

SIXTY-SECOND REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
(2007-08)

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND
PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

DEMAND FOR GRANTS
(2007-08)

*[Action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations
contained in the Fifty-Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on
Finance on Demand for Grants (2007-08) of Ministry
of Statistics and Programme Implementation]*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 4.12.2007

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 4.12.2007



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

November, 2007/Agrahayana, 1929 (Saka)

COF No. 62

Price : Rs. 34.00

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Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Twelfth Edition) and printed by Jainco Art India, New Delhi.

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COMPOSITION OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE (2007-2008)

Shri Ananth Kumar — *Chairman*

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| 5. Shri Ramesh Nebhnani | — | <i>Committee Officer</i> |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Sixty-second Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifty-fourth Report of the Committee (Fourteenth Lok Sabha) on Demand for Grants (2007-2008) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

2. The Fifty-fourth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 28th April, 2007 and laid in Rajya Sabha on 3rd May, 2007. Replies indicating action taken on all the recommendations contained in the Report were furnished by the Government on 26th July, 2007.

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Report at their sitting held on 28 November, 2007.

4. An analysis of action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Fifty-fourth Report of the Committee is given in the Appendix.

5. For facility of reference observations/recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

NEW DELHI;
28 November, 2007

7 Agrahayana, 1929 (Saka)

ANANTH KUMAR,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Finance.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Finance deals with action taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in their Fifty-fourth Report on Demand for Grants (2007-2008) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which was presented to Lok Sabha on 28.4.2007 and laid in Rajya Sabha on 3.5.2007.

2. The Action Taken Notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 15 recommendations contained in the Report. These have been analysed and categorized as follows:

- (i) Recommendations/Observations, that have been accepted by the Government:

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12 & 15

(Chapter II)

- (ii) Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies:

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 13 & 14

(Chapter III)

- (iii) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee:

Recommendation Sl. No. 5

(Chapter IV)

- (iv) Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final reply of the Government are still awaited:

Recommendation Sl. Nos. 4, 6, 8 and 10

(Chapter V)

3. The Committee desire that the replies to the recommendations contained in Chapters I & V may be furnished to them expeditiously.

4. The Committee will now deal with action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations.

A. Infrastructure and Projects Monitoring

Recommendation (Sl. No. 5, Para 59)

5. In the context of analyzing the reasons for time and cost overrun in the implementation of infrastructure projects the Committee, *inter alia* recommended that they be apprised of action taken against those responsible for lapses that contributed to the cost escalation of projects within one month.

6. The Government in their action taken reply stated *inter alia* as follows:

“As directed by the Hon’ble Committee, the Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division requested the 10 concerned administrative Ministries to furnish action taken or proposed to be taken within one month, *vide* D.O. No. 11025/3/2007-IPMD dated May 17, 2007. Feedback has been received from 6 Ministries/ Departments and reminders issued to remaining 4 Ministries/ Departments for providing necessary information for the preparation of the report for submission to the Standing Committee on Finance. On the basis of the feedback received from six Ministries/Departments an interim report will be submitted shortly for the information of the Hon’ble Committee. The final report will be submitted once reports are received from the 4 other Ministries also.”

7. **The Committee take a serious note of the fact that despite their specific recommendation to the Government to submit the action taken against those responsible for time and cost overruns within one month, the Government should not submit an interim report even after a lapse of more than six months since presentation of the report. The Committee, therefore, while reiterating their earlier recommendation desire that immediate steps be taken to ensure that final report is submitted to the Committee taking into account the feedback received from all the Ministries concerned.**

B. India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP)

Recommendation (Sl.No. 6, Para 73)

8. In view of its (India-Statistical Strengthening Project) being a flagship programme bringing in immense value addition to the country by way of improving the quality of statistics while reiterating the need for implementing the project in right earnest without further time lags and undue delays the Committee recommended that they be apprised of the progress of the implementation of the project at quarterly intervals.

9. The Government in their action taken reply *inter alia* stated as under:—

“India-Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) was formulated with the assistance from the World Bank for strengthening of Indian Statistical System with primary focus on strengthening of State Statistical System. The ISSP has a 2-Tier approach for its implementation. Tier-I consists of four studies, concerning (i) Creation and Maintenance of Business Register, (ii) Improvement of Service Sector Statistics, (iii) Assessment of Survey Capabilities of Private Sector, and (iv) Strengthening of State Statistical Bureaus. The framework for reporting quarterly progress to the Hon’ble Standing Committee will be finalised shortly. However, an interim report as on 15.05.07 in respect of the activities under the ISSP is given below:

Sl.No.	Name of sub-component	Present Status
Tier-I		
1.	Creation and Maintenance of Business Register	This study has been completed. As a follow up action, a special cell for Business Register has been created under the charge of one director level officer.
2.	Improvement of Service Sector Statistics	This study has been completed.
3.	Assessment of Survey Capabilities of Private Sector	This study has been completed.
4.	Strengthening of State Statistical Bureaus	The Phase-I of Tier-I has been completed. Consultants have been identified to take up the Phase-II of the project.
Tier-II		
5.	The work relates to strengthening of State Statistical Bureaus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Note for Tier-II has since receive the approval of the Department of Economic Affairs and formally placed it before the World Bank. • The International Consultant is being given the responsibility of preparing detailed Strategic Statistical Master Plan for submission to the World Bank.”

10. The Committee regret to note that no further information has been furnished to the Committee regarding the progress in India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) after submission of interim progress report dated 15.05.2007. The Committee would like to know how soon the Tier-II of the ISSP Project is expected to be completed.

C. Delay in releasing reports and publications

Recommendation (Sl.No. 8, Para 83)

11. As there was recurring delay in timely release of various reports and publications of statistical data the Committee emphasized that that these are released in timely manner so as to ensure that relevance of the data is not lost. The Committee had inclined to believe that lack of IT preparedness/readiness could be a major contributory factor to the undue delay happening in timely release of these report and publications. The Committee, therefore, desired the Government to apprise them of the remedial measures taken to ensure that these are released in time.

12. The Government in their action taken have given the detailed reasons for delay of various reports and publications. As regards Natural Resource Accounting, the reasons for delay are stated to be as follows:

“The eight pilot studies on Natural Resource Accounting (NRA) in different Sectors were entrusted by the Ministry to specialized institutes working in the field of environment science or related socio-economic subjects.

A Technical Monitoring Committee (TMC) was constituted by the Ministry under the Chairmanship of Prof. Amitabh Kundu, Member, National Statistical Commission and Dean, School of Social Science, JNU to monitor the progress of these eight studies periodically and also to provide technical guidance.

NRA is an emerging area. These studies on NRA for developing methodologies under SEEA (System of Integrated Economic and Environmental Accounting) were taken up for the first time through outsourcing. The Institutes conducting these studies on NRA had also taken up such studies for the first time although they had past experience of conducting NRA under general framework and the studies aimed at development of sector specific standard methodology under SEEA, which could be applicable under Indian scenario. The project directors faced a number of conceptual and

methodological problems from time-to-time. These problems had to be ironed out and placed before the TMC for guidance. All these led to delay in completion of the studies necessitating subsