

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1981-82)

THIRTY-THIRD REPORT

(SEVENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF PLANNING

(DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS)

Presented to Lok Sabha on..... 20 APR 1982



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

April, 1982/Vaisakha 1904 (Saka)

Price: Rs. 3.20

**LIST OF AUTHORISED AGENTS FOR THE SALE OF LOK SABHA
SECRETARIAT PUBLICATIONS**

ANDHRA PRADESH

1. Andhra University General Co-operative Stores Ltd., Waltair (Visakhapatnam).

BIHAR

2. M/s. Crown Book Depot, Upper Bazar, Ranchi (Bihar).

GUJARAT

3. Vijay Stores, Station Road, Anard.

MADHYA PRADESH

4. Modern Book House, Shiv Volas Palace, Indore City.

MAHARASHTRA

5. M/s. Sunderdas Gianchand, 601, Girgaum Road, near Princess Street, Bombay-2.
6. The International Book House Pvt., 9, Ash Lane, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay-1.
7. The International Book Service, Deccan Gymkhana, Poona-4.
8. The Current Book House, Maruti Lane, Raghunath Dadaji Street, Bombay-1.
9. M/s. Usha Book Depot, 585/A, Chira Bazar Khan House, Girgaum Road, Bombay-2.

10. M & J Services, Publishers, Representatives Accounts & Law Book Sellers, Bahri Road, Bombay-15.

11. Popular Book Depot, Dr. Bhadkamkar Road, Bombay-400001.

MYSORE

12. M/s. Peoples Book House, Opp. Jaganmohan Palace, Mysore-1.

UTTAR PRADESH

13. Law Book Company, Sardar Patel Marg, Allahabad-1.
14. Law Publishers, Sardar Patel Marg, P.B. No. 77, Allahabad—U.P.

WEST BENGAL

15. Granthaloka, 5/1, Ambica Mookherjee Road, Belgharia, 24-Parganas.
16. W. Newman & Company Ltd., 3, Old Court House Street, Calcutta.
17. Mrs. Manimala, Buys & Sells, 128, Bow Bazar Street, Calcutta-12.

DELHI

18. Jain Book Agency, Connaught Place, New Delhi.
19. M/s. Sat Narain & Sons, 3141, Mohd. Ali Bazar, Mori Gate, Delhi.

CORRIGENDA TO 33rd REPORT OF E. C.

<u>Page</u>	<u>Para</u>	<u>Line</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Read</u>
10	1.36	1	the obsolete	the
10	1.36	5	and furnish	and from
10	1.37	2- 3	of release the statios	the release of statistics
10	1.37	1	remedial. The	remedied. The
11	1.38	4	prologed absence	prolonged absence
11	1.38	7	data process- ling	data process- ing
11	1.40	3	andd its	and its
11	1.40	8	not be to	not to be
12	1.42	11	conserned at a	concerned at a

C O N T E N T S

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE	(iii)
INTRODUCTION	(v)
CHAPTER I—INTRODUCTORY	
(i) The National Sample Surveys	2
(ii) Time lag in Tabulation and Publication of Data	3
(iii) Printing of Reports	8
(iv) Crop Estimation Surveys	9
CHAPTER II—STATISTICAL DATA—GAPS	
(i) Difficulties	14
(ii) Incomplete Coverage of crop statistics, regular statistics of livestock products, forest products, inland fisheries, fruit and vegetables and farm inputs	15
(iii) Unorganised sector in industries, unorganised transport sector, unorganised segments of the service activities.	15
(iv) Construction activities.	16
(v) All India Index Number of retail prices.	16
(vi) Environment and Energy Balance	16
(vii) Distribution of Household Income by size classes : pattern on income expenditure and saving separately for rural and urban areas	17
(viii) Interstate Trade Movement	17
(ix) Saving and Consumption series	18
(x) Household Income	18
(xi) Per capita Income Studies	20
(xii) Consumption Expenditure	20
(xiii) Monthly Index of Industrial Production	22
(xiv) NSSO Methodology	23
(xv) Educating the people for collecting statistics.	24
(xvi) Outdated Bench Marks	24
(xvii) Evaluation of the reliability of statistics	25
(xviii) Computer Centre	26
(xix) Economic Analysis	27

	PAGE
(xx) Analytical Studies	33
(xxi) Working Class Family Income Survey	35
(xxii) Participation in the work programme of developing an Integrated System of Classification of Activities and Goods	36
 CHAPTER III—COORDINATION	
(i) Co-ordination of Statistical Activities	38
(ii) Apex Body	39
(iii) Prior Clearance for Undertaking Surveys	42
(iv) Synchronisation of Central & State Data	43
(v) Advisory Committees of the National Income Division	44
(vi) Association of Research Institutions with Data Collection Work	44
(vii) Association of Rural Youth with Survey Work	46
(viii) Statistical Standards	46
 CHAPTER IV—ORGANISATION	
(i) Head of Deptt. of Statistics	52
(ii) Governing Council for NSSO	52
(iii) Indian Statistical Institute	53
(iv) Staff-Avenues of Promotion	54

APPENDIX

Summary of Recommendations/Observations	57
---	----

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1981-82)

CHAIRMAN

Shri S. B. P. Pattabhi Rama Rao

MEMBERS

2. Shri Kumbha Ram Arya
3. Shri Chitta Basu
4. Shri Manoranjan Bhakta
5. Shri Ajitsinh Dabhi
6. Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev
7. Shri Digamber Singh
8. Shri Jitendra Prasada
9. Shri K. T. Kosalram
10. Shri M. M. Lawrence
11. Shri Vilas Muttemwar
12. Shri B. R. Nahata
13. Shri P. Namgyal
14. Shri Balasaheb Vikhe Patil
- *15. Shri Janardhana Poojary
16. Shri K. Pradhani
17. Shri K. Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy
18. Shri Ajit Kumar Saha
19. Shri M. S. K. Sathiyendran
20. Shri Daya Ram Shakya
21. Shri Nawaz Kishore Sharma
22. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma
23. Shri Virbhadra Singh
24. Shri R. S. Sparrow
25. Dr. Subramaniam Swamy
26. Shri Tariq Anwar
27. Shri R. L. P. Verma
28. Shri D. P. Yadav
29. Dr. Golam Yazdani
30. Shri Zainul Basher

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri H. G. Paranjpe—*Joint Secretary.*
2. Shri K. S. Bhalra—*Chief Financial Committee Officer.*
3. Shri H. C. Bahl—*Senior Financial Committee Officer.*

*Shri Janardhana Poojary ceased to be member of the Estimates Committee w.e.f. 15-1-1982 consequent on his appointment as Deputy Minister.

INTRODUCTION

1. the Chairman of Estimates Committee having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf present this Thirty-third Report on the Ministry of Planning—Department of Statistics.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Planning (Department of Statistics) at their sitting held on 27th January, 1982. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Department of Statistics for placing before them material and information which they desired in connection with the examination of the subject and for giving evidence before the Committee. The Committee also wish to thank the Chairman, Governing Council of National Sample Survey Organisation for giving evidence before the Committee.

3. The Committee also wish to express their thanks to the User Ministries/Departments and National Council on Applied Economic Research who furnished memoranda on the subject to the Committee.

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 16th April, 1982.

5. For facility of reference recommendations/observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report. A summary of the recommendations/observations is appended to the Report (Appendix).

NEW DELHI;
April 26, 1982.

Vaisakha 6, 1904 (S).

S. B. P. PATTABHI RAMA RAO,
Chairman,
Estimates Committee.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

1.1. The Department of Statistics with its constituent wings, the CSO, the NSSO and the computer centre is performing the basic modal functions of collecting, collating, analysing and publishing valuable and essential statistical data needed by the Government for planning and decision making. The work relating to the collection of data was started a century ago. As early as 1862, Statistical Committee was set up for designing modal statistical forms to collect data on trade, finance, education, agriculture etc. The first country-wide synchronised population census was organised by this Committee in 1881. A Director-General, Statistics, as Head of the Statistical Bureau was appointed in 1895. A Central Statistical Unit was set up in the Cabinet Secretariat in 1949 which evolved into the Central Statistical Organisation which was established in the Cabinet Secretariat in May, 1951. The Union Department of Statistics was created in the Cabinet Secretariat in 1961. A Computer Centre for data-processing was set up as an attached office in the Department in 1967. The National Sample Survey (NSS) which came into existence in 1950 with a programme of large scale sample surveys to provide data for national income estimation and for planning and policy formulation has since grown into one of the largest organisations of its kind in the world and expanded its activities in several directions. It carries out annual rounds of socio-economic surveys covering various facets of population, undertakes the field work of Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) and carries out sample checks of area and yield of crops to improve the quality of estimates of agricultural production prepared by the States. The NSS was reorganised in 1970 and all aspects of the work was entrusted to a single government agency, the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) under the overall direction of a Governing Council with requisite independence and autonomy in the matter of collection, processing, analysis and publication of NSS data.

1.2. The Department of Statistics is a part of the Ministry of Planning and has, under its overall control the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and the Computer Centre. It is also closely associated with the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Calcutta recognised as an Institution of National importance under the Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959.

1.3. The Department of Statistics, proper and the main offices of the Central Statistical Organisation and National Sample Survey Organisation

have a Composite administrative set-up. The Department is headed by a Secretary to the Government. Besides the Secretary, the other senior officers are the Director-General, Central Statistical Organisation who is an ex-officio Addl. Secretary and the Chief Executive Officer of the National Sample Survey Organisation who is an ex-officio Joint Secretary.

1.4. The CSO is primarily responsible for coordination of statistical activities in the Country, laying down and maintaining statistical standards, preparation of national accounts, processing and publications of industrial statistics, conduct of economic census and surveys, plan work relating to development of statistics, organising, training programmes in official statistics and related methodology, dissemination of statistical information and liaison with international statistical agencies.

(i) *The National Sample Surveys*

1.5. Starting from the 26th round (1971-72), a statement giving round-wise position of the survey period, tabulation and release of results is given in Annex-I (Part I & Part II). The Surveys were completed during the targetted period indicated within brackets against each round. The tabulation and release of data, however, have not kept pace with the collection of data as can be seen from the Annex.

1.6. When the NSSO was reorganised in March, 1970, the abulation was in huge arrears owing to a variety of reasons including inadequacy of tabulation resources which comprises Unit Record Machines. With a view to reducing the arrears and bringing out the results of the survey within as short a time as possible after the completion of the field work, a judicious combination of manual, mechanical and electronic data processing was adopted. In 1977-73, Manual Tabulation Centres were set up in different parts of the country to facilitate bringing out at least the key results with the least possible delay. One more data processing Centre was set up at Nagpur. Since 1977 progressive use of computerisation has been resorted to. The time-lag in completing the tabulation was as high as about 4 years from the date of completion of survey in certain cases. With these measures, it has been possible to reduce the time-lag to some extent as could be seen from the progress of 25th round to 32nd round. Even so the objective of bringing out the results of a round within a year of the completion of the survey has not yet been accomplished and the position with regard to the tabulation of Central Sample is still far from satisfactory.

1.7. The principal causes of the delay in data processing and accumulation of back-log are antiquated machines and inadequate staff of the NSSO. Added to this are the difficulties in acquiring and maintaining conventional punching and verifying machines which are getting out of date.

1.8. The Covering Council of NSSO has appointed a Working Group on acceleration of NSS data processing to study the status of arrears of tabulation and recommend a plan to achieve the objective of completing

the tabulation and publication of data collected in a round within 12 to 15 months of the completion of field work. Their report has been received in February, 1982.

Time-lag in Tabulation and Publication of Data

1.9. From the information furnished by the Ministry it is seen that even from the 25th round of survey (1971 onwards) the time-lag between completion of survey and tabulation release has been as high as 48—53 months in a number of cases. All the table of the 32nd round completed between July, 1977—June 1978 had not been tabulated till the end of January 1982, though some key result and a report on Employment (32nd Round) has been released. Data pertaining to 33 round (July 1978—June 1979) and 34 round (July 1979—June 1980) are still being processed.

1.10. It is also seen that publication of the results of surveys has also been inordinately delayed. For example, publication of important surveys like Annual Survey of Industries and Consumer Expenditure Surveys (Tables with notes) has been delayed by 5 to 12 years. Consumer Expenditure Survey (Tables with Notes) relating to the period from September, 1961 to July, 1962 was published in March, 1974. Annual Survey of Industries (Tables with notes) for the year 1964 was published in 1971. Some of the reports published in 1981 related to the period of July, 1973 to June, 1974 which shows a delay of nearly 6-7 years.

1.11. The Review Committee on the National Statistical System observed in its report (June 1980):

“Timely availability of statistics is the essence of the efficiency of national statistical system. It is crucial in planning and decision making as well as for effective management of economic affairs in government departments. For instance, when the government is dealing with a situation of severe shortage and the latest available statistics on the subject relate to a period of couple of years ago when a situation of surplus might have been prevailing in the country, such outdated statistics may not at all be helpful for decision making. In such a situation the decision maker, rather than waiting for statistics would tend to take decision, right or wrong, on the basis of empirical impressions. From the view-point of policy makers, statistics with long time-lag may only be useful for academicians and economic historians. The Committee recognises that if the statistical system is to serve the policy makers effectively, it has to devise ways and means of giving to the policy makers some basic useful statistical material well in time for decision making.” (Para 6.2).

1.12. The Review Committee (1980) suggested a basic norm (para No. 6.10) which may be laid down for all periodicals or time series statistics. According to the Committee "The time-lag in respect of any statistical series should not exceed the periodicity of statistics, *i.e.*, the monthly series should be released with a time-lag of not more than one month and the annual series should be released with a time-lag of not exceeding one year. However, in regard to censuses carried out at long intervals, either quinquennially, or decennially, the results should be made available within 2-3 years of the completion of the field work.

1.13. The Committee desired to know the action taken by the Ministry to achieve the level of efficiency set up by the Review Committee (1980).

1.14. Secretary, Department of Statistics admitted during evidence "It is very true that there is a considerable time-lag between the collection of data by the National Sample Survey Organisation and its publication. In fact, it has been the cause of great concern for me since I took-over this Department (July 1981)."

1.15. Explaining the reasons, Secretary informed the Committee that one of the reasons for this time-lag is the antiquated machines which have been in use in this Department. At one time the data was to be processed through unit record machines. It is only from 1976 or 1977 that a progressive use of computers is being made for the purpose of processing of the data. When it was decided to entrust the work of processing to the computers, it was found by the Computers Centre that they had three Honeywell machines which were second generation machines and they were also out-dated. The Government took a decision to have a new computer of the third generation, *i.e.*, the Burroughs computer. You will be glad to know this computer the witness added (January 1982) has just been installed. It is having its test run just now. The Deptt. hopes to complete the work by the end of the month or by the first week of next month (February 1982).

1.16. Secretary (statistics) stated that. As a result of the installation of this computer it is expected that the processing of the data can be three times faster as compared with the old Honey well machines." The witness added that the second direction in which action had been taken by the Deptt. of Statistics to speed up processing was the introduction of the direct data entry machines one at Calcutta (HCL-8) and one at Delhi (DCM Spectrum-7). The Governing Council of the NSSO, Secretary stated, was also equally keen, that the delay and the time-lag in the publication of the data should be reduced. It had set up a Working Group which went into the question of reducing time-lag. The Working Group had completed its report and it was going to be submitted to the Governing Council of the NSSO shortly.

1.17. Secretary (Statistics) further stated that "In order to get early results, another step which had been taken was that "whatever information now becomes available, that should be immediately published in the journal which has been started, called Sarvekshana, and whatever results are available should be released immediately."

1.18. Referring to the question of delay in publication of Annual Survey of Industry, the witness stated that "There also our attempt is that we should be able to issue the summary reports immediately and later on we will have to bring out the detailed results."

1.19. Summing up the measures propose to be taken by the Ministry, Secretary stated, "the action which is being taken is a three-fold action. One is having a new computer so that faster computing can be made. Second is punching the data on the direct data entry machine and the third is that even if the detailed results are not available, the summary results should be made available immediately, because I do realise that for the purpose of policy makers and for the purpose of the users of statistics it is absolutely necessary that whatever data is collected, that should be made available to them quickly."

1.20. Tendering evidence before the Committee the Chairman of the Governing Body, NSSO stated: "... the organisation is very large and it is also partly lop-sided. The lop-sidedness is of the following nature. As far as Field Operations Division of the NSSO is concerned, it is able to collect whatever information the Governing Council decides to be collected. But there are other parts of the organisation which probably are not taken into account at the time we decide what to collect. I think the reason for the delay is the lopsidedness of the organisation. In particular, the processing of data is a highly technical business. Unless we take a look at the whole thing in an integrated fashion we will make some piecemeal adjustments here and there without really being able to deliver the overall objectives."

1.21. Referring to the Working Group of experts appointed to look into the problems of the NSSO including long time-lags, the witness stated that this group was almost ready to give a Report and that Report would be considered by the Governing Council at the end of February (1982) and after its consideration by the Governing Council, "I would be making a recommendation on behalf of the Governing Council to the Government in terms of looking at the problem in its totality rather than create a few jobs here and there and get machines here and there and later on not being able to do the job."

1.22. Asked about the things that are to be done, the witness added that after considering the report of the Working Group "We will say, that

these are the objectives and if data must be made available within 18 months of the survey being finished, these are the thing that we ought to do."

1.23. The Chairman, Governing Council, stated that "I have a feeling that the problem (of delays) is not such that it cannot be tackled. It can be tackled provided some major changes are made."

1.24. Asked about the broad areas in which the Ministry should move to cut short the time-lag, the witness stated that, "somehow we are able to get whatever data we want to be collected in the field. The major part of the difficulty arises in processing that data. The technology that is being used for that is very old. You know the kind of apparatus that is still being used in India. For example, spare parts are not being manufactured here. What happens is that you put in a little machine somewhere without taking care of the thing somewhere else. So, either it remains infructuous for a while or it is not really part of a total picture. I think we need to change quite a lot of that equipment. What system is to be adopted is being considered by the Group. By associating some experts from the Electronics Department we want to make a lot of changes in the technology of data processing. Once we switch over to new technology, may be that we will have a little less of problem in coordination between different divisions of NSSO. But the major difficulty is with the data processing technology."

1.25. The terms of reference of the Working Group on Acceleration of NSSO Data Processing set up by the Department of Statistics were given as follows:

- (i) To study the present status of arrears of tabulation pertaining to the various rounds of NSSO and to pin-point the critical bottlenecks and organisational weaknesses which may have caused the accumulation of these arrears.
- (ii) To assess the time requirements with reference to different stages of data processing *viz-a-viz* the total tabulation plan and arrive at a realistic estimate of requirement of men and machines, so as to complete the tabulation and publication of data collected in a round within 12 to 15 months of the completion of field work.
- (iii) Pending the availability of men and machines required to suggest an interim plan for the optimum utilisation of the available resources in all Divisions of NSSO, so that the basic objective of tabulation and publication of results within 12 to 15 months of completion of field work is achieved. For this, different approaches may be suggested together with the possible time-lag involved in each approach for completion of tabulation and

publication of results. Suggestions may include, if necessary, functional redeployment of personnel among the 4 Divisions of NSSO as well as adjustments in the sampling design or the size of samples.

- (iv) To study and comment on any other matter which may have relevance to the above three items of the terms of reference.

1.26. The Chairman, Governing Body while referring to the terms of reference stated, "they have been given very exhaustive terms of reference. I have a feeling that they may not do justice to all items. I will say that the working group is working hard. I have no doubt that they would do very well. But I once again repeat that the basic difficulty for planning timely estimates for the last 30 years has been outdated and old equipment. I feel shamed of it. We do not have the modern data collecting technology even today."

The witness added, "some 10 years ago, I was in a Data Improvement Committee for annual Planning and budget making. We submitted a report after great deal of work. As far as I know, the report is still in the archives of some Ministry. Off and on we do come across some enthusiasm for getting things done in time. But what I say is there is no tradition in this country to take decision on the basis of data and expert reports. Sometime the Civil servants would discourage and delay the implementation of findings by saying that they would have such and such impacts. And what happens is that by the time they take a decision, everything changes and there will be a change in the policy. Here, things are done on the gut feelings."

The witness added that "I want to assure the Committee as long as we (the Governing Council) are here, we will definitely try to bring about some changes. But we are purely an advisory body. We may be consulted on some issues by the Government and the Government may not consult us on some other issues."

1.27. In written reply, the Ministry subsequently informed the Committee (April 1982) that the Governing Council for NSSO at its meeting held on 20th January, 1981 had considered the question of acceleration of NSS data processing and ways and means of bringing out the results in 12 months after completion of the field work and had recommended setting up of a Technical Working Group to study the problem in depth. The Working Group has finalised its report and is expected to submit the same to the Governing Council of NSSO shortly.

1.28. The Ministry furnished a copy of the Report of the Working Group to the Committee. The Working Group have come to the following findings:—

1.29. The NSSO had on 31st March, 1981 an accumulated backlog of data processing work, which with its present resources, it would take, at a rough estimate, no less than four years to complete. The Working Group has identified the following reasons for the accumulation of this backlog.

- (a) A total systematic failure to appreciate and provide adequate human and material resources required for processing the data gathered in large-scale multi-purpose surveys that have been conducted by the NSS over the past three decades.
- (b) Frequent changes and prolonged absence of senior management in the Data Processing Division.
- (c) Not taking constraints on data processing resources into account in planning or surveys.
- (d) Accepting *ad-hoc* demands for additional tabulation and continual changes in assigned priorities.
- (e) Delays arising from manual procedures of data editing involving repeated references to schedules.
- (f) Long delays in reconciling tabulated results with similar results from other sources.
- (g) Absence of systematic manpower planning and training arrangements for data processing personnel.
- (h) Low productivity and low morale of workers.

(iii) *Printing of Reports*

1.30. It was suggested in a memorandum that time lag in publication of results could be reduced by augmenting men and machines and also streamlining the existing procedure for compilation and publication. The organisation may be allowed to set up a small offset press within the organisation and to get its work done through private presses wherever necessary.

1.31. During evidence Secretary, Department of statistics stated that "we have already included in the Sixth Plan a Scheme for providing off-set printing facilities and separate printing facilities will be provided, under this Scheme to meet the printing requirements of the Department of Statistics as well as the Planning Commission and, for this purpose, the Directorate of Printing will establish a separate Wing in the Government of India Press at Faridabad for executing the work of these two Organisations. A project report has already been prepared by the Directorate of Printing and the total outlay involved so far as next year is concerned is Rs. 12 lakhs. We have made a provision for that. In the next year's plan, the Ministry of Works and Housing will be giving the administrative clearance and, we hope, that by the end of 1984-85, a separate wing will become operational."

(iv) *Crop Estimation Surveys*

1.32. It was stated in another memorandum that the yield rates of principal crops were estimated through Crop Estimation Surveys conducted by the State agencies. The Agricultural Statistics Wing of the NSSO brings out annually a report on the status of estimation of agricultural production in India. The report contains an overall account of the status of estimation of agricultural production as also technical details and results relating to the scheme of improvement of crop statistics. It provides comparison of estimates based on sample checks under the scheme for improvement of crops statistics, timely reporting scheme, final forecast and crop estimation surveys. The report is quite comprehensive. However, these reports are being brought out with a time lag of about 2 years. The practical utility of these reports would be considerably enhanced if they are brought out within a year of the close of the season.

1.33. Secretary, Department of Statistics stated "We are bringing out a status report State-wise since 1976-77. We are also trying to bring out season-wise report now. These reports are ready by about one year after the close of the season. Since these are the reports which relate to the States, we thought that if the State-wise reports are made available that would enhance the utility."

"Now the question arises about the All India report. All India report is a consolidation of various State reports. There is a delay in preparing them because unless all the States reports are ready, we cannot prepare all India report. One of the suggestions is that the work relating to the preparation of the State-wise report should be undertaken by the States themselves so that we may be able to expedite the all India report."

1.34. The representative of NSSO stated that "the agriculture status report is based mainly on the scheme for improvement of Crop Statistics. In so far as the yield estimates for important crops are concerned, which number 163 at all-India level, these are brought out within a period of four to six weeks of the completion of the harvest of a crop in a State. These estimates are passed on to the Ministry of Agriculture for preparation of advance estimates of crop production annually. Till 1976, we were bringing out one All India report (Vol. I) and once State-wise report (Vol. II). From 1977-78 onwards, in order to increase the utility of these reports and to reduce the time lag, we have started preparation of season-wise, State-wise status reports which are ready after about one year of the close of the season. The report contains the estimate from the Central sample and the estimates from the matching State sample and the pooled estimates. It has been agreed that the States will analyse the data relating to their State Sample Part. But the position is not very happy. Excepting a few States, others are not in

a position to implement that part of the scheme. The Centre has to do the State Sample tabulation as well as Central Sample tabulation. If the States could take over at least the State matching samples and tabulation, the time lag could be reduced further."

1.35 The Committee are greatly disappointed at the inordinately long time-lag between completion of NSSO surveys and publication/release of the results of the Survey. From the information furnished by the Ministry it is seen that even after the re-organisation of NSSO in 1971 the time-lag between completion of surveys and tabulation/release of data has been as high as 48—53 months in a number of cases. 32nd Round of Central Sample Survey completed between July 77—June 1978, 33rd Round (July 78—June 79) and 34th Round (July 79—June 80) are still under tabulation. Publication of the results of surveys have also been inordinately delayed. For example publication of Annual Surveys of Industries and Consumer Expenditure surveys have been delayed by 5—12 years. Consumer Expenditure Surveys pertaining to the period September 61—August 1962 was published in March 1974. Annual Survey of Industries for 1964 was published in April 1971. Some of the reports published in 1981 related to the period July 1973—June 1974 which shows a delay of nearly 6-7 years. The Committee wonder whether results of surveys published after a time gap of 5—12 years could have been of any use of anybody except academicians and economic historians. What has pained them deeply and what they cannot but deplore strongly, is that this state of affairs has been continuing for over 30 years and nothing concrete has been done so far to accelerate the entire exercise so as to make it useful to policy makers and planners.

1.36. The basic weaknesses of the NSSO are stated to be the obsolete and outmoded equipment and the lopsidedness of the organisation. The Governing Council of NSSO has appointed a Working Group to go into the question of acceleration of NSSO data processing and to recommend measures and furnish its terms of reference it is seen that the NSSO is now aiming to complete the tabulation and publication of data collected in a round within 12 to 15 months of the completion of the field work.

1.37 The Department of statistics has it is seen, taken certain measures to modernise the data-processing equipment and accelerate of release the statios. But the Committee agree with the Chairman, Governing Council, that some piecemeal improvements in procedures and machines here and there are not going to achieve the overall objectives unless the problems faced by the NSSO are looked at in their totality and the lopsidedness of the organisation which, in his opinion, is the root cause of delays, is

remedial. The report of the working Group on the acceleration of data processing, to which the Governing Council and the Department of Statistics had been looking forward with great expectations, has now been submitted to and considered by the Governing Council. The Committee would like to advise the Government that this report should be taken seriously and an integrated action plan prepared without delay to thoroughly reorganise the NSSO so as to make it a technically and professionally competent and well-equipped organisation to be able to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and within the optimum time-frames.

1.38. The report submitted by the Working Group reveals failure of the system in a number of fields. According to the report there have been a systematic failure to appreciate and provide human and material resources, prologed absence of senior management in the Data Processing Division, ad hoc additions in tabulation, continual changes in assigned priorities, absence of systematic manpower planning and training arrangements for data processing personnel and low productivity and low morale of workers.

1.39. The Review Committee on National Statistical System in its Report (June 1980) has emphasised that timely availability of Statistics is the essence of the efficiency of National Statistical System. According to the Review Committee if statistical system has to serve the policy makers effectively it has to devise ways and means of giving to the policy makers some basic useful statistical material well in time for decision making. The Review Committee has suggested that the basic norm for all periodical or time series statistics should be that the time lag should not exceed the periodicity of the statistics. That is, the monthly statistics should be released within a time lag of not more than one month and the annual series should be released with a time lag of not exceeding one year. In case of censuses carried out either quinquennially or decennially the results should be made available within 2-3 years of the completion of the field work.

1.40. The Committee are happy to note that the Governing Council of NSSO is aiming at making the organisation efficient enough to reduce the time lag between data collection and its publication to 12-15 months. The Estimates Committee consider the time-frames suggested by the Review Committee (1980) for various kinds of statistics not only reasonable but absolutely essential for the working of NSSO if its reports have to be of some contemporary use to contemporary planners and policy makers and not be to consigned to the dustbins of history. The Committee would like that Government should adopt these basic norms as outside target limits of time for the guidance of the NSSO and ensure that the contemplated re-organisation of the NSSO is done to achieve these objectives.

1.41. The Committee note that NSSO is also handicapped for lack of adequate printing facilities and this too contributes to the delays in the publication of statistical data. They note that a scheme to provide offset printing facilities to meet the requirements of the Department of Statistics and Planning Commission has been included in the Sixth Five Year Plan and a separate wing in the Government of India Press at Faridabad is expected to come up by the end of 1984-85 for executing the work of the two organisations. The Committee cannot over-emphasise the need for making adequate printing facilities available to the Department of Statistics. They hope that additional wing in the Government of India Press at Faridabad would be set up by the target date. In the alternative the Government of India Press can get this printed in any decent reliable Private Press, which would be perhaps more economical also.

1.42. Delay in the publication of crop estimation survey reports has been brought to the notice of the Committee. These reports are at present being brought out with the time lag of about two years. The utility of these reports it is stated, would be considerably enhanced if they are brought out within a year of the close of the season. The Department has explained that State-wise and season-wise status reports are brought out by about one year after the close of the season but all India report is delayed. It appears that the Department is not getting adequate support from the States in this regard. The Committee would suggest that the various issues involved in the publication of this report should be discussed with the State Governments concerned at a high level and concrete solutions found to accelerate the publication of crop estimation survey reports.

CHAPTER II

STATISTICAL DATA-GAPS

2.1. The Department of Statistics has informed the Committee that although considerable improvements have been made recently in collection and compilation of different types of statistics in various sectors of the economy, there are still gaps and deficiencies in the data base of the economy to meet the growing requirements of planning and policy making. These are partly due to technical and operational difficulties in filling up the gaps. Some of the important areas in which statistical series is at present not being collected are broadly as follows.

(a) In the agriculture and allied sectors, the major gaps are incomplete coverage of crop statistics, regular statistics of livestock products, forest products, inland fisheries, fruits and vegetables and farm inputs.

(b) In the field of industry, the major lacuna is in the unorganised sector, although, some effects have been initiated by the CSO recently to bridge some of the gaps in this sector by under-taking economic census and follow-up surveys. The index of production currently being compiled reflects broadly the trends in large scale and medium sectors of industry only. Efforts are being made to include in the production coverage of the index, the production of small scale sector falling within the registered factory sector. In the field of trade, distributive trade statistics, trade by road are the two major segments in which systematic data are not available. Similar is the position with regard to unorganised transport sector. Another field where collection of data needs good impetus relates to construction activity. Another major chunk of grey area in which information is partial, relates to the unorganised segments of the services activities.

(c) An important area in which the statistical aggregates are at present not being compiled, related to the All India Index Number of retail prices covering the entire range of commodities in the retail trade activity on the same lines as the All India wholesale price Index Number. The retail prices are at present being collected in respect of those commodities only which go into the consumer price indices being constructed for specified groups of population. However, a beginning has been made by Maharashtra to compile a consumer price index number for selected essential commodities as first approximation to the retail price index number for rural and urban areas separately. There is need for similar work to be done in other States also.

(d) In social statistics, the important gap is regarding the inadequacy of data for development of social indicators and establishing an appropriate linkage between different segments of social sector. Other areas which have recently assumed importance for which data are at present not adequately available, relate of environment and energy balance.

(e) Though the National Accounts Statistics in India cover several aspects of the subject, gaps remain in a few fields. One of the most important lacunae in this regard is the lack of data on distribution of household income by size classes. This is mainly because to collection of data on the subject through official agencies has so far been undertaken. However, collection of data on the subject is now being given greater emphasis. Currently, data on domestic product are available separately for public and private sector. However, separation of private income between private corporate Sector and household sector is necessary to study the relationship between household saving and household income.. This has not so far been possible because of the absence of data, on household income and expenditure. To obtain the estimates indirectly, studies have now been initiated to estimate income originating in private corporate sector so that household income can be obtained as a residual. Another aspect of economic statistics where information is lacking is on pattern of income expenditure and saving separately for rural and urban areas. Non availability of basic data has stood in the way of preparing such estimates. As a first step towards obtaining such information, estimates are being prepared of domestic product originating in rural and urban areas.

(i) *Difficulties*

2.2. Explaining the difficulties for filling the gaps, the Department has stated that one of the factors for non-collection of data in areas which are known to be deficient has been resources at different levels in terms of manpower required for data collection, supervision and compilation. The non-response to a fair degree in implementing the statutory, provisions for data collection has also been one of the hurdles in improving the data collection system. Further, in certain areas like fruits, vegetables, inland fisheries, livestock production, non-availability of appropriate operational methodology for collection of requisite data in a systematic and regular manner has also been a constraint, although some studies towards development of methodology in these areas have been done recently. In the field of construction, firms are extremely mobile and activities are seasonal in nature, subcontracting is very common and the work is carried out by a variety of units. This makes it impossible to organise data collection through a unified approach. The provision in some of the Acts like the Sales-tax Act do not provide for regular maintenance of data of input costs, output, value added etc. Consequently regular collection of data on various aspects of trade activity is difficult. In some sectors, there is no statutory obligation to

maintain records which could be used for culling out the requisite data. For constructing index numbers on retail prices, detailed data on commodity-wise volume and value of retail trade in respect of each of the commodities entering the index, are required. These data are at present not available. Periodical distributive trade surveys have to be undertaken for this purpose.

2.3. The Department has added that the statistical aggregates lacking at present in different sectors are thus known. Efforts will be made to fill up these lacunae through different plan schemes keeping in view the priorities determined by the requirements of planning.

2.4. The Committee asked whether the Department had drawn up any programme to fill these gaps progressively. The Director General Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) stated that "We have drawn up programmes for different area. The steps are required to taken not only by us but by some other Ministries also who are getting these statistics".

2.5. In a note furnished to the Committee, the Department has stated that Statistics is a decentralised subject and different Ministries and the Department of Statistics have drawn up programmes to fill up data gaps progressively in their respective fields. The CSO advises different Ministries on the programmes to be taken up to fill up gaps and the technical details of such programmes like improvement of crop statistics, statistics of livestock products, are referred to CSO. The programmes already drawn up to fill up the major data gaps in the areas listed above are given below:

(i) Incomplete coverage of crop statistics, regular Statistics of livestock products, forest products, inland fisheries, fruit and vegetables and farm inputs.

2.6. The Schemes proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture and included in the Sixth Plan (1980-85) are listed below:

- (i) Extension of crop estimation surveys to fruits, vegetables and minor crops;
- (ii) Sample surveys on estimation of production of major livestock products in States;
- (iii) Continuance and expansion of comprehensive scheme for studying the cost of cultivation of principal crops.

(ii) Unorganised sector in industries, unorganised transport Sector, unorganised segments of the services activities;

2.7. The Economic Census and follow up surveys scheme of CSO aims at providing data on the structure, employment emoluments, input/output, value added in different unorganised sectors of manufacturing transport and

services. Following the 1977 Census of non-agricultural establishments, follow up surveys covering non-factory manufacturing sector and transport and services were carried out in 1978-79 and 1979-80 respectively in collaboration with National Sample Surveys. Again, following the 1980 Economic Census, sample surveys are proposed to be taken up in 1984 and 1985 on similar lines.

(iv) *Construction activities*

2.8. Construction activities could not be covered under the follow up sample surveys of Economic Census in 1977, as there were methodological problems involved in covering this sector. The NSSO have recently completed in 1980-81 methodological investigations on collection of data in the field of construction activities. Once this methodology is finalised, regular surveys will be taken up.

(v) *All India Index Number of retail prices*

2.9. It is difficult to get details of commodity-wise volume and value of retail trade which is necessary for deriving the weighting diagram for construction of retail price index, in the absence of a comprehensive survey of distributive trade. An All India Consumer Price Index Number covering all sections of population separately in rural and urban areas, can be thought as an alternative. Presently, consumer price index numbers are being constructed for (i) Industrial Workers (Urban areas), (ii) Non-manual employees (Urban), and (iii) Agricultural Labour. A combined index of these indices into an all-India index can not however, be considered as proxy to All India retail price index as it will not cover all sections of population. The Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics of Prices and Cost of Living have recommended that the NSS Consumer expenditure data might be utilised for constructing weighting diagrams for different classes of workers in rural and urban areas, as these surveys provide dependable estimates of expenditure pattern at state level. CSO has advised the State Directorates of Economics and Statistics to take up compilation of such an index. Two States, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have finalised the methodology for constructing such consumer price index numbers for selected essential items. Uttar Pradesh have also finalised the methodology for rural index. Once the State indices are available, they could be suitably combined to derive an All India Index of retail prices.

(vi) *Environment and energy balance*

2.10. The present gaps in the field of environment and energy were discussed at length at the Fifth Conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations held in November 1981. There is no statistical cell at present in the Department of Environment. Certain sectoral data are

at present being collected by various agencies. The collection and analysis of data on parameters of environmental change have to be organised and developed in a systematic manner. It should not be difficult for the Department of Environment to maintain these statistics on a regular basis once an appropriate environmental statistical system is developed. The Conference of Central and State Statistical organisations have recommended that an environmental statistical cell might be set up in the Department of Environment to compile relevant data in different sectors and establish appropriate linkages both at the Centre and in the States. The CSO proposes to assist the Department of Environment in this regard and provide linkages with the user organisations and agencies producing sectoral data.

2.11. As regard energy statistics, the Conference recommended that there should be a statistical cell in the Ministry of Energy for coordination of activities pertaining to development of energy statistics and in collaboration with the CSO, develop on a priority basis the following:

- (a) data base for non-commercial fuels;
 - (b) more elaborate information on renewable energy sources;
 - (c) appropriate methodologies for measuring the animate energy sources for inclusion in the energy balance-sheets.
- (vii) *Distribution of household income by size classes: pattern of income, expenditure and savings separately for rural and urban areas.*

2.12. The Central Statistical Organisation have been emphasising the need for collection of information on household income. The NSSO could not however, take up earlier the collection of data. The NSSO has now proposed to take up methodological investigations for collection of information on household income. Once these procedures have been finalised, regular and systematic surveys could be taken up.

Priorities have been laid out to fill up the data gaps from time to time.

(viii) *Interstate Trade Movement:*

2.13. In a memorandum to the Committee it was suggested that the department of Statistics should play a greater role in generation of interstate Trade Movement data. During evidence Director General Central Statistical Organisation stated:—

“We are also of the view that there is urgent need for regular statistics on inter-state trade movement. Ministry of Commerce which is mainly concerned with coordination and consolidation of data on inland trade, have not suggested so far compilation of this type of information. The Directorate General of Com-

mercial Intelligence and Statistics are publishing information on rail-borne, river-borne and coastal trade. The other bodies involved will be the Ministry of Shipping and Transport, Railway Board, Indian Airlines and the State Governments. But there will be several difficult problems which are to be tackled by these organisations while working out the estimate of interstate movement.

Regarding rail-borne trade data the Railway Board are collecting information for 35 blocks; these blocks can be re-grouped into States. As regards data on river borne and road borne trade, it will be difficult to compile such statistics. Since this is an important subject in which the Ministry of Commerce themselves should be interested, we want to take up the question of compilation of such data with them and if they agree we wish to form a technical working group involving all persons, we may pursue the matter further with the Ministry of Commerce.

(ix) *Saving and Consumption series*

2.14 A view has been expressed that the Department of Statistics is **not** able to derive consistent series of savings and consumption.

2.15. Director General, CSO, stated in evidence (January, 1982) "We have not been able to derive consistent series of savings and consumption because we find gaps and discrepancies."

2.16. In a note furnished to the Committee after the evidence, the Department stated that estimates of saving as well as private consumption expenditure are available in the National Accounts Statistics.

2.17. The estimates of saving and consumption are consistent within the framework of the national accounts statistics in India.

However, estimates of saving and consumption of households as such have not been available in the absence of a comprehensive survey of household income and expenditure. The C.S.O. has taken up this question with the N.S.S.O. a number of times. In view of the difficulties of carrying out an income survey, the NSSO is proposing to first conduct a pilot survey on the subject in its 38th round. It is hoped that on the basis of this enquiry a comprehensive survey on income, consumption, expenditure and savings of the household by the NSSO may become feasible in the near future.

(x) *Household Income*

2.18 It has been stated in a memorandum that NSSO has covered over the years almost all subjects of importance in the Indian Economy. A significant exception is the one relating to Household Income. Currently, there

are no data on the distribution of household income from any official source. The only data that are available are from the ad-hoc surveys of the National Council of Applied Economic Research by investigators with a relatively small sample size. The difficult nature of enquiry on Household Income notwithstanding, the NSSO with its large team of investigators should explore the possibility of undertaking a full-fledged survey pertaining to household income in one of the ensuing rounds and provide for repeating it once in 5 years.

2.19 The representative of NSSO stated in evidence that "It is true that the NSSO has not so far done in large scale sample survey of income. Asked if this has been done on a small scale, the witness replied "we have not done that. We shall now do so as pilot survey." Asked why the organisation had so far not done survey on this subject and whether it was not a big gap in the statistics, the witness replied "methodologically it is a complex study. We still feel like that."

2.20 Asked why decision was taken not to have an income survey, the witness replied "that was because we thought the expenditure survey will partly serve the purpose of income survey also." When that Committee pointed out that other countries with more recent statistical systems than ours had collected income statistics, the witness replied "we have yet to develop the methodology." It was pointed out to the witness that the Council of Applied Economic Research had collected such statistics but the Department could not do so.

2.21 In a note furnished subsequently on the survey on household income the Deptt. has stated that Incomes is a very complex subject and Survey on incomes in our rural and urban set up requires extensive methodological experimentation. The NSSO has been conducting surveys on consumer expenditure which could be taken, to a large extent, to serve the purpose of income survey also. The question of taking up the income survey has been considered in the Governing Council but it was not found to be feasible to take up such a survey. The last occasion when the decision not to have a full survey on incomes was taken was the 29th meeting of the Governing Council of NSSO which met on 20-3-1980. They had recommended that "It was agreed that it would be more appropriate to have data on household income of a summary nature collected along with employment and unemployment and consumer expenditure survey rather than in a full-fledged survey." The NSSO is, no doubt appreciative of the gap in our statistical data base in respect of incomes data but consider it necessary to first explore appropriate methodology for collection of such data in our rural environment. Having in mind the needs to fill up the data gap as well as the need to have methodological experimental in this regard, the Working Group appointed by the Governing Council for NSSO to plan the 38th round survey on employment

and unemployment and consumer expenditure in its meeting on 25-26 November 1981 suggested setting up of a specific for methodological work to pre-test, through pilot studies, different approaches before any specific approach (schedule, questions, concepts and definitions etc.) is adopted for large scale nation-wide survey on incomes. A proposal has therefore, been formulated recently and included in the Annual Plan 1982-83. This has been approved by the Planning Commission.

2.22 Only after a proper survey methodology gets established in this field, question of conducting such surveys on regular intervals with proper periodicity could be finalised.

It would thus be apparent that the question of undertaking full-fledged survey on household incomes is receiving active consideration in the NSSO.

(xi) Per Capita Income Studies

2.23 The Committee asked if the Department had undertaken any studies for international comparison of per capita income, comparing India with other countries making suitable adjustments for the difference in concepts.

2.24 Secretary (Deptt. of Statistics) stated that "the Department as such has not undertaken any study for international comparison, but India has been associated with the International comparison, Project (ICP) which has been sponsored by the United Nations. There are four phases of IV has been undertaken now and India also will be participating in that. Phase I which pertained to the year 1970 extended to 10 countries. phase II covered 16 countries.

The witness added "Whenever meetings are called, firstly we participate in them; secondly the data which is required for the purpose of international comparison being supplied by us.

2.25 Asked whether the Department was not making its own analysis, Secretary (Deptt. of Statistics) stated "No." The question is that we ourselves have been doubting whether the methodology which is adopted for this is a perfect methodology. For that purpose we have set up an expert committee to go into this question." Asked when the expert Committee was set up, the Director General CSO replied "about 4-5 months ago."

(xii) Consumption Expenditure

2.26 The Committee asked when the pattern of consumption Expenditure was last published by the Department and to which period it related and whether it had not become out-dated by the time it was published.

2.27 The representatives of NSSO stated "During 1973-74 the pattern of consumption expenditure was fast published. Again the results of earlier round were published during 1979." Asked whether any series were published after the pattern of 1973-74 witness replied, "it is not published. Of course I would like to say that the pattern of consumption expenditure does not change fast. In my opinion that is the logic why the Governing council recommended these surveys once in five years. The Governing Council has considered this issue and they have not recommended conducting surveys of consumption expenditure each year."

2.28 Expressing his opinion, Chairman, Governing Body of NSSO stated "I do not think there is any need to do once a year. With all the knowledge that we have, I do not think that there is a great change in the pattern of consumer expenditure in short periods of time, So if you have got date at 5 year interval I do not think it is a great violations of any principle."

2.29 In a note furnished to the Committee subsequently, the Department has stated that the subject of consumer expenditure was covered earlier in almost all the successive NSS rounds of socio-economic surveys upto the NSS 28th round (1973-74) and later once in five years. The Governing Council of NSSO, in its 15th meeting held on 24-25 January 1974, reviewed, among other things, the subjects to be covered in the subsequent rounds and took a view on the long term programme of the NSSO and the periodicity of the different subjects to be covered by the NSSO. The Governing Council recommended (in the 15th meeting as quoted above) the following programme and periodicity:

- (i) Population, births, deaths, disability, morbidity, fertility, maternity and child care and family planning.
- (ii) Debt and investment and capital formation once in 10 years
- (iii) Land holding and livestock enterprises
- (iv) Employment and unemployment, rural labour enquiry, and consumer expenditure once in five years.
- (v) Self-employment in non-agricultural sector

2.30 The five groups of subjects cited above will cover in all seven rounds i.e., seven out of 10 years. The remaining 3 years out of the ten year programme may be kept open for surveys on other subjects so as to accommodate special requests from the Central and State Governments.

2.31 The above short period and long term programme for the socio-economic surveys of the NSSO was subsequently approved by the Cabinet.

2.32 In the light of the above, after 1973-74 the next round was 32nd (1977-78) where consumer expenditure survey was carried out. This will be

followed by the consumer expenditure survey in the NSS 38th round starting from January 1983.

2.33 It has been stated in a memorandum that currently data of consumers expenditure available for a series of years in a highly aggregative form. It will be fore meaningful to have the data for rural areas tabulated not only by expenditure classes but also by size of land operated as a regular feature.

2.34 During evidence the representatives of the NSSO stated "In the 32nd round, 1977-78 we have got them tabulated on the basis of the land possessed. So, this point has been taken care or. For the 38th round we are considering land operating as a classification variable. The 38th Round will be taken up from January 1983."

Montly Index of Industrial Production

2.35 The Department has stated that there has not been any systematic study to assess the accuracy of the monthly index of industrial production. The Department has, however, explained the system of collection of data for the preparation of this index and it has added that "It will not, therefore, be unreasonable to infer that the compiled indices are, by and large consistent and correct."

2.36 The Department has also stated that beginning with the index series with base 1946, indices of Industrial production have been compiled and released from July 1950 onwards continuously for all months. However, different series are not strictly comparable with each other due to variation in coverage of items and improved techniques of compilation in later series.

2.37 Elucidating the position Director General CSO stated that "when we compile the index, the first step that we take in the unit is to see that there is consistency of the reported figures and then see whether the coverage is adequate. We know that the factory unit record these figures and send them to government. As it is a statutory obligation, more than 95 per cent of the units respond to this. Secondly, we also closely scrutinise the figures that are collected. We collect them monthly on a regular basis. If there is a sudden jump, we analyse what could be the cause for this. We get into touch with the concerned ministry to find out whether it could be adequately explained. If there is an increase we also check up the trend using recent month's figures. We also check with other external figures. From the data available in the National Income Division, we are working out implicit quantum indices for manufacturing sector. We also check up whether the implicit quantum indices which we compile independently, are broadly/

comparable with the corresponding figures of the industrial production. We find that far most of the years, the two index figures are quite close. That does not mean that there cannot be any error at all. However we do take precautions to see that the figures are consistent. There may be a possibility that sometimes the factory units themselves may not be quoting the correct production figures. For that a sample check may have to be introduced. So far this has not been done in compilation of the index. Regarding the second part of the question, we generally use index number for short-run comparisons; we ourselves the limitations of making long-term analysis of trend. While revising the base year, we want to make it more comprehensive. Initially we did not have the resources to cover a large percentage of industrial units. We also try to improve the quality of data in terms of coverage and non-response. When non-comparability is introduced as and when the base year of the index is revised and the coverage is improved, we link the two consecutive index series by the method of splicing. If we work out the linking factor based on comparable acts of industrial units, then the linking factor could be used for building up a long term meaningful series of index numbers of industrial production. No doubt, the long term series is also subject to certain limitation. But it is expected to give reasonably good results for the purpose of policy making."

2.38. Asked about the base year, the representative of CS stated that "the base year is 1970. We are shifting it base year to 1980-81. We will revise the whole thing."

(xiv) *NSSO Methodology*

2.39. Commenting on the methodology adopted by the NSSO, it has been stated in a memorandum that while the methodology is generally satisfactory, it (NSSO) tends to collect too much of information and tabulate too little with a massive time lag. This possibly happens because they do not receive precise and pointed demand requiring information from the user Ministries/Departments as such too much information is collected to meet various possible questions that may become relevant to the general subject of the round.

2.39 (a) Explaining the position Secretary (Statistics) stated during evidence that "the various Ministries and State Government suggest to NSSO the subjects to be covered in any specific round. These suggestions are examined by the NSSO governing Council. There is also a cycle of ten years which has already been approved by the government as a result of the recommendations of the Governing Council. We do not receive invariably the precise suggestions for this purpose. These suggestions are in general terms and it is on that basis that the Governing Council decides the subject and also decides the type of schedule Questionnaire which has to be formulated. The Governing Council invariably associates various experts for the purpose of deciding the details of the subject and for determining the Questionnaire."

Educating the people for collecting statistics:

2.40. It has been stated in a memorandum that there is immense scope of improvement in the quality of statistical data emerging from the schedules canvassed by the field investigators with better cooperation of the people with the field staff etc. In this context, it has been suggested that concerted efforts to educate the people regarding the importance of reliable statistics through mass media would be helpful.

Secretary (Department of Statistics) stated that "various steps are taken for the purpose of bringing it to the notice of the community and to canvass this. One of the steps is that a small folder is brought out in English Hindi as well as in regional languages, in a handout form, with a view to apprise the public of the activities of NSSO.

2.41. After the subject of a round is finalised, a separate folder on the subject would be brought out by the NSSO. Our field officers who are engaged in the task of data collection are also provided with an introductory document for this purpose to enable them to indicate to the respondents the purpose of the enquiry which has been undertaken. 'As matter of fact, we arrange an All India Training Conference, the Regional Conference and the press hand-outs are distributed at such Conference for the purpose of information to the public. I would like particularly to illustrate the current we have even made a film in order to bring it to the notice of the public the purpose of that round. Sometimes, talks are also delivered over the All India Radio by our various officers for bringing this to the information of the public.'

Outdated Bench Marks:

2.42. It has been stated in a memorandum submitted to the Committee that for certain sectors such as unorganised sectors of industry and trade data base is weak and the CSO is obliged to make a number of assumption to arrive at their estimates. These assumptions are derieved from relationships. relationships observed in them have no doubt changed. But the CSO has RBI. However most of these surveys are now outdated. For instance the empirical base for the un-organised industry sector is 1969-70 and for trade, 1965-66. A great deal of time has passed since these surveys and the relationships observed in them have no doubt changed. But the CSO has continued to use them for lack of other information.

Director General CSO stated that "The point which has been mentioned here is quite correct that we are not in a position to utilise current data while formulating our national estimates mainly because the data that we have do not sometimes relates to the current year. So we look for bench-mark data. Because we want to estimate for the country as a whole, most of the time we have to depend on data collected through the National Sample

Survey. But it is often noticed that the basic information which we have for the country as a whole relates to a year which is not the current year. However, the current years estimates are derived by carrying forward the benchmark estimates using current available data of some other variable co-related with the basic characteristic under study.

The witness added "to have data for household, unregistered manufacturing and trade we are using the latest figures which are available for 1974-75 based on 29th Round of NSS". Asked whether there were any benchmark figures of sixties used in the National Accounts the witness replied "There are some. We have recently brought out one book which give full details of the method of calculation."

2.43. When pointed out by the Committee that the Department could not rely on benchmark figures of sixties while attending the United Nations Conferences, the witness replied, "we are faced with difficulties in getting more reliable estimates of national income. We have introduced follow up surveys of economic excess."

2.44 Asked whether the Department would up-date the outdated benchmark figures of sixties and bring them up to seventies, Secretary, Departments of Statistics, replied "so far as CSO's estimation of the national income is concerned, the data collection is dependent on various Ministries and various organisations. Now, here we will have to make a scheme for changing our bench-mark figures from Sixties".

(xii) Evaluation of the reliability of statistics

2.45. The Department has stated that although no agency as such has been entrusted with the task of evaluation of the work done by the CSO, in 1979 the Committee which reviewed the National Statistical System had critically examined the work done by the CSO while reviewing the National Statistical system.

2.46. When asked what views, if any, were expressed by the Review Committee on National Statistical System on the reliability or accuracy of the statistics produced by CSO. Director General, CSO stated during evidence that the Review Committee "have not expressed any view on the reliability and accuracy of the available statistics". Asked if the terms of reference included evaluation, the witness replied "No".

The itness added "As far as evaluation part is concerned that we normally do is to get views of the users and we ourselves do the evaluation. It is not only the government agencies. We get the views of many of the outside agencies which are using our data. The Technical Advisory Committee set up to look into any specific aspect includes the research institution and other users organisations. They go into the CSO has been

doing Normally, there are a number of Conference and Seminars on specific topics which are attended by the CSO and many other organisation; the people coming there present papers. One of the main contributions they make is, they comment on the quality of data produced by the CSO and other Government agencies. These comments are made that there are gaps and deficiencies in the information".

2.47 Asked whether there was any unit within CSO which looked at the reliability of the data, Secretary Department of Statistics stated that "So far as statistics are concerned, these are being collected by various agencies. And the question of reliability is related to data being collected by different agencies. The Department of Statistics really collects basic data which is derived from various surveys conducted by the NSSO".

2.48 Asked if the Department had any objection to an independent evaluation of the statistics published by them from the point of view of reliability, the witness stated "we will have to define areas where we want the reliability to be tested". Asked if within those parameters, the Department had any objection to an evaluation being done, the Secretary replied "we cannot have any objection".

(xiii) *Computer Centre*

2.49 It was found from the information supplied by the Department that while the production time for the computer installed in the Computer Centre had gone down from 11898 hours in 1976 to 9113 hours in 1980, the non-production time had gone up from 3437 hours in 1976 to 4658 hours in 1980.

2.50. The Committee asked why the non-production time was going up from year to year and whether it was due to the computers being out of use or lack of demand. During evidence the Director Computer Centre stated "The non-production time is going up due to two or three reasons. The non-production time consists of the actual machine down time, that is, (i) when the computer has failed for one reason or the other of its own, or (ii) for reasons of the failure of air-conditioning or supply of electricity etc.; plus whenever the machine fails like this, data that is in the memory is washed off without previous intimation requiring the job to be re-run. So, the non-production time consists of machine down time plus the time that we have to devote for the re-run of the job that is already on the machine when it suddenly stops. All these factors put together contribute to the machine down time going up".

2.51 As regards the question whether non-production time was due to the lack of the demand, the witness stated "We have enough demand; in fact, we have more demand than any absolute honeywell computers could cope with. It is for this reason that we had been trying to replace

the second-hand computers purchased in 1966-67, by getting a three times faster III generation computer to meet full demand. The tests on that would be over by the first week of February. Briefly, therefore, the machine down time is not due to the lack of demand but it is due to the old machines not cooperating."

The witness added that:—

"We had purchased second-hand reconditioned machines in 1966-67 and their economic life already expired by about 1975. We have been trying to make most of it because we had no other way till recently. We will soon be in a better position to meet full demand by running the new computer round-the-clock."

(xix) *Economical Analysis*

2.52 In their report, the Three Member Committee appointed by Government on the re-organisation of NSS Work (1969) observed that "the work of economic analysis of economic data has been largely neglected and NSS output has been reduced to publication of data in the form of "Tables with notes." This is unsatisfactory because potential users have found it difficult to use the NSS data in this form. Without guidance as to their overall comparability with relevant data from the sources, their implications for economic analysis and their limitations to the formulation of policy." The Committee recommended that the NSS Council should treat comprehensive economic analysis of collected data and its publication as an integral part of its functions and provide for adequate and economic analytical staff for the purpose. It was also pointed out that as a result of neglect of economic analysis in the past a certain imbalance has developed in staffing of NSS. In general more data are being collected than are being tabulated and more are being tabulated than are subjected to any economic analysis or even detailed statistical analysis.

2.53 In a memorandum it has been suggested that although the subjects covered by National Sample Survey Organisation vary from round to round, some topics like consumer expenditure have been covered every year till recently. It would be better if reports for individual rounds are brought out with critical analysis of data. In the case of consumer expenditure, for example one would be interested not only in the level of pattern of consumption during a year but shift in the pattern over years. Here time series analysis of data collected would be of a great use.

It has been further stated that no doubt an attempt has been made of late to present an analysis of data for a few topics in the form of

articles published in the name of staff members in the journal called Sarvekshana. What is desirable is that NSSO might take on itself the responsibility for undertaking and presenting an authoritative analysis in the form of consolidated reports at periodical intervals.

In a written reply, the Ministry have stated that Pursuant to the recommendations of the three member Committee (1969) the NSS activities were reorganised in 1979, and a new Division viz., economic Analysis Division (EAD) was created in December 1973 with a small nucleus staff. The present sanctioned strength of the Economic Analysis Division consists of 1 Director, 1 Officer on Special Duty, 2 Deputy Directors, Senior Investigators and 2 Junior investigators. With this meagre staff strength the EAD.

- (i) offered constructive suggestions for improving the tabulation programmes of socio-economic rounds with a view to getting tables which would be amenable for economic analysis.
- (ii) suggested the necessary modifications in schedules for surveys under NSS.
- (iii) critically examined the NSS 'Tables with notes' and offered comments on the estimates suggesting modifications wherever necessary.

2.54 It may be pointed out that recent NSS report No. 298 has given some analysis along with results and tables, instead of bringing out only tables with notes. Some analytical articles have also been prepared and published by the Economic Analysis Division.

2.55 The functions of the EAD cover in its scope all the Rounds which broadly fall into following five subjects categories as approved in the long-term and short-term programme of the NSSO:

- (i) Population, births, deaths, disability, morbidity, fertility, maternity and child care and family planning;
- (ii) Debt, investment and capital formation;
- (iii) Landholdings and livestock enterprises;
- (iv) Employment and unemployment, rural labour enquiry and consumer expenditure;
- (v) Unorganised enterprises in non-agricultural sectors.

2.56 To attempt economic analysis in all these areas of NSS activity, the Economic Analysis Division (NSSO) needs substantial strengthening. As the existing resources of the Division are grossly inadequate, it was considered expedient to utilise the services of experts from the academic

world, research institutions as consultants for short durations. Accordingly, a plan scheme entitled "Economic analysis of NSS data—Augmentation of resources" has been included under the 6th Five Year Plan proposals and also in the annual plan 1982-83.

2.57 There are gaps and deficiencies in the data base economy in various fields. For example, in the agriculture and allied sectors, major gaps are in the fields of crop statistics, livestock products, forest products, inland fisheries, fruits and vegetables and farm inputs. In the field of industry, major lacuna is in the un-organised sector. In the field of trade, distributive trade statistics and trade by road are the two major segments in which systematical data are not available. Similar is the position with regard to unorganised transport sector. Construction activity and unorganised segments of the services activities are the other area where there is data gap.

2.58 An important area in which statistical aggregates are at present not being compiled relates to All-India Index Number of Retail Prices. Some other areas for which data are at present not adequately available relate to environment or energy balance.

2.59 One of the most important lacunae in the field of National Accounts Statistics in India is the lack of data on distribution of household income of size classes. Another aspect of economic statistics where information is lacking is on pattern of income expenditure and saving separately for rural and urban areas. The list given above is not exhaustive.

2.60 Some of the factors responsible for non-collection of data in these areas are stated to be deficiencies of manpower resources for data collection, supervision and compilation non-response in implementing the statutory provision for data collection, non-availability of proper operational methodology for collection of requisite data in certain fields and lack of any statutory obligation for maintenance of records in certain areas.

2.61 The Committee take note of the various programmes drawn up by the Department of Statistics to fill up major data gaps in certain areas. They find that the Department has not drawn up any programme to deal with the problems of non-response in implementing statutory provisions for data collection and the lack of statutory obligation in certain other fields to maintain records for the purpose of collecting data. The Committee feel that in these two fields Government can and should take remedial measures at the earliest.

2.62 The Committee find that the Department has already initiated certain studies to fill gaps in methodologies in the collection of data. Methodologies investigations have been recently completed in the field of construction activities, and once this methodology is finalised, regular surveys

will be taken up. The Committee would await the outcome of these exercises. (S. No. 3)

2.63 In regard to compilation of All India Index Number of Retail Prices, the Department is finding it difficult to get details of commodity-wise volume and value of retail trade which is necessary for deriving the weighting diagrams for construction of retail price index, in the absence of a comprehensive survey of distributive trade. An All India Prices Index Number covering all sections of population separately in rural and urban areas can be thought of as an alternative. The matter has been considered by the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics of Prices and cost of living and pursuant of its recommendation CSO has advised the State Directorates of Economic and Statistics to take up compilation of Consumer Price Index Numbers. Two States, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, have finalised the methodology for constructing such Consumer Price Index Numbers for selected essential items. Uttar Pradesh has also finalised the methodology for rural index. The Department feels that once the State indices are available they could be suitably combined to derive All India Index of Retail Prices. The Committee hope that the Department of Statistics would be able to persuade all the States to undertake the necessary exercises in this regard expeditiously so that it can then construct the All-Indian Index of Retail Prices. (S. No. 4)

2.64 The Department of Statistics has not been able to derive consistent series of savings and consumption of households in the absence of a comprehensive survey of household income and expenditure. According to the Department, incomes is a very complex subject and a survey on incomes in rural and urban set-up requires extensive methodological experimentation. The working group appointed by the governing Council for NSSO to plan the 38th round survey on employment and unemployment and consumer expenditure in its meeting held in November, 1981 suggested setting up of a specific unit for methodological work to pre-test, through pilot studies, different approaches before any specific approach is adopted for large scale nation-wise survey on incomes. The Committee hope that the pilot studies on methodological experimentation would be completed as scheduled and a comprehensive survey on income, consumption expenditure and savings to the Households by NSSO will become feasible in the near future. (S. No. 5)

2.65 The Committee find that the Department has not undertaken any studies for international comparison of per-capita incomes including India's based comparable real price though India has been associated with the International Comparison Project which has been sponsored by the United Nations. The Department has not been making the comparative analysis because it has doubts whether the methodology adopted for this

purpose is a perfect methodology. It has set up an Expert Committee to go into the question of methodology. The Committee feel it rather strange that while India has been associated with the International Comparison Project of the United Nations for which the Indian experts also supply data, they are not making such a comparative analysis within their own country. The Committee hope that appropriate methodology in this regard would be evolved soon and per capita comparison would be undertaken by the Department as early as possible. (S. No. 6)

2.66 The Committee would like to suggest in this context that the gaps in methodologies for collecting data in all other important fields should be clearly identified and schemes formulated to conduct methodological investigations to evolve appropriate methodologies in these fields. (S. No. 7)

2.67 The Committee note that while schemes have been drawn up to fill major data gaps in a number of areas, there are still some areas such as inter-state trade movement, live-stock products, forest products etc. where the gaps will persist.

2.68 The Department should clearly identify all such gaps with reference to their importance to socio-economic planning and policy making and draw perspective plans to fill those gaps keeping in view the available resources and man-power. (S. No. 8)

2.69 The Committee note that the subject of consumer expenditure was covered earlier in almost all the successive NSS rounds of socio-economic surveys upto the 28th round (1973-74). In 1974 the Governing Council of the NSSO decided that the consumer expenditure surveys should thereafter be conducted once in five years. In the opinion of the experts the consumer expenditure does not change fast and there is no need to conduct consumer expenditure surveys every year. The Committee hope that reduction in the frequency of such surveys to once in five years have no adverse effect on planning and policy-making. (S. No. 9)

2.70 The Department has admitted that there has not been any systematic study to assess the accuracy of the monthly index of industrial production, though it feels that it has reason to infer that the compiled indices are by and large consistent or correct. The Committee find that the Department is feeling the necessity of introducing a sample check to test the accuracy of indices compiled by it. The Committee also take note of the fact that though indices of industrial production have been compiled and released from July, 1950 inwards continuously for all months, the different series are not strictly comparable with each other due to variation in coverage of items and improved techniques of compilation in later series. The Committee also note that at present the base year for industrial pro-

duction indices is 1970. The Department has accepted the need to shift it to 1980-81. The Committee feel that there is need for a systematic study of the various aspects of indices of industrial production with a view to assessing their accuracy and taking appropriate measures to make them more reliable, more meaningful and more helpful to policy makers.

(S. No. 10)

2.71 It has been brought to the Committee's notice that while the methodology followed by NSSO is generally satisfactory, the NSSO tends to collect too much of information and tabulate too little with a massive time lag. The Department has stated that the suggestions received by the Governing Council from Ministries etc. are in general terms and the Governing Council of NSSO decides the subjects which have to be covered in a round and the types of questionnaires which have to be formulated. In this process Experts are also associated. The Committee desire that the view expressed to the Committee regarding the NSSO collecting too much information and tabulating too little should be taken note of by the Governing Council in drawing up questionnaires.

(S. No. 11)

2.72 The Committee note that a number of measures such as publication of publicity folders press hand-outs, radio-talks etc. have been taken by the Department to inform and educate the public in regard to the surveys undertaken by the NSSO. For the 36th Round of NSSO survey a film was also made to bring to the notice of the public the purpose of that Round. The Committee welcome these measures and hope that such publicity programmes will be continued to elicit better response from public.

(S. No. 12)

2.73 The Committee find that the benchmarks in respect of many series brought out by the Department of Statistics such as National accounts, un-organised industry sector are out-dated in that they relate to the 60's. The Committee feel that having statistical data related to benchmarks of 60's is not a very satisfactory of affairs. In their opinion it is very necessary to up-date the statistical base and bringing it as close to 80's as possible.

(S. No. 13)

2.74 The Committee regret to note that the Department has not so far evaluated the quality and accuracy of the work done by Central Statistical Organisation. The Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) neither expressed any view on this matter nor were they asked to do so. The Committee would like that an independent and expert evaluation of the quality of work done by Central Statistical Organisation to which the Department has no objection should be arranged at the earliest.

(S. No. 14)

2.75 The Committee find that the non-production time of computer centre has been going up since 1976. From 3437 hours in 1976, the non-production time had gone up to 4658 hours in 1980. The two main reasons

for the increase in non-production time are stated to be the break-down of computers or the interruption in their working due to power failure. The Committee are aware that the Honeywell Computers installed in the computer Centre are old and obsolete and they break down very frequently. But so long as they are there and are not replaced, the Committee feel that better maintenance of the machines can cut down the down-time to a considerable extent. They hope that the preventive maintenance of the computers will be taken seriously and carried out regularly. (S. No. 15)

2.76 The Three-Member Committee appointed by Government on the re-organisation of NSS work (1969) had observed that the work of economic analysis of economic data had been generally neglected. It recommended that the NSS Council should treat comprehensive economic analysis of collected data and its publication as an integral part of its functions and provide for adequate and economic analytical staff for the purpose. The need for the publication of authoritative analysis by NSSO in the form of consolidated reports at periodical intervals has also been brought to the Committee's notice in certain memoranda. The Committee find that pursuant to the recommendations of the Three-Member Committee (1969) a new Division, namely, Economic Analysis Division (EAD) was created in December, 1973 with a small nucleus staff. Recently this Division has attempted analysis and brought out analytical articles a few subjects. The Department has informed the Committee that to attempt economic analysis in all the areas of NSS activity, the Economic Analysis Division needs sufficient strengthening. A plan Scheme entitled "Economic Analysis of NSS Data—Augmentation of resources" has been included under the 6th Five Year Plan proposals and also in Annual Plan 1982-83. This is a welcome though belated measure. The Committee feel that publication of data without critical analysis is of little use to potential users. In their opinion publication of comprehensive economic and statistical analysis should be regarded as an integral part of the exercise of data collection and publication and adequate staff and other infrastructure should be provided for the purpose without delay. (S. No. 10)

(xx) *Analytical Studies*

2.77. The Committee pointed out that upto the year 1978-80 in the Annual Reports of the Department of Statistics, Analytical Studies was shown as a Separate Division of CSO but there was no mention of this Division in the List of Divisions given in the Administrative Report of the Department for the year 1980-81. In a written reply the Department of Statistics has stated:

"In pursuance of the decision taken at the meeting of the senior officers of the CSO held on 18 August, 1979, an internal review of the work programme of the various Divisions was

dertaken to identify the resources which could be utilised for taking up additional items of work which were considered more important. The review showed that the Analytical Unit had completed the assignment of "Directory of Statistics-India" and "Guide to Official Statistics" entrusted to it and was engaged in preparing a "Directory of Statistics for Union Territories" and bibliography on the concepts and definitions used in official statistics. It was, therefore, decided that in addition to the existing work programme, the Analytical Unit could look after the work in the sectors of transport, tourism, civil aviation and communications. Subsequently, in view of the changed nature of work handled by the Unit, it was redesignated as Transport and Communication Division and shown as such in the Annual Report of the Department of Statistics 1980-81."

2.78. The Committee are surprised how the Department has reorganised the Analytical Division into Transport and Communication Division with the result the identity of the Division as or separate analytical unit has been lost. The Committee are not satisfied with the work done by the Analytical Division. It is evident that the Analytical Division could not undertake any indepth studies of linkages of one sector with the other in order to identify inter-relationship which could help policy formulation. The Committee expected that the Division would have undertaken such studies. The Committee are of the view that development of statistics has taken place so far mainly towards the coverage and content and some efforts have been made in timeliness in processing and presentation of data but the statistical system has not been able to cater appropriately to the policy needs of the Government. This is mainly because enough attention has not been devoted in developing appropriate statistical expertise for effective analysis and interpretation of already available data for the use of Government. The Committee suggest that the Analytical Division should have high level expert guidance on whole-time basis. The officer-in-charge of the Division should be made responsible for discharging the functions assigned instead of seeking for consultants for short run periods. The posts sanctioned for Analytical Work should not be used for other activities like Transport and Communication.

(S. No. 17)

2.79. The Committee also feel that there should be closer co-ordination between CSO and Indian Statistical Institute in regard to exchange of technical know-how for effectively implementing the functions assigned to the Analytical Studies by CSO. (Sl. No. 18)

2.80. Developmental work in official statistical system should also be given due priority for implementaion so that functions allotted under

planned schemes are not allowed to lapse because of inordinate delay in effective implementation. (Sl. No. 19)

Collection of Current Statistics of Wholesale and Retail Trade

2.81. In a note the Department of Statistics have informed the Committee that a plan Scheme on Collection of Current Statistics of Wholesale and Retail Trade has been prepared by C.S.O. With an outlay of Rs. 47.7 lakhs for the Five Year Plan 1980—85 and for the year 1981-82 outlay of Rs 11.3 lakhs has been approved.

2.82. The main objective of the scheme is to evolve suitable compilation procedures from the primary level onwards on a pilot basis in two States viz Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat and one Union Territory of Goa, Daman & Diu. The results of the pilot study will be assessed for deciding the methodology to be adopted in all the States and Union Territories which are proposed to be covered later.

2.83. The scheme envisages compilation of data on turn over available with sales tax offices (for non-agricultural commodities) and from the regulated markets (for agricultural commodities) under the control of Agricultural Marketing Organisations. The scheme provides for giving grants-in-laid to States for creation of suitable posts at the headquarters of the State Directorates of Economics & Statistics and at the district level for enabling them to undertake the compilation work. There is also a provision for creating a small cell in CSO comprising one Office on Special Duty, one Senior Investigator and one Stenographer for technical guidance and co-ordination.

2.84. The Ministry of Finance have agreed to the proposal regarding giving grants-in-aid to the States for creation of posts at headquarters of State Directorate of Economics and Statistics and at the district level. The creation of a Cell in the CSO for implementation of the Scheme has yet not been agreed to.

2.85. One of the grey areas for development of Statistics relates to "wholesale and retail trade" for which the CSO has indicated processing of a plan scheme for implementation during the Sixth Plan period. The Ministry of Finance has already agreed to the proposals for grants-in-aid to the States for creation of posts for primary level collection, correlation and compilation of data at district/State level. The Committee views with concern the delay in implementation of the core-scheme. (Sl. No. 20)

(xxi) Working Class Family Income Survey

2.86. At the instance of the Committee a copy of the technical report on sampling design and other aspects of the Working Class Family Income and Expenditure Survey 1971 made available to the Committee.

2.87 The Committee express their disappointment over 3 sketchy technical report on the sampling design and other aspects of the Working Class Family Income and Expenditure Survey, 1971. The Committee urges the Department to make full use of the valuable data collected during Family Budget Enquiries (Income and Expenditure Survey) for detailed cross-sectarial and econometric analysis such as elasticities of demand for essential consumer goods, income distributions, concentration ratios etc. (Sl. No. 21E)

(xxii) *Participation in the work programme of developing an integrated System for Classification of Activities and Goods*

2.8. The Harmonised System Committee (HSC) of the Customs Co-operation Council (CCS) has been engaged in evolving the Harmonised System (HS) of Classification. The HS is intended for application in customs tariff for purposes of classification and also for statistical purposes. In the Customs Cooperation Council, India is represented by Member (Customs), Central Board of Excise and Customs, Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance consults CSO in regard to matters concerning statistical classifications. A Special Group was convened by HSC in December 1981 to draft a new Convention on HS. The CSO's views regarding adoption of HS in the national statistical classification were communicated to Ministry of Finance. The draft Convention prepared by the Special Group was also examined and views of CSO thereon were forwarded to the Ministry of Finance in January, 1982.

2.89. The United Nations' Statistical Office (UNSO) has taken a decision about the HS to play a major role in contributing to harmonisation of various statistics (external trade, production, industrial activity). It has also been decided by UNSO that in the third revision of Standard International Trade Classification (SITC), correlation will be established with all the 1—dash sub-headings of the HS, and with certain 2—dash sub-headings. In order to provide advice and guidance over the time span covered by the work programme of UNSO, a point Working Group of UNSO and Statistical Office of European Communities (SOEC) on World Level Classifications has been formed. The CSO is represented on this Working Group. The Working Group has met three times—at Brussels from 21-25 November 1977 and at Luxembourg between 25-29 June, 1977 and between 12-15 May, 1981. The representative of the CSO participated in all the three meetings. The proposals drawn up by the SOEC for modification of HS received subsequently were examined and CSO's comments forwarded to UNSO/SOEC in September and November 1981.

2.90. It is seen from the Ministry's file that at the first two sessions of the Joint Working Group, CSO was represented by the Joint Director while for the third session a Deputy Director of the Organisation was nominated to participate in the meeting.

2.91. The Committee desire that necessary steps should be taken towards Standardisation of Classification in conformity with the Harmonised System (HS) of Classifications developed by the Customs Corporation Council in which India is represented as an Associate Member of the Council and consequently implementation of HS for Customs, trade, tariff and industry is governed by a Convention having legal status. In fact, such a classification at micro-level will be a handy tool for cross-sectional and sectoral economic analysis.

2.92 The Committee would also urge the Department of Statistics to ensure that only such officers as have proper experience and calibre in concerned fields are nominated to represent India on bodies such as Joint Group of UNSO and SOEC on World Level Classifications. (Sl. No. 22)

CHAPTER III

COORDINATION

(i) *Co-ordination of Statistical Activities*

3.1 Central Statistical Organisation is entrusted with the responsibility of co-ordination of activities of the Statistical offices at the Centre and in the States which in a decentralised statistical system is essential to avoid duplication of efforts to ensure optimum utilisation of resources. The principal mechanism through which this co-ordination is achieved is the conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations held once in 2 years. CSO also ensures a uniform approach on all statistical matters of common interest by participating in the meetings of high powered statistical Committee set up in the states.

3.2. The Committee asked to what extent the Department had been successful in avoiding duplication of data collection through Central, State and other agencies.

Director-General CSO stated "We feel that we have been able to avoid duplication of data collection between the Centre and the States to a large extent. We are not aware of any avoidable duplication between them. We not only discuss the programmes of collection of data at the Conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations but also scrutinise State plan schemes when the States try to collect something new. These plan schemes are examined by the Statistics and Surveys Division of the Planning Commission which is a part of the CSO. If we know that similar data have already been collected, then at that stage, we intervene and see that there is no duplication."

The witness added that "when we try to collect something new, we generally set up a Technical Advisory Committee or a working group where we consult not only the Central Ministries but also certain States which have done some work in that field. Some state representatives are also member of such technical groups. We try to ensure that whatever data collection of such technical groups. We try to ensure that whatever data collection is done, it is done in a co-ordinated manner so that there is no duplication between the Centre and the States."

3.3. Asked about co-ordination with Reserve Bank of India, Director, General CSO stated that "often consultation takes place between the RBI, our organisation and other agencies which are utilising the data."

3.4. Asked whether the data received from DGCIS and RBI matched, the witness stated, that "the Committee on Trade Statistics set up under the Chairmanship of Director-General, CSO have gone into this question and made recommendations as to how this discrepancy could be avoided. The report was submitted to the Ministry of Commerce. For two years, it is lying with them; they could not implement the recommendations because of staff union problem. The working group was set up by the Ministry of Commerce. The report suggests some remedial actions."

3.5. Asked about follow-up action taken on the report the witness added that "the Ministry of Commerce have asked us to submit the second part of the Report. We have yet to submit the second part of the report. They have not been able to take any concrete action except replacing certain old equipments."

3.6. In reply to another question the witness stated that the Report was submitted in 1979.

(ii) *Apex Body*

3.7. The Central Statistical Organisation's current role is to coordinate statistical activities at the Centre and State levels. The coordination is achieved mainly through the Conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations held once in two years. CSO has no direct control on the content of statistics or quality of statistics or functioning of various economic and statistical organisations in the Central Ministries or at State level.

3.8. The Department also admitted that as the data from which they collect statistics originates from several sources, the quality is not always uniform, depending as it does on the method of collection, the organisational set up for collecting and tabulating data, the quality of field staff, the concepts and procedures employed, and the varying time lag in the availability of results. The Department stated that shortcomings in the basic data are, therefore, necessarily of varying magnitudes and their overall impact on the national income estimates is too complex to be assessed."

3.9. It was suggested to the Committee by a user organisation that the coordinating role of the CSO should be made effective. This can be achieved if strong effective and functional linkage is created by knitting various Central and State economic and statistical organisations in the following manner:—

"An Executive Body that may direct and control the functions of CSO should be created. The heads of various economic and statistical organisations existing in all the Central Ministries may be appointed in ex-officio capacities (to their substantive ranks *i.e.* Adviser/Director as the case may be) under

CSO and these officers may deal with, advise and act in their specific branch of statistics on behalf of CSO. All statistical matters relating to various disciplines could thus be passed on to the ex-officio Eco. Advisors/Directors who could serve and work on ex-officio basis with CSO and respond to various statistical (national and international) needs and develop concepts and standards.

Directors of various State Statistical Bureaus/Directorates (region-wise and by rotation) could also form ex-officio functionaries of CSO.

The above functionaries could constitute the Executive Body for developing norms/standards and concepts and also for bringing about an effective coordination between various Ministries, States and CSO. Theoretically, CSO should act as the "clearing house" but in practice, the existing Advisors/Directors of various Ministries may function on behalf of CSO relating to Statistical matters dealt with in the respective Ministries.

CSO may however, continue to have direct responsibility for the collection, collation, compilation and processing of data relating to the following:

- (i) National Accounts Statistics,
- (ii) Economic Census,
- (iii) Statistical assistance of Planning Commission,
- (iv) Training programme,

and keep direct liaison with international statistical agencies strictly as above."

3.10. The Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) had also recommended that for technical guidance on policy issues, effective coordination, improvement of quality, identification of gaps and avoidance of duplication, it is necessary to establish an apex body with representation from Central Ministries, State Governments, Universities research institutions and non-official user organisations. The apex body should have its secretariat in the CSO and may be called National Advisory Board on Statistics.

3.11. The Review Committee on the National Statistical System (1980) also recommended that functions of co-ordination of Statistical activities at the Centre should be formally entrusted to the Department of Statistics by designating it as the 'Nodal Agency for Statistics'.

3.12. During evidence, Secretary Department of Statistics stated "the question raised is whether the Department of Statistics should be declared as a nodal agency for the purpose of collection of statistics.

3.13. The first entry (in the Allocation of Business Rules) is relevant, that is, standard, norms and method of collection of statistics. It does not cover the question of nodal agency. I was looking up the rules of business in the case of the Department of Electronics. The Government of India has made it a rule that whenever any electronic equipment is to be ordered from outside, the Department of Electronics should be consulted. It is not merely the Central Ministries which are concerned with the collection of Statistics but also the State Governments. If one has to get their coordination, then it can only be done by getting their consent on that point.

3.14. As far as the question of setting up of advisory board is concerned, the point is whether it should be given the obligatory clearance functions. The general opinion is that it should not be given the obligatory functions. We have to take a view regarding the form in which the National Advisory Board is to be set up and its composition. We shall be in a position to take this decision very shortly."

3.15. In a written reply furnished subsequently the Department has stated that the recommendations of the Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) for establishing an apex body called National Advisory Board on Statistics (NABS) is acceptable to the Department of Statistics. A Group set up in June, 1981 on the recommendations of the First Conference of State Ministers of Statistics, held in April, 1981 has gone into the composition and detailed working procedure for NABS and submitted its report in January, 1982. The Department of Statistics is processing the proposal for setting up the NABS.

3.16 According to the recommendations of this Group, the secretariat for the NABS will be provided by the CSO. The NABS will comprise 10 representatives from Central Ministries and 10 from the State Governments. Some of these will be appointed by partial rotation every two years.

3.17. Currently CSO is represented in various Technical Committees/ Working Groups on statistical subjects, set up by different Ministries. Further, CSO is also a member of the State Level Coordination Committees on Statistics which have been set up in different States to oversee and coordinate the statistical development activities in their respective States.

3.18. It is felt that there is no need to create an executive body as the proposed NABS would make the coordinating role of CSO more effective. Further, it may not be administratively feasible to appoint the

Heads of various economic and statistical organisations to work under CSO in *ex-officio* capacities.

(iii) *Prior Clearance for Undertaking Surveys*

3.19 The Review Committee on National Statistics System (1980) had recommended that "It should be made obligatory for all the organisations at the centre to take clearance from the National Advisory Board on Statistics (NABS) before launching any large scale statistical operation funded by Government. The State Governments may also issue executive orders to make it obligatory for the State Departments to seek clearance of the NABS in similar situations." (Paras 4.10 and 4.13).

3.20 The Committee asked if there was any system in vogue at present under which prior clearance of the Department of Statistics is taken by Central and State Agencies before undertaking any survey operations funded by Governments.

3.21 Secretary Department of Statistics stated that there was no such system of taking clearance of the Department of Statistics, before either the State Government or the Central Ministries undertook a survey operation. Sometimes they do refer it to the Department of Statistics or to CSO and then comments of the CSO or the Department of Statistics are available. Secretary added that a Committee which was set up to review the national statistical system had recommended that there should be a National Advisory Board on Statistics and whenever surveys are to be undertaken, the clearance of that National Advisory Board should be sought. This question was discussed at the meeting of the State Ministers of Statistics who gave their views. Ultimately, this question was referred to a Group. That Group has given its view that it should not be obligatory on the departments or on the State Governments to take a prior clearance because under the Constitution, statistics is in the Concurrent List. It is not always possible to bind the State Governments to do this."

3.22 Asked if introduction of such a system would not reduce duplication of work, Secretary (Statistics) stated that "on the question of avoiding duplication of work, when there is a centralised body set up for taking prior clearance and when they refer the matter to them, there is delay caused because of referring the matter to such a Central Organisation. We have to balance that."

Subject Panels in CSO

3.23 The Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) had recommended that "for laying down appropriate standards and to deal with the problems of quality, reliability and timeliness of data being

collected in different fields, subject panels may be set up at the centre for all important subjects on which major data collection is being undertaken or needs to be initiated, Besides representatives from central and state statistical offices, the subject panels should have subject matter specialists from administrative agencies, universities, research institutions and non-official user organisations as members."

3.24. Asked about the action taken by the Department on these recommendations, Secretary, Department of Statistics stated that already the machinery for consultation was there. "We call them technical committees and advisory groups. They are set up from time to time for this purpose."

3.25 The Committee pointed out that the Review Committee must have been aware of the position before it made recommendation for 'subject panels'. Director General, CSO stated that "this point was considered and they came to the conclusion that they are doing the job quite well. There were two deficiencies. All the subjects are not covered. The recommendation was that it needs to be systematically looked into. From that point of view, they should look into whether the existing technical committees would be sufficient or not or some additional institution or user organisation may also be added to the existing committees. Then there are some other sectors in which some new panel needs to be set up so that they can look into other areas which are not being looked into by any technical committee."

3.26 Asked whether there were experts from universities research institutions, administrative agencies on the existing committees, the witness replied "Generally it comprises representatives of the Ministries, State Governments, universities, research institutions and some of the users' organisations. There are many other areas where there is a need for them. This suggestion was accepted by the CSO. This was one of the points for discussion in the Ministers of Statistics Conference where all the States accepted this suggestion. So, it will be implemented."

(iv) *Synchronisation of Central and State Data*

3.27 According to the Press Report the Planning Minister observed at the inaugural session of All India Training Conference for 37th Round of State data tabulation, "This aspect needs to be looked into more seriously and State data tabulation. This aspect needs to be looked into more seriously and it should be possible to evolve a system by which the process of tabulation and pooling of Central and State is achieved smoothly and speedily."

3.28. The Chairman, Governing Council, NESO also observed on the occasion that the time has come to realise that the state and the central

301 LS—4.

sample should be pooled. This is a problem in Central and State relations. We would need some financial assistance but more than that streamlining of the system is required.

3.29 The Committee asked what measures have been taken to synchronise the tabulation of data collected by the Central and State agencies. Secretary, Department of Statistics stated that "in order that this problem could be looked into in detail the Governing Council of the NSSO recommended that we should set up a group to synchronise the compilation of the data by the States and the Centre. Thus a Technical Group was formed in the Department of Statistics, headed by a former CEO NSSO and Additional Secretary in the Ministry. The terms of reference which had been given to this Group were that it should study the problems which are faced by both the NSSO and the State Governments in synchronising the Central and State tabulation and suggest measures to achieve pooling of the sample results at the earliest. The Group is expected to give its report in five to six months."

(v) *Advisory Committees of the National Income Division*

3.30 It was stated in a memorandum that National Income Division of the Central Statistical Organisation has two advisory committees—one relates to collection of data on national income and the other to compilation and analysis of national accounts. In these advisory Committees a couple of State Statistical Bureaus, RBI, Indian Statistical Institute and a few specialists in the field of national income are represented. Agriculture accounts for about 50 per cent of the national income and the data on output of crops, inputs and prices required for the purpose of estimation are all supplied by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics in the Ministry of Agriculture. It was suggested that it would be in the fitness of things that a senior officer from the Ministry of Agriculture should be represented on the Advisory Committees.

3.31 Asked about the reaction of the Department to this suggestion, Secretary (Statistics) replied "We have no objection to accept this."

(vi) *Association of Research Institutions with Data Collection Work*

3.32 It was stated in a memorandum that to improve the quality of CO's estimates it would have to be supported by more frequent surveys in areas where continuous information is not available. If NSSO cannot fulfil this need with the frequency required other research institutions in the country should be asked to contribute in this regard.

3.33 The Committee asked whether other research institutions in the country should not be engaged in the task of surveys with a view to increase the frequency of data collection in certain important fields.

3.34 The representatives of CSO stated that "for the purpose of data collection, if a large scale survey has to be undertaken, NSSO alone will be in a position to conduct it, because it requires a large number of investigators, and also a continuous type of work being handled by the some body every timē.

3.35 Before NSSO was set up, the national sample surveys were being handled by ISI. It was then decided that the National Sample Surveys should be taken up by Government. Government (NSSO) is conducting such surveys now. If there are small scale surveys specific to the requirements of certain research institutions, they are themselves doing them. They are also receiving grants from the concerned administrative Ministries. NCAER had done certain work, and got allowance from Government.

3.36 The question for consideration will be whether the Department of Statistics should also give them grants and get the work done. So far, this has not been done. In fact, we would not like to have any duplication. If the administrative Ministries are in a position to support those research institutions, it is much better that they do it rather than the Department of Statistics."

3.37 Asked if the Department had any system of monitoring the work done by research institutions like NCAER, universities, department of Economics and of Statistics of colleges etc. working in this field Secretary (Statistics) stated:

"At present, the only system available with us is through the association of the Directors of Statistics of State Governments."

3.38 Director-General CSO stated during evidence that:

"We don't have a system, in CSO, for getting information about all these surveys carried out by different research institutions or individuals. But sometimes the reports prepared on the basis of these surveys by Universities or research institutions are sent to us for information. Sometimes, some of these are received by us as part of some thesis. We find that they are generally localized surveys. No doubt they give useful information. In many cases, we have observed that because they have utilised students for data collection, there are certain weaknesses and we know that these weaknesses also need to be carefully considered."

3.39 The Committee pointed out that if the Department was interested in a particular format a method these organisations could be asked to organise the research in that manners as it was done in foreign countries. The Director-General CSO, stated that:

“One of the recommendations made by the Review Committee on National Statistical System very recently, i.e. last year, deal with this aspect. On their recommendation we are setting up a National Advisory Board on Statistics in which research institutions would also be associated, so in future we will be in a better position to know what is being done by research institutions would also be associated, so in future we will be in

(vii) *Association of Rural Youth with Survey Work*

3.40 At the inaugural session of the All India Training conference for NSS 37th Round Survey held on 23rd September, 1980 the Chairman of the Governing Council of NSS had suggested that educated youth in village|urban block should be associated with survey work as part time investigators to get the involvement in the field work of NSSO.

3.41 During evidence Secretary statistics stated that “So far as the workload per investigator per day is concerned, it is being examined by our survey, Design and Research Division and it is only on that basis that the number of investigators can be determined. There is another aspect. At present it is becoming more difficult for the field staff to collect data, because people are becoming more and more conscious and they would not like to spend so much time in answering Questions, which are being put by the field investigator.”

“With regard to the suggestions made by the Chairman of the Governing Council, NSSO regarding making use of educated youth in the rural areas, the witness stated ‘so far as this suggestion is concerned, there are one or two aspects which we have to consider. Already NSS has built up an organisation of trained investigators. Every time a round is taken up, further training is provided to them for the purpose of conducting those rounds. At present we have got about 4,000 odd persons, out of which the number of investigators is about 1,400 and assistant superintendents 1,640. In case we entrust this work to the educated youth, what do we do with these people, who are already our whole-time employees? Secondly, will the part-time people, who are recruited as field investigators, be able to give better results.’”

(viii) *Statistical Standards*

3.42 The Committee were informed by the Department that laying down and maintenance of statistical norms and standards for collection, processing and dissemination of data is necessary to ensure the quality and comparability of statistical series. With increasing statistical activities in the country the need to compile statistical terms and procedures in different fields has assumed special importance. The Central Statistical Organisation

has made significant contribution in this direction by publishing "Directory of Statistics" (1976), "Guide to Official Statistics" (1979) and compilation of "Common Product Nomenclature" (1978).

3.43 The Committee asked to what extent the objective of laying down and maintenance of standards had been achieved and whether any study had been made in this regard. Director-General CSO stated that "we are conscious about these standards and their uniform use not only by the Centre but by the States also. One of the mechanism by which we work is like this. Whenever any topic or any survey or study is taken up, generally, we set up a technical advisory committee. We consult the concerned Ministries, the States and the agencies which might have done some work in that subject, like the Universities, etc. We give this Group the work and tell them what are the things to be done. These persons who have been selected, are normally members who have vast experience, and have been associated with similar work which has been done by the Government. It is also decided that whatever they suggest should also be generally comparable with the past, so that we can study the changes. Sometimes the comparability alone may not meet the needs of the economy and we may need more disaggregated figures. The Technical Advisory Committee discusses these aspects to come to a conclusion because the CSO is also familiar with the international recommendations regarding what needs to be done on that topic. After detailed examination we decide on the information to be collected and what type of definitions and concept has to be used, and to see how comparable figures can be obtained. Then we decide what further should be done. We feel that generally the system is such that we are in a position to maintain the general standards."

3.44 Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) is entrusted with the responsibility of coordination of activities of Statistical Offices at the Centre and in the State. The principal mechanism through which this coordination is achieved is the Conference of Central and State Statistical Organisations held once in two years. To avoid duplication, plan schemes of the State are examined by the Statistics and Survey Division of the Planning Commission which is a part of CSO. Before the Department of Statistics starts any new scheme, Technical Advisory Committees or Working Groups are set up for the purpose and they, it is stated, consult Central Ministries, RBI, and States concerned to see that there is no duplication between the Centre and the States. From the material placed before the Committee, they find that prior consultation is neither mandatory with all the agencies in field nor with all the States nor in all cases. There is also no system of prior clearance of a new scheme by CSO.

3.45 The Department of Statistics has also admitted that as the data from which it collects statistics originates from several sources, the quality is not always uniform.

3.46 As user organisation has suggested that for developing norms and standards and for making the co-ordinating role of CSO effective, a strong, effective and functional linkage should be created by knitting the heads of various economic and statistical organisations at the Centre and in the State into an executive body which should direct and control the functions of CSO.

3.47 The Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) had also recommended that for providing technical guidance on policy issues, effective co-ordination, improvement in quality, identification of gaps and avoidance of duplication, it is necessary to establish an apex body with representations from Central Ministries, State Governments, Universities, research institutions and non-Government user organisations. The apex body should have its secretariat in the CSO and may be called National Advisory Board on Statistics (NABS).

3.48 The recommendations of the Review Committee for setting up NABS is acceptable to the Department of Statistics and the proposal to set up an executive body, as suggested by a user organisation, as the proposed NABS, would make the co-ordinating role of CSO more effective.

