Ministry be revisited and revised upwardly. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation should take up the matter and pursue with the Ministry of Finance, accordingly.

**Reply:**

The MoSPI had drawn up an Annual Action Plan along with quarter wise targets for various activities to be undertaken by the Ministry during the year 2018-19. Quarterly reviews of activities are undertaken to ensure that all planned activities are completed within the stipulated time frame and financial resources earmarked for the purpose are utilized. All statistical activities of MoSPI are carried out under Capacity Development (CD) scheme, which has been continuing since 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan. The overall objective of the scheme is to augment infrastructural, technical and manpower resources making available credible and timely official statistics for policy makers and public at large. Recognising that the data on various socio economic aspects is vital

for the policy making at the national and State levels, this Ministry has proposed to take a few new initiatives, namely, Annual Survey of Service Sector Enterprises (ASSSE), Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), Time Use Survey (TUS) (once every three years) and Economic Census (once every three years). These new activities are aimed at bridging the existing data gaps. In the EFC Memo for the continuation of Scheme, it is proposed to undertake these activities in addition to ongoing statistical activities. An outlay of Rs. 2741.86 Crore has been proposed for the period 2017-20. The EFC proposals are being processed for competent approval.

### Underutilization of allocated funds

2. The Committee note that the total Plan and Non-Plan allocation of Rs.4826.87 crore for the year 2015-16 was reduced to Rs.4631.07 crore at RE level and the actual utilization was stated to be Rs.4178.39 crore (86% of BE and 90% of RE). In the year 2016-17, the BE, RE and actual utilisation were recorded to be Rs.4752.83 crore, Rs.4759.82 crore and Rs.4270.83 crore (around 89% of BE and RE), respectively *whereas* in the year 2017-18, BE and RE were shown as Rs.4795.74 crore and Rs.4783 crore, respectively. The utilisation upto December, 2017 in the fiscal 2017-18 is reported to be Rs.3055.41 crore only (63.71% of BE and 63.88% of RE). Thus, the Committee find that persistently there has been large amount of "Surrender/Savings" to the tune of Rs. 648.47 crore in 2015-16 and Rs.481.99 crore in 2016-17. In the year 2017-18 also, the actual expenditure up to December, 2017 is Rs.3055.41 crore which has fallen short by Rs. 1740.32 crore vis-a-vis the BE for the fiscal year. The Committee are thus constrained to observe that 'Surrender' of budget allocations reflects poorly on budget planning and implementation of the Ministry. The Ministry is unable to properly utilize their budgeted funds within the stipulated timeline. The Ministry is set to face new challenges and expand their indices in the arena of employment opportunities in

organised and unorganised sectors, range and scope of labour forces and meet the requirements of enormous data for achieving Sustainable Development Goals on the one hand and on the other hand utilize the resources available with them to the fullest extent. The Committee would, therefore, recommend a comprehensive review of the entire gamut of functioning of the Ministry

**addressing the areas of concern so that its mandated role could be fulfilled through better and complete utilisation of the funds allotted to them.**

**Reply:**

The utilization of funds by the Ministry under Capacity Development (CD) Scheme for the Financial Year 2017-18 is about 87%. The Ministry, through monthly expenditure plan and expenditure review meetings, monitors the pace of expenditure and ensures that the allocated funds are properly utilized to achieve the mandate of this Ministry. Further, it is informed that in BE 2017-18, excess funds to the tune of Rs. 28.25 crore were allocated under capital head as against the projected demand of Rs. 16.77 crore. Therefore, Rs. 12.89 crore was unutilised in the capital expenditure head for FY 2017-18. However, with the help of technical supplementary Rs.12.00 crore was utilized.

The MoSPI is fully seized of data needs in the emerging scenario and it will make all efforts to fulfil them. It is worth mentioning here that the Ministry is planning to conduct these new surveys on regular basis to fill data gaps. The Ministry has already made provision of funds for these surveys in the EFC Memo for 2017-20, which is under process for competent approval.

### **Data dynamics**

3. **Statistics by implication connotes a minefield of information relevant for planners, policy makers and researchers, among others. It provides a kaleidoscopic view of a country embracing within itself the geo-historical, socio-economic and cultural aspects of the populace in consideration. Authentic, reliable and timely data provides the required impetus for policy makers. In a developing and aspirational society as ours, credibility and authenticity of available data is *sine qua non* for policy formulation and inclusive growth. In the recent past doubts and criticism of statistics and computation of GDP not reflecting the momentum of economic activities across the spectrum have surfaced time and again, especially pertaining to economic indices. In this era of societal dynamism the need for credible data is the least that can be desired from the statistical machinery of the country. The Committee would, therefore, urge the Ministry to be more inclusive in computation of GDP and bring wider areas/sectors of the economy within its ambit, rationalise process and assumptions so as to set all the methodological ambiguities and doubts to rest and inspire confidence in the nation's statistics. They also desire that relevant and authentic data on many dynamic areas should be made available so that policy makers reach a pragmatic and implementable policy.**

#### **Reply:**

To capture changing structure of economy and to accurately reflect the current economic situation in the country, base year of indicators like GDP, IIP etc are regularly revised. During every base year revision, a comprehensive review of both database and methodology employed in the estimation of various aggregates/ indices

is undertaken. The changes in methodology and data sources are also examined in detail by Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics (ACNAS). The endeavour is also to align with international guidelines on compilation to facilitate international comparison. To inform users, methodology and revisions are communicated in a clear and transparent way. This involves, publishing release dates through an advance release calendar, as prescribed by the IMF's Special Data Dissemination Standards, providing detailed Meta Data and data at various levels of disaggregation, publishing tables showing the revisions to the data with accompanying text and explaining reasons for revision.

Considering the concern of large data gaps, frequency of data collection of labour force statistics and need for availability of such statistics at more frequent intervals, the National Statistical Commission (NSC) constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Amitabh Kundu to prepare a detailed proposal to establish a framework to collect and disseminate monthly/quarterly labour force data at national and state levels in urban areas. Based on the recommendations of the Committee and the pilot, a regular Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) has already been launched from April, 2017. Besides, PLFS, NSSO conducts regular Socio-Economic (SE) surveys whose subjects are decided for various periodicities. Apart from these socio-economic surveys other surveys like the Urban Frame Survey (UFS), Consumer Price Index (Urban), Rural Price Collection (RPC), Wholesale Price Index (WPI), and Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) are also conducted by NSSO. Further, a proposal of NSSO for conducting Annual Survey of Service Sector Enterprises (ASSSE), Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE) and Time Use Survey (TUS) has been included in the EFC 2017-20. Apart from these, NSSO in digital mode

initiated Urban Frame Survey (UFS) with the help of mobile app developed by NRSC. These maps shall be stored at the BHUVAN portal and will be used for frame for drawing samples in urban area.

NSSO, MoSPI has been maintaining high standard in planning & designing of its survey, collection of data, data verification & validation and generation of results based on its large scale multi-subject sample surveys over the years. Multiple level checks, beginning from the conceptualization of the survey to final dissemination of results in public domain, become the touch stone of authenticity and transparency in data generation by MOSPI. Independent body, namely, National Statistical Commission (NSC) guides and oversees the entire process of Socio-Economic Surveys of NSSO and approval of results based on the survey.

For ensuring adoption of appropriate scientific methods in conducting the survey and coverage of items relevant to the user Ministries & other users, National Statistical Commission (NSC) appoints for each round, a Working Group comprising of eminent economists, statisticians, officers from user Ministries/ Organisations and other domain experts to oversee the development of survey instruments and checking the reliability of survey results presented in NSS Reports.

The trainings of the Field Investigators are organized elaborately in English, Hindi and local languages through Regional Training Camps (RTC), Review Regional Training Camps (RRTC) etc. to ensure correct implementation of concepts and definitions while collecting data. Furthermore, there exists a system of rigorous inspection /supervision of field work of field investigators during data collection and a minimum two tier scrutiny of submitted schedules by senior officers to check and ensure the quality of

data and monitor. In addition, officers of the NSSO are adequately exposed to in-service training on subjects relevant to enhance their skills on surveys as well as general skills. Availability of qualified & trained staff with adequate experience is one of the important factors for ensuring the quality of data. NSSO has been constantly implementing measures required to ensure quality of data.