3.49 The Estimates Committee agree with the proposal to set up a National Advisory Board on Statistics (NABS) as an apex body which should have representations not merely from the Central Ministries and State Governments, as proposed by a Group (June 1981), but also from Universities, research institutions and non-official user organisations. The Committee would caution the Department of Statistics against making the NABS a narrow-based purely bureaucratic organisation which will become if the representatives of universities, research institutions and non-Government user organisations are kept out of it. (Sl. No. 23)

3.50. The Committee are of the view that, as recommended by the Review Committee (1980) it should be obligatory on the Central and State Government Organisations to take prior clearance from NABS before launching any large scale statistical operation funded by Government. They do not agree with the view expressed by a Group set up by the Department that prior clearance of this nature is not possible or is not desirable. (Sl. No. 24)

3.51 The Committee also endorse the recommendation made by the Review Committee (1980) that the Department of Statistics should be formally designated as the 'Nodal Agency' for coordinating statistical activities at the Centre and would suggest that necessary orders should be issued in this regard. (Sl. No. 25)

3.52. The Committee take note of the Minister of Planning's observation made at the inaugural session of All India Training Conference for 37 Round of NSSO that it had not been possible so far to synchronise the Central and State data tabulation. A Technical Group is reported to have been formed in the Department of Statistics to suggest a solution to the problem. The Committee hope that it would soon be possible to evolve a system to synchronise the Central and State tabulation and achieve pooling of sample results. (Sl. No. 26)

3.53 The Department of Statistics has a system of appointing from time to time technical committees or advisory groups on various subjects. It has, however, admitted that the present system has certain deficiencies; first, all the subjects are not at present covered by the technical committees or advisory groups; and secondly, there is need for setting up new panels in some other sectors which are at present not being looked into by any technical committee. The Committee find that in this context the Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) had recommended that for laying down appropriate standards and dealing with the problems of quality, reliability and timelines of data being collected in different fields, subject panels should be set up at the Centre for all important subjects on which major data collection is being undertaken or needs to be initiated. The Committee endorse this recommendation and suggest that the Department of Statistics should initiate action to set up panels, to be called by whatever name it chooses, to deal with all the subjects and all the sectors in which data is being collected or in considered necessary to be collected. (Sl. No. 27)

3.54 The Committee take note that Department of Statistics has no objection to accept the suggestion to appoint representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture on the Advisory Committees relating to the collection of data on National Income and National Accounts. They expect follow-up action in this regard. (Sl. No. 28)

3.55 The Committee find that at present there is no system of associating research associations or universities in the task of surveys undertaken by NSSO. The Department has stated that certain research institutions are doing certain small surveys specific to their own requirements and for these surveys they are given grants by the Ministries concerned. The Department of Statistics does not wish to get involved in this to avoid

duplication. The Committee find that the Department of Statistics has viewed the problems from a wrong end. The question is not as to who should give grants; the question is whether such research institutions can be associated by NSSO in the task of collecting data and thus not only increasing the frequency of surveys but also widening the base. In the Committee's opinion association of research institutions and universities in the survey operations under the guidance of NSSO will prove very useful in many ways and the Department should give it a careful thought. (Sl. No. 29)

3.56 The Committee also feel that the idea mooted by the Chairman, Governing Council, NSSO that educated youth in village/urban blocks should be associated with survey work as part-time investigations is a welcome idea and deserves to be pursued. The apprehensions entertained by the Department on this account do not appear to have weight. (Sl. No. 30)

3.57 It is surprising that at present there is no system in the CSO to get reports or even information on the surveys carried out by research institutions or individuals in the country. The Department even doubts the quality of these surveys just because they have utilised students for data collection. The Committee do not approve this approach. The Committee would like the Department of Statistics to evolve a system of monitoring the surveys done by research institutions and universities of standing and making use of such of them as are found to be of acceptable standard. (Sl. No.31)

3.58 The Committee understand that a Committee on trade statistics was set up under the Chairmanship of the Director-General CSO and it had submitted Part I of the Report in 1979 to the Ministry of Commerce. But so far no action has been taken on the recommendations of the Committee. This is unfortunate. The Committee desire that decisions on all the recommendations of the Committee need not be held up till receipt of Part II of its Report and, wherever possible, follow-up action should be initiated straightway in the interest of bringing about better co-ordination among various organisations engaged in the task of collection, collation and dissemination of data. (Sl. No. 32)

3.59 The Committee note that the Department is conscious of the need for having uniform standards and statistical norms for collection, processing and dissemination of data by the Central Ministries and State Governments etc. With this end in view CSO has brought out certain publications. Another mechanism through which this object is achieved is the system of appointing Technical Advisory Committee whenever any

new survey or topic is taken up and consultation with the Central Ministries, State Governments and research institutions concerned. The Committee wish to emphasise that maintenance of statistical norms and standards is essential to ensure quality and comparability of statistical data which have assumed importance with increasing statistical activities in the country. The Committee desire that this aspect should be kept under constant watch.

(Sl. No. 33)

CHAPTER IV ORGANISATION

(i) *Head of the Deptt. of Statistics*

4.1 The Committee asked whether Secretary (Deptt. of Statistics) was looking after any other Department also. Secretary stated that at present he was also holding charge of the post of Secretary Deptt. of Expenditure in the Ministry of Finance. Asked what part of the Secretary's time was devoted for the Department of Statistics, the witness replied, "Frankly most of my time is spent in the Ministry of Finance. That is a heavy charge." The Committee asked whether this had been brought to the notice of the Government that the Department of Statistics required a full time Secretary, the witness stated that "Generally, any Secretary would not be fully satisfied if he is in charge of only the Department of Statistics. In the past also most of the time there had been a part time arrangement the past also time the Cabinet Secretary himself used to be the the Secretary Department of Statistics. Even the Secretary, Planning Commission, has been Secretary Department of Statistics many times. There were only few exceptions where there was a full time Secretary. But in each case it was for short period.

(ii) *Governing Council for NSSO*

4.2 The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) works under the overall directions of a Governing Council which consists of 5 non-government academicians, 5 users of data in Central and State Governments and 5 functionaries of the NSSO. From the membership of the Governing Council, it was seen that out of 5 non-government academicians, 2 are from Delhi, 2 from Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta and one from Ahmedabad.

4.3 It has also seen that out of the 5 seats earmarked for user organisations there were 2 members representing user organisations in the States. They were from Kerala and Haryana.

4.4 Asked about the justification for appointment of 2 members from I.S.I. against the seats intended for non-Government academicians, Secretary (Statistics) stated that "We have got 5 non-government academicians, 5 users of data, and 5 functionaries of the NSSO. So far as non-government academicians are concerned, we take persons from the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI). The reason is that the work of the NSSO previously was being done by the ISI; still some work is being done by them.

It is an institute of all India importance; it is the only institute, so far as the field of statistics, as a premier organisation, is concerned. That is why it was decided that two members should be from them."

4.5 Asked whether there should not be much wider representation on the governing body from non-official side, the witness stated, "So far as ISI is concerned, there is an adequate representation. The question is whether it should be one or two. So far as others are concerned these academicians are drawn upon from the point of view of not their regional representation but the work which they have done in the field of academics. The Governing Council itself goes on changing. There have been a number of persons from South. It may happen that on a particular Governing Council, the regional representation may be different. The same is the question in the case of States. There also we tried to give a rotational representation. That is very important. When we again reorganise it there may be some from Haryana and some from Kerala. Next time it may be that there may be none from Haryana but from Eastern side only there will be one or two."

(iii) *Indian Statistical Institute*

4.6 The Committee desired to know the amount of grants given to Indian statistical Institute during the last 5 years and whether any assessment had been made of the performance of the Institute *vis-a-vis* grants given.

4.7 Secretary, Department of Statistics, stated that "The grant-in-aid at present given to the Indian Statistical Institute varies—from Rs. 2.48 crores in 1976-77 to Rs. 3.63 crores in 1980-81. They are divided into two parts, *viz* plan grants and non-plan grants. The Plan grant has been of the order of Rs. 1 crore. The system now adopted is under Section 8(1) of the India Statistical Institute Act. Government appoints a statutory committee every year which considers the programme of work, and budget of the Institute, and recommends what amount of grant should be given. On that basis, the Department of Statistics, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, sanctions the grant and provides for it in the budget."

4.8 Asked whether the performance of the Institute had been reviewed in the past, Secretary replied, that "This is an annual exercise. There was one review committee appointed by Government in 1966, headed by Prof. Humayun Kabir, M.P. under Section 9(1) of the Act. It went into the performance of the Institute and made a number of recommendations. We have now taken a decision to appoint another review committee. The question now before us is its composition."

(iv) *Staff-Avenues of Promotion*

4.9 In his speech at the inaugural session of All India Training Conference for NSS 37th Round Survey held on 23 September, 1981, the Chairman of the Governing Council of NSSO observed that at a certain level in the organisation there was virtually no nobility. He called for avenues of promotion which would enthuse these cadres and provide for vertical and lateral mobility.

4.10 The Chairman, Governing Council also observed that the Central and State Statistical Organisations should have more co-operation in terms of changing staff from one to the other. Also the Indian Statistical Service should be made an all India service so that State Statistical Officers could also be posted.

4.11 During evidence Secretary Department of Statistics stated that "So far as the question of one person who has to be nominated by staff association of the Planning Commission is concerned there we have been asking the Planning Commission but the staff association concerned has not been able to nominate any member."

4.12 Studies of staff strength in headquarters organisations as well as field organisations have been conducted from time to time by the Internal Works Study Unit of the Department as well as by the Staff Inspection Unit of Ministry of Finance and additions and abolition of certain posts have been recommended.

4.13 From a note furnished by the Ministry at the instance of the Committee it is seen that staff studies were made by S.I.U./Internal Works Study Unit during 1978-79 to 1980-81 with following results:—

Year	Posts to be abolished			Posts to be created		
	Officers	Staff	Total	Officers	Staff	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1978-79						
CSO, New Delhi	15	67	82	Nil	Nil	Nil
CSO, in Industrial Statistical Wing, Calcutta	4	38	42	1	1	2
1979-80						
Deptt. of Statistic	..	3	3

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pay & Accounts Officers		15	15
CSO, in Industrial Statistical Wing, Calcutta		3	3	..	3	3
1980-81						
Field Operation Division NSSO	1	100	111	61	168	229
D.P. Division HQ. & SDR Division Calcutta		3	3		3	3
Computer Centre		11	11		7	7

4.14 The Committee find that at present the Department of Statistics has only a part-time Secretary. Besides looking after the Department of Statistics he is also holding charge of the post of Secretary, Department of Expenditure in the Ministry of Finance which admittedly is a heavy charge and leaves his little time for the Department of Statistics. The Committee are informed that in the past also most of the time there has been a part-time Secretary only for the Department of Statistics excepting few occasions when there was a full time Secretary but in each case it was for a short period.

4.15 The Committee have given thought to this matter. They agree that the work in the Department of Statistics does not justify the appointment of a full time Secretary. But they wonder whether instead of giving the additional charge of Department of Statistics to the Secretary of a very heavy Department like the Department of Expenditure, it cannot be assigned to a Secretary holding a lighter charge. In the Committee's opinion, however, if Secretaryship of the Department of Statistics is not to be a mere formality and if the Secretary of the Department is expected to make worth while contribution in the various fields which are under the charge of the Department of Statistics, the best arrangement would be to appoint a professional as Secretary of the Department of Statistics as has been done in the case of certain other Departments of the Government of India. The Committee would like this approach to be considered seriously by the Government.

4.16 The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) works under the overall direction of a Governing Council which consists of five non-Government academicians, five users of data in Central and State Governments and five functionaries of the NSSO. The

Committee find that at present out of 5 non-Government academicians, two are from Delhi, two from Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta and one from Ahmedabad. The Committee also find that out of five seats earmarked for users organisations, these are only two members representing users organisations in the States and they are from Kerala and Haryana.

4.17 The Committee feel that there is no justification to appoint two members from the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, against the seats earmarked for non-Government academicians. While they do not doubt the eminence or the usefulness of the academicians from Indian Statistical Institute on the Governing Council, they would not like them to be appointed against seats meant for non-Governmental academicians. (S. No. 34)

4.18 The Committee also feel that representation to the States does not show any systematic approach. They are conscious of the need to keep the size of the Governing Council small and compact. Even then the Committee see no reason why instead of picking two States out of 22 States in the country, at least one representative from each region representing the States in that region cannot be appointed on the Governing Council. (S. No. 35)

4.19 The performance of the Indian Statistical Institute was last reviewed by a Statutory Committee in 1966. The Committee note that the Government has decided to appoint an other Review Committee and is finalising its composition. The Committee hope that the Review Committee will be appointed soon and given wide terms of reference to be able to make a thorough evaluation of the performance of the Institute. (S. No. 36)

4.20 The Committee take note of the observations made by the Chairman of the Governing Council of NSSO pointing out lack of mobility and avenues of promotion for the staff in the organisation and suggesting some sort of inter-change of staff between the Centre and States. They also take note of his suggestion that Indian Statistical Service should be made an All-India Service. The Committee would like the issues underlying these observations should be examined by the Department of Statistics. (S. No. 37)

NEW DELHI;
April 26, 1982.
Vaisakha 6, 1904 (S).

S. B. P. PATTABHI RAMA RAO
Chairman,
Estimates Committee.

APPENDIX II

Summary of recommendations/observations

Sl. No.	Para	Recommendation/observation
1	1.35	<p>The Committee are greatly disappointed at the inordinately long time-lag between completion of NSSO surveys and publication/release of the results of the Surveys. From the information furnished by the Ministry it is seen that even after the re-organisation of NSSO in 1971 the time-lag between completion of surveys and tabulation/release of data has been as high as 48-53 months in a number of cases 32nd Round of Central Sample Survey completed between July 77—June 1978, 33rd Round (July 78—June 79) and 34th Round (July 79—June 80) are still under tabulation. Publication of the results of surveys have also been inordinately delayed. For example publication of Annual Surveys of Industries and Consumer Expenditure surveys have been delayed by 5-12 years. Consumer Expenditure Surveys pertaining to the period September 61—August 1962 was published in March, 1974. Annual Survey of Industries for 1964 was published in April 1971. Some of the reports published in 1981 related to the period July 1973—June 1974 which shows a delay of nearly 6-7 years. The Committee wonder whether results of surveys published after a time gap of 5-12 years could have been of any use to anybody except academicians and economic historians. What has pained them deeply and what they cannot but deplore strongly, is that this state of affairs has been continuing for over 30 years and nothing concrete has been done so far to accelerate the entire exercise so as to make it useful to policy makers and planners.</p>

1	2	3
2	1.37 1.40 1.41	<p>The Department of statistics has it is seen, taken certain measures to modernise the data-processing equipment and accelerate the release of statistics. But the Committee agree with the Chairman, Governing Council, that some piecemeal improvements in procedures and machines here and there are not going to achieve the overall objectives unless the problems faced by the NSSO are looked at in their totality and the lopsidedness of the organisation which, in his opinion, is the root cause of delays, is remedial. The report of the working Group on the acceleration of data processing, to which the Governing Council and the Department of Statistics had been looking forward with great expectations, has now been submitted to and considered by the Governing Council. The Committee would like to advise the Government that this report should be taken seriously and an integrated action plan prepared without delay to thoroughly reorganise the NSSO so as to make it a technically and professionally competent and well-equipped organisation to be able to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and within the optimum time-frames.</p>

The Committee are happy to note that the Governing Council of NSSO is aiming at making the organisation efficient enough to reduce the time-lag between data collection and its publication to 12-15 months. The Estimates Committee consider the time-frames suggested by the Review Committee (1980) for various kinds of statistics not only reasonable but absolutely essential for the working of NSSO if its reports have to be of some contemporary use to contemporary planners and policy makers and not to be consigned to the dustbins of history. The committee would like that Government should adopt these basic norms as outside target limits of

1

2

3

time for the guidance of the NSSO and ensure that the contemplated re-organisation of the NSSO is done to achieve these objectives.

The Committee note that NSSO is also handicapped for lack of adequate printing facilities and this too contributes to the delays in the publication of statistical data. They note that a scheme to provide offset printing facilities to meet the requirements of the Department of Statistics and Planning Commission has been included in the Sixth Five Year Plan and a separate wing in the Government of India Press at Faridabad is expected to come up by the end of 1984-85 for executing the work of the two organisations. The Committee cannot over-emphasise the need for making adequate printing facilities available to the Department of Statistics. They hope that additional wing in the Government of India Press at Faridabad would be set up by the target date. In the alternative the Government of India Press can get this printed in any decent reliable Private Press, which would be perhaps more economical also.

3

1.42

Delay in the publication of crop estimation survey reports has been brought to the notice of the Committee. These reports are at present being brought out with the timelag of about two years. The utility of these reports it is stated, would be considerably enhanced if they are brought out within a year of the close of the season. The Department has explained that State-wise and season-wise status reports are brought out by about one year after the close of the season but all India report is delayed. It appears that the Department is not getting adequate support from the States in this regard. The Committee would suggest that the various issues involved in the publication of this report should be discussed with the State Governments

1

2

3

concerned at a high level and concrete solutions found to accelerate the publication of crop estimation survey reports.