In so far as releasing timely statistics is concerned, NSSO now releases its results within a year of the completion of the field work. Further, with the usages of the ICT namely, CAPI the release of statistics would be rapid in future. The NSSO, MOSPI plans to release the first estimates of labour force indicators based on the Periodic Labour Force Survey data upto the quarter ending June, 2018 and the first annual estimates for reference period of July, 2017 to June, 2018 by December, 2018.

The published reports of NSSO are placed in public domain (Ministry website: [www.mospi.gov.in](http://www.mospi.gov.in)). A large chunk of the users of NSSO reports download them from this website. The other set of data users are the unit level data which can be accessed by making a simple request on either payment of the requisite fee, if applicable or free of cost, as per the approved guidelines, from Computer Centre, MOSPI which is the custodian of unit level.

### MPLAD Scheme

4. Although the subject of MPLADS falls within the purview of a separate Parliamentary Committee, *nonetheless*, the major part of the plan outlay of Ministry i.e. Rs. 3950 crore is allocated for this important scheme, which is about 95% of the amount allocated for the Ministry. It is, therefore, imperative that certain festering issues afflicting MPLADS are taken up by this Committee and corrective measures suggested thereon. The Committee note that an amount of Rs.3950 crore is being allocated every year to MPLAD Scheme. However, the utilization for the years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 (upto December, 2017) is shown to be Rs.3502 crore, Rs. 3499.50 crore and Rs.2426.50 crore, respectively which indicate a declining trend in expenditure over the years. They would suggest that the State Authorities concerned should be directed to furnish Utilisation Certificates, Audit Certificate and Monthly Progress Report to the Ministry on urgent basis for release of pending installments of MPLADs funds which would augment completion of ongoing projects under the scheme in a time bound manner. The Committee are aware of the demand to increase the amount earmarked to each Member of Parliament for recommending works of capital nature every year. In view of this, timely release and full utilisation of funds is to be ensured. Besides, a mechanism should be evolved to keep tabs on the quality and timeliness of the undertaken works/projects. Many a time it is observed that the concerned MP/MLA is keen to do the work but the due priority is not provided by the related Deputy Commissionr/District Magistrate and the related State Departments, which leads to undue delay in undertaking the project. The Committee would, therefore, urge the Ministry to impress upon the

**State Authorities for regular coordination meetings between the State / District Authorities, concerned Member of Parliament and the stake holders in the MPLAD Scheme. Furthermore, the Committee note that the Members of Parliament suggest shelf of projects to the District Authorities for execution. Since MPLAD fund is non-lapsable, the Committee recommend that the annual allocation should be placed at the disposal of the District Authorities so that the fund can be used for the projects suggested by the MPs in accordance with the MPLAD scheme.**

**Reply:**

There is no declining trend in the release of MPLADS funds in the years under reference as the final figures in the records are Rs 3502 crores (2015-16), Rs 3499.50 crores (2016-17) and the figure of Rs.2426.50 crore, which was for up to December, 2017, has reached to Rs. 3504 crores for 2017-18.

MPLADS division of the Ministry has been continuously following up with District Authorities to submit the Utilisation Certificate, Audit Certificate, Monthly Progress Report on time. In addition, the Division has been insisting for using MPLADS portal for uploading the above-mentioned documents so as to expedite the release.

District authorities are continuously requested to adhere to extant guidelines for sanctioning of works & corresponding release of funds so as to complete the works recommended by the Hon'ble MP in time bound manner. In addition State authorities are requested to regularly convene State Level Coordination Committee meetings under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary/Development Commissioner/Additional

Chief Secretary, wherein the concerned Hon'ble MP and other stakeholders in the MPLAD Scheme may also be invited .

Recently a D.O letter dated 14.03.18 has been sent to Chief Secretaries of all states/UTs in which it has inter-alia been mentioned that State/UT level MPLADS Monitoring Committee chaired by Chief Secretary are not being held regularly. Hon'ble MPs at many fora have requested for convening of such meetings at regular intervals. As per para 4.13 of Guidelines on MPLADS "The District Authority can sanction works up to the entitlement of the MP for that year without even physical availability of funds.....".

**Indian Statistical Institute (ISI)**

5. Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) is engaged in conducting integrated programme of research, training and practical application of statistics in different disciplines through a large number of projects. Through decades of pioneering works in the field of statistics, the Indian Statistical Institute has evolved as an Institution of National eminence. For such an Institute of national eminence, the Committee find that the budget utilisations have not been in consonance with its stature and contributions. The BE, RE and Actual Expenditure for the year 2017-18 were Rs. 274.15 crore, Rs. 269.65 crore and 212.28 crore (expenditure upto December 2017), respectively. The Budget Estimate for the financial year 2018-19 is Rs.275.32 crore, which is a negligible rise of 0.4% from the previous fiscal (2017-18). The Indian Statistical Institute has not been able to fully utilize the allocated funds, as can be gleaned from the budgetary figures for the previous financial years. In the 45th Report pertaining to the DFG (2017- 18), the Committee had observed that infrastructure development at various centres of ISI, especially at Tezpur and Chennai were not moving at the desired pace. The work progress at Giridih, where land was provided on donation basis, needs special attention with respect to infrastructure development. From the budgetary allocations of ISI, it is not clear as to what provisions have been made for infrastructure development works at the aforementioned centres of ISI. The Committee would, therefore, recommend the Ministry and Indian Statistical Institute to take up the construction work at its various centers urgently and preempt any encroachment efforts. The Committee would also urge the Ministry to provide sufficient budgetary support to Indian

**Statistical Institute for expansion and upgradation of its centers/facilities so that this institute of national eminence lives up to its mandate.**

**Reply:**

The major reasons for under utilisation are given below:

- At Tezpur centre of ISI, there was inordinate delay in getting the approval for campus and building plan from local authorities, as the land allotted by the Government of Assam, being an agricultural land, required to be converted to land used for construction purpose. A provisional approval for this has been recently received.
- In case of Chennai centre of ISI, the land that was allotted for construction did not have an approach road and this hindered all the works of construction as well as land filling.
- More than 30 acres of land in Giridih centre of ISI needs boundary wall to prevent it from being encroached. Availability of partial fund prevented ISI to take up the entire project at Giridih as partial fencing will not serve the purpose.

The issues had been analysed in details and in consultation with Ministry, an infrastructure and development road map with larger allocation of funds will be prepared and under close monitoring of the Ministry, the Institute would be able to execute the plan.

**Statistical services/Manpower related issues**

6. There has been continuous shortage of manpower in the Ministry for years together and as a result the Ministry and its various departments have been functioning with a depleted workforce. Statistics is a specialised field which is vital for socio-economic planning and decision making and thus in effect nation building. The Committee are deeply concerned about this perennial shortage of officials/staff especially at the crucial level of Senior and Junior Statistical Officers of subordinate statistical service cadre. As on 1st December, 2017, 922 vacancies exist at subordinate cadre level while the figure stood at 861 on 1st December, 2016. Instead of the vacancies getting filled up, they have rather increased. Similarly, in the Indian Statistical Service there were 165 positions lying vacant as on 1st April, 2017. Such a depleted strength in the statistical cadre does not augur well for statistical planning of the country. In effect it gives rise to an apprehension of reliability and credibility of data being compromised. Besides, a large attrition rate at the subordinate statistical service cadre is a cause of grave concern. The Committee are of the opinion that to draw better work force, better working conditions and comparable remunerations should be provided to the field officers as this has a direct bearing on quality, coverage, timeliness and accuracy in collection, processing and dissemination of data. The Committee would also recommend that awareness programmes about important official and applied statistics be initiated among the students of Department of Statistics in various Universities to attract suitable candidates at cutting edge level. The Committee would also recommend that urgent steps be taken by the Ministry to overcome its acute

manpower shortage so that reliable collection and compilation of statistics is not undermined. The Committee further recommend that the shortage of faculty members and the associated support staff dealing with the training administration and financial matters in the National Statistical Systems Training Academy (NSSTA) be immediately addressed for effective execution of all the programmes envisaged by the NSSTA . Furthermore, Ministry should be proactive in their efforts for capacity building for production, organisation and management of official statistics.