4

2.61

2.62

The Committee take note of the various programmes drawn up by the Department of Statistics to fill up major data gaps in certain areas. They find that the Department has not drawn up any programme to deal with the problems of non-response in implementing statutory provisions for data collection and the lack of statutory obligation in certain other fields to maintain records for the purpose of collecting data. The Committee feel that in these two fields Government can and should take remedial measures at the earliest.

The Committee find that the Department has already initiated certain studies to fill gaps in methodologies in the collection of data. Methodologies investigations have been recently completed in the field of construction activities, and once this methodology is finalised, regular surveys will be taken up. The Committee would await the outcome of these exercises.

5

2.63

In regard to compilation of All India Index Number of Retail Prices, the Department is finding it difficult to get details of commodity-wise volume and value of retail trade which is necessary for deriving the weighting diagrams for construction of retail price index, in the absence of a comprehensive survey of distributive trade. An All India Prices Index Number covering all sections of population separately in rural and urban areas can be thought of as an alternative. The matter has been considered by the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics of Prices and cost to Living and in pursuance of its recommendation CSO has advised the State Directorates of Economics and Statistics to take up compilation of Consumer

1

2

3

Price Index Numbers. Two States, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, have finalised the methodology for constructing such Consumer Price Index Numbers for selected essential items. Uttar Pradesh has also finalised the methodology for rural index. The Department feels that once the State indices are available they could be suitably combined to derive All India Index of Retail Prices. The Committee hope that the Department of Statistics would be able to persuade all the States to undertake the necessary exercises in this regard expeditiously so that it can then construct the All-India Index of Retail Prices.

6

2.64

The Department of Statistics has not been able to derive consistent series of savings and consumption of households in the absence of a comprehensive survey of household income and expenditure. According to the Department, incomes is a very complex subject and a survey on incomes in rural and urban set-up requires extensive methodological experimentation. The working group appointed by the governing Council for NSSO to plan the 38th round survey on employment and unemployment and consumer expenditure in its meeting held in November, 1981 suggested setting up of a specific unit for methodological work to pre-test, through pilot studies, different approaches before any specific approach is adopted for large scale nation-wise survey on incomes. The Committee hope that the pilot studies on methodological experimentation would be completed as scheduled and a comprehensive survey on income, consumption expenditure and savings to the Households by NSSO will become feasible in the near future.

7

2.65

The Committee find that the Department has not undertaken any studies for international comparison of per-capita incomes including India's based comparable real price though India

1	2	3
		<p>has been associated with the International Comparison Project which has been sponsored by the United Nations. The Department has not been making the comparative analysis because it has doubts whether the methodology adopted for this purpose is a perfect methodology. It has set up an Expert Committee to go into the question of methodology. The Committee feel it rather strange that while India has been associated with the International Comparison Project of the United Nations for which the Indian experts also supply data, they are not making such a comparative analysis within their own country. The Committee hope that appropriate methodology in this regard would be evolved soon and per capita comparison would be undertaken by the Department as early as possible.</p>
8	2.66	<p>The Committee would like to suggest in this context that the gaps in methodologies for collecting data in all other important fields should be clearly identified and schemes formulated to conduct methodological investigations to evolve appropriate methodologies in these fields.</p>
9	2.67 2.68	<p>The Committee note that while schemes have been drawn up to fill major data gaps in a number of areas, there are still some areas such as inter state trade movement, live-stock products, forest products etc. where the gaps will persist.</p> <p>The Department should clearly identify all such gaps with reference to their importance to socio-economic planning and policy making and draw perspective plans to fill those gaps keeping in view the available resources and man-power.</p>
10	2.69	<p>The Committee note that the subject of consumer expenditure was covered earlier in almost all the successive NSS rounds of socio-economic surveys upto the 28th round (1973-74). In 1974</p>

1

2

3

the Governing Council of the NSSO decided that the consumer expenditure surveys should thereafter be conducted once in five years. In the opinion of the experts the consumer expenditure does not change fast and there is no need to conduct consumer expenditure surveys every year. The Committee hope that reduction in the frequency of such surveys to once in five years have no adverse effect on planning and policy-making.

11

2.70

The Department has admitted that there has not been any systematic study to assess the accuracy of the monthly index of industrial production, though it feels that it has reason to infer that the compiled indices are by and large consistent or correct. The Committee find that the Department is feeling the necessity of introducing a sample check to test the accuracy of indices compiled by it. The Committee also take note of the fact that though indices of industrial production have been compiled and released from July, 1950 onwards continuously for all months, the different series are not strictly comparable with each other due to variation in coverage of items and improved techniques of compilation in later series. The Committee also note that at present the base year for industrial production indices is 1970. The Department has accepted the need to shift it to 1980-81. The Committee feel that there is need for a systematic study of the various aspects of indices of industrial production with a view to assessing their accuracy and taking appropriate measures to make them more reliable, more meaningful and more helpful to policy makers.

12

2.71

It has been brought to the Committee's notice that while the methodology followed by NSSO is generally satisfactory, the NSSO tends to collect too much of information and tabulate

1

2

3

too little with a massive time lag. The Department has stated that the suggestions received by the Governing Council from Ministries etc. are in general terms and the Governing Council of NSSO decides the subjects which have to be covered in a round and the types of questionnaires which have to be formulated. In this process Experts are also associated. The Committee desire that the view expressed to the Committee regarding the NSSO collecting too much information and tabulating too little should be taken note of by the Governing Council in drawing up questionnaires.

- 13 2.72 The Committee note that a number of measures such as publication of publicity folders press hand-outs, radio-talks etc. have been taken by the Department to inform educate the public in regard to the surveys undertaken by the NSSO. For the 36th Round of NSSO survey a film was also made to bring to the notice of the public the purpose of that Round. The Committee welcome these measures and hope that such publicity programmes will be continued to elicit better response from public.
- 14 2.73 The Committee find that the benchmarks in respect of many series brought out by the Department of Statistics such as National accounts, un-organised industry sector are out-dated in that they relate to the 60's. The Committee feel that having statistical data related to benchmarks of 60's is not a very satisfactory state of affairs. In their opinion it is very necessary to up-date the statistical base and bringing it as close to 80's as possible.
- 15 2.74 The Committee regret to note that the Department has not so far evaluated the quality and accuracy of the work done by Central Statistical Organisation. The Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) neither

1

2

3

expressed any view on this matter nor were they asked to do so. The Committee would like that an independent and expert evaluation of the quality of work done by Central Statistical Organisation to which the Department has no objection should be arranged at the earliest.

16

2.75

The Committee find that the non-production time of computer centre has been going up since 1976. From 3437 hours in 1976, the non-production time had gone up to 4658 hours in 1980. The two main reasons for the increase in non-production time are stated to be the break-down of computers or the interruption in their working due to power failure. The Committee are aware that the Honeywell Computers installed in the computer Centre are old and obsolete and they break down very frequently. But so long as they are there and are not replaced, the Committee feel that better maintenance of the machines can cut down the down-time to a considerable extent. They hope that the preventive maintenance of the computers will be taken seriously and carried out regularly.

17

2.76

The Committee find that pursuant to the recommendations of the Three-Member Committee (1969) a new Division, namely, Economic Analysis Division (EAD) was created in December, 1973 with a small nucleus staff. Recently this Division has attempted analysis and brought out analytical articles on a few subjects. The Department has informed the Committee that to attempt economic analysis in all the areas of NSS activity, the Economic Analysis Division needs sufficient strengthening. A Plan Scheme entitled "Economic Analysis of NSS Data—Augmentation of resources" has been included under the Sixth Five Year Plan proposals and also in Annual Plan 1982-83. This is a welcome though belated measure. The Committee feel that publication of data without critical analysis

1

2

3

is of little use to potential users. In their opinion publication of comprehensive economic and statistical analysis should be regarded as an integral part of the exercise of data collection and publication and adequate staff and other infrastructure should be provided for the purpose without delay.

18

2.78

The Committee are surprised how the Department has reorganised the Analytical Division into Transport and Communication Division with the result the identity of the Division as or separate analytical unit has been lost. The Committee are not satisfied with the work done by the Analytical Division. It is evident that the Analytical Division could not undertake any indepth studies of linkages of one sector with the other in order to identify inter-relationship which could help policy formulation. The Committee expected that the Division would have undertaken such studies. The Committee are of the view that development of statistical has taken place so far mainly towards the coverage and content and some efforts have been made in timeliness in processing and presentation of data but the statistical system has not been able to cater appropriately to the policy needs of the Government. This is mainly because enough attention has not been devoted in developing appropriate statistical expertise for effective analysis and interpretation of already available data for the use of Government. The Committee suggest that the Analytical Division should have high level expert guidance on whole-time basis. The officer-in-charge of the Division should be made responsible for discharging the functions assigned instead of seeking for consultants for short run periods. The posts sanctioned for Analytical Work should not be used for other activities like Transport and Communication.

1	2	3
2.79	<p>The Committee also feel that there should be closer coordination between CSO and Indian Statistical Institute in regard to exchange of technical know-how for effectively implementing the functions assigned to the Analytical Studies by CSO.</p>	
19	2.80	<p>Developmental work in official statistical system should also be given due priority for implementation so that functions allotted under planned schemes are not allowed to lapse because inordinate delay in effective implementation.</p>
20	2.85	<p>One of the grey areas for development of Statistics relates to "wholesale and retail trade" for which the CSO has indicated processing of a plan scheme for implementation during the Sixth Plan period. The Ministry of Finance has already agreed to the proposals for grants-in-aid to the States for creation of posts for primary level collection, correlation and compilation of data at district/State level. The Committee views with concern the delay in implementation of the core-scheme.</p>
21	2.89	<p>The Committee express their disappointment over a shaky technical report on the sampling design and other aspects of the Working Class Family Income and Expenditure Survey, 1971. The Committee urges the Department to make full use of the valuable data collected during Family Budget Enquiries (Income and Expenditure Survey) for detailed cross-sectarial and econometric analysis such as elasticities of demand for essential consumer goods, income distributions, concentration ratios etc.</p>
22	2.91	<p>The Committee desire that necessary steps should be taken towards 'Standardisation of Classification' in conformity with the Harmonised System (HS) of Classifications developed by the Customs Corporation Council, in which</p>

1

2

3

India is represented as an Associate Member of the Council and consequently implementation of HS for Customs, trade, tariff and industry is governed by a Convention having legal status. In fact, such a classification at micro-level will be a handy tool for cross-sectional and sectoral economic analysis.

2.92

The Committee would also urge the Department of Statistics to ensure that only such officers as have proper experience and calibre in the concerned fields are nominated to represent India on bodies such as Joint Group of UNSO and SOEC on World Level Classifications.

23

3.49

The Estimates Committee agree with the proposal to set up a National Advisory Board on Statistical (NABS) as an apex body which should have representations not merely from the Central Ministries and State Governments, as proposed by a Group (June 1981), but also from Universities, research institutions and non-official user organisations. The Committee would caution the Department of Statistics against making the NABS a narrow-based purely bureaucratic organisation which will become if the representatives of Universities, research institutions and non-Government user organisations are kept out of it.

24

3.50

The Committee are of the view that, as recommended by the Review Committee (1980) it should be obligatory on the Central and State Organisations to take prior clearance from NABS before launching any large scale statistical operation funded by Government. They do not agree with the view expressed by a Group set up by the Department that prior clearance of this nature is not possible or is not desirable.

25

3.51

The Committee also endorse the recommendation made by the Review Committee (1980)

1	2	3
		that the Department of Statistics should be formally designated as the 'Nodal Agency' for co-ordinating statistical activities at the Centre and would suggest that necessary orders should be issued in this regard.
26	3.52	The Committee take note of the Minister of Planning's observation made at the inaugural session of All India Training Conference for 37 Round of NSSO that it had not been possible so far to synchronise the Central and State data tabulation. A Technical Group is reported to have been formed in the Department of Statistics to suggest a solution to the problem. The Committee hope that it would soon be possible to evolve a system to synchronise the Central and State tabulation and achieve pooling of sample results.
27	3.53	The Department of Statistics has a system of appointing from time to time technical committees or advisory groups on various subjects. It has, however, admitted that the present system has certain deficiencies; first, all the subjects are not at present covered by the technical committees or advisory groups; and secondly, there is need for setting up new panels in some other sectors which are at present not being looked into by any technical committee. The Committee find that in this context the Review Committee on National Statistical System (1980) had recommended that for laying down appropriate standards and dealing with the problems of quality, reliability and timeliness of data being collected in different fields, subject panels should be set up at the Centre for all important subjects on which major data collection is being undertaken or needs to be initiated. The Committee endorse this recommendation and suggest that the Department of Statistics should initiate action to set up panels, to be called by whatever name it chooses, to deal with all the subjects and

- | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|----|------|--|
| 31 | 3.57 | <p>It is surprising that at present there is no system in the CSO to get reports or even information on the surveys carried out by research institutions or individuals in the country. The Department even doubts the quality of these surveys just because they have utilised students for data collection. The Committee do not approve this approach. The Committee would like the Department of Statistics to evolve a system of monitoring the surveys done by research institutions and universities of standing and making use of such of them as are found to be of acceptable standard.</p> |
| 32 | 3.58 | <p>The Committee understand that a Committee on trade statistics was set up under the Chairmanship of the Director-General CSO and it had submitted Part I of the Report in 1979 to the Ministry of Commerce. But so far no action has been taken on the recommendations of the Committee. This is unfortunate. The Committee desire that decisions on all the recommendations of the Committee need not be held up till receipt of Part II of its Report and, wherever possible, follow-up action should be initiated straightaway in the interest of bringing about better co-ordination among various organisations engaged in the task of collection, collation and dissemination of data.</p> |
| 33 | 3.59 | <p>The Committee note that the Department is conscious of the need for having uniform standards and statistical norms for collection, processing and dissemination of data by the Central Ministries and State Governments etc. With this end in view CSO has brought out certain publications. Another mechanism through which this object is achieved is the system of appointing Technical Advisory Committee whenever any new survey or topic is taken up and</p> |

1

2

3

consultation with the Central Ministries, State Governments and research institutions concerned. The Committee wish to emphasise that maintenance of statistical norms and standards is essential to ensure quality and comparability of statistical data which have assumed importance with increasing statistical activities in the country. The Committee desire that this aspect should be kept under constant watch.

34

4.15

The Committee agree that the work in the Department of Statistics does not justify the appointment of a full time Secretary. But they wonder whether instead of giving the additional charge of Department of Statistics to the Secretary of a very heavy Department like the Department of Expenditure, it cannot be assigned to a Secretary holding a lighter charge. In the Committee's opinion, however, if Secretaryship of the Department of Statistics is not to be a mere formality and if the Secretary of the Department is expected to make worthwhile contribution in the various fields which are under the charge of the Department of Statistics, the best arrangement would be to appoint a professional as Secretary of the Department of Statistics as has been done in the case of certain other Departments of the Government of India. The Committee would like this approach to be considered seriously by the Government.

35

4.17

The Committee feel that there is no justification to appoint two members from the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, against the seats earmarked for non-Government academicians. While they do not doubt the eminence or the usefulness of the academicians from Indian Statistical Institute on the Governing Council, they would not like them to be appointed against seats meant for non-Governmental academicians.

1	2	3
36	4.18	The Committee also feel that representation to the States does not show any systematic approach. They are conscious of the need to keep the size of the Governing Council small and compact. Even then the Committee see no reason why instead of picking two States out of 22 States in the country, at least one representative from each region representing the States in that region cannot be appointed on the Governing Council.
37	4.19	The performance of the Indian Statistical Institute was last reviewed by a Statutory Committee in 1966. The Committee note that the Government has decided to appoint another Review Committee and is finalising its composition. The Committee hope that the Review Committee will be appointed soon and given wide terms of reference to be able to make a thorough evaluation of the performance of the Institute.
38	4.20	The Committee take note of the observations made by the Chairman of the Governing Council of NSSO pointing out lack of mobility and avenues of promotion for the staff in the organisation and suggesting some sort of inter-change of staff between the Centre and States. They also take note of his suggestion that Indian Statistical Service should be made an All-India Service. The Committee would like the issues underlying these observations should be examined by the Department of Statistics.