**Reply:**

The sanctioned strength and number of incumbents in position as on 1st May 2018 are, as follows:

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name of the Post</b>	<b>Sanctioned Strength</b>	<b>In Position</b>	<b>Vacancy</b>
1.	Senior Statistical Officer	1781	1581	200
2.	Junior Statistical Officer	2168	2003	165
	Total strength	3949	3584	365

- (i) SSC had nominated 666 candidates for the posts of Junior Statistical Officer (JSOs) on the basis of Combined Graduate Level Examination (CGLE) – 2016. After completion of pre-recruitment formalities, offers of appointment to 535 candidates have been issued in April 2018 and remaining are under process. Thus, as on 01.05.2018, 165 positions of JSOs and 200 positions of SSOs are vacant under different participating Ministries/Departments of SSS.

- (ii) Further, 124 vacancies of JSOs have been reported to SSC for CGLE-2017. Final result is still awaited.
- (iii) To make the service more attractive and in order to reduce attrition rate at the level of JSOs, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation had taken up the issue regarding up gradation of Grade Pay from Rs.4200 to Rs.4600 with Committee of Secretaries (COS) *vide* this ministry ID Note No. 12035/02/2010-SSS dated 05.09.2016, the decision of COS is still awaited.
- (iv) Apart from the above, this Ministry had, with the approval of Hon'ble Minister for Statistics & Programme Implementation sent a proposal to Implementation cell of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC for grant of GP of Rs.4600 (Level-7) to JSOs and GP of Rs.4800 (Level-8) to SSOs of SSS to arrest the high rate of attrition in SSS and make the service more attractive.
- (v) So far as the cadre review of SSS is concerned, it is submitted that the same is due by December 2018 and the process for cadre review of SSS will be initiated very shortly.

National Sample Survey Office have actively involved in strengthening of in-house human resources development system through conducting various trainings programme for NSSO Officials through Zonal Offices as per training Calendar. A large

number of Statistical Sub-ordinate officials and Indian Statistical service officials have been trained in administrative and technical training in past years.

The regular posts of Indian Statistical Service (ISS) and Subordinate Statistical Service (SSS) at National Statistical System Training Academy (NSSTA) are being maintained/ filled by concerned Cadre in terms of MoSPI's Gazette Notification No. G.S.R. 579 (E) dated 07.06.2016 and SSS Division's OM No. 11015/1/2014-SSS dated 09.06.2016 respectively. The Department of Expenditure, vide their ID No. 8152871/ ECI/10 dated 23.09.2010 had created 23 plan posts under various categories which have gone into deemed abolished category because of non-filling of these posts. Ministry is in the process of revival of these posts.

**North-Eastern Area**

7. The North Eastern Area is vibrant socio-cultural zone of the country. However, in terms of statistical infrastructure this area has been a laggard, which by implication has hampered generation of economic indices for the area. Under Major Head "2552" - North Eastern Area, the BE and RE for the year 2016-17 were Rs. 30 crore. Similarly, the BE and RE for the financial year 2017-18 stood at the same figure of Rs. 16.80 crore which is a reduction of 44% from the previous fiscal (2016-17). The allocation for the current fiscal is 20.80 crores. With this kind of budgetary allocation the objective of expanding and strengthening the statistical infrastructure/machinery in the North-Eastern Area may be farfetched. From the allocations in the last three fiscals the actual expenditure have not been depicted by the Ministry. The Committee are given to understand that NSSO does not have field set-up in North-Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura and depend on the States for doing the field work of both Central and States samples of NSS Socio-economic survey. The Committee feel that lack of reliable and quality data stand as roadblock for socio-economic policy making and recommend the Ministry to enhance the allocations for the North-Eastern Region and also ensure full utilization of the allocations for strengthening of survey capacity of the area.

**Reply:**

Regarding the generation of economic indices, it may be mentioned that the 6<sup>th</sup> EC during the January 2013 to April 2014 was carried out in all the North Eastern States. Similarly, the field work for Socio-Economic surveys as well as Annual Survey of Industries is carried out in the North Eastern States except Mizoram. Also, the price

data for Consumer Price indices are being collected from North Eastern States except Arunachal Pradesh (Urban).

Under Ministry's scheme of Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS), a sub-scheme of the Capacity Development Scheme, Grants-in-aid is provided to States for strengthening their statistical systems, and for improved data flow. In NE Region, SSS Scheme is presently being implemented in Sikkim, Mizoram and Manipur. It is going to be extended to Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam in the current fiscal.

Budgetary allocation, utilization of funds etc. to North-East in respect of Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS) sub-scheme is as under:

**Fund released in last 3 years**

*(Rs. In crore)*

Year	Allocation in NER (Under SSS Scheme only)		Released/Utilization	
	BE	RE	To North East States	% release in NE to total(BE)
2015-16*	6	9.49	9.49	158.09
2016-17**	5	5	7	140
2017-18*	2	2	3.58	178.88
Total	13	16.49	20.07	154.38

\* Additional amount was re-appropriated from Head 3454

\*\* Expense from general head

To strengthen and extend the reach of surveys in North-Eastern region, assistance is being provided to Directorates of Economics & Statistics (DEs) of North-Eastern States under the Capacity development scheme to carry out various surveys of NSSO.

MoSPI had appointed a Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 under the Chairmanship of Prof. Atul Sharma to inter-alia suggest appropriate sample size requirements at the State level in North East states. The Committee, while providing its recommendation to enhance sample size, has also recommended that NSSO should orient its field survey set-up in the four NE states viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura for improving the capability of human resources in the States for conducting survey and processing of NSS State-sample data. The National Statistical Commission considered the report of Atul Sharma Committee in its 43rd meeting and it inter-alia recommended that the NSSO (FOD) may set up field offices in all the North-Eastern States and other States/UTs, where such offices were not established. The existing system of taking assistance from the DEs in the entire NE region will not work if the sample size is enhanced.

The process of opening of 2 new Regional Offices and upgrading 2 Sub Regional Offices of NSSO (FOD) for data collection and a centre of NSSO (DPD) for data processing in North-East has already been initiated by NSSO.

National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) conducts socio-economic surveys on various subjects on all-India basis. Based on the sample canvassed by the NSSO (Central

Sample), the results of each survey are published in the form of reports. The State Governments **including the north-eastern states** also participate in these surveys on a matching sample basis (State Sample); using the same survey instruments (i.e. schedules and concepts & definitions). The data collected by State Governments, through the state samples, are processed by them as per the data processing protocols and a common tabulation plan developed by NSSO. Based on the data for the sample used for data collection by NSSO (i.e. Central sample), NSSO provides national and state level estimates.

The State Government officials including the officials from the **north-eastern states** involved in conducting the sample surveys are imparted training using the same concepts & definitions and through a common training conference, so that the agency bias is minimized. The data processing methodology is also shared with the State Government officials through data processing conference and data processing software developed by NSSO, which is distributed to the states for their use.

NSSO has also developed a uniform methodology and software for use by the State Governments to bring out sub-state level estimates by pooling the data of Central and State samples. The pooling methodology and software are shared with the State Governments and training on the same to the State Government officers is organized by the NSSO on regular intervals.

NSSO has therefore, taken necessary steps to ensure that its survey capabilities both in terms of the strength and quality remains robust and reliable.

On the recommendations of Prof Atul Sharma Committee NSSO included the proposal for opening of its centres for strengthening the North Eastern States in the EFC

documents for the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) of the Ministry. The proposal for creation of posts for these Centres was sent to the D/o Expenditure for their examination and consideration during the currency of the 12th Five Year Plan. However, the posts could not be created during the 12th Five Year Plan. Hence, the proposal was retained in the EFC document for the period 2017-20 and was approved again. The delay, if any may be attributed due to the necessity of complying with the procedural aspects. The same is now being actively pursued at various levels in the Government.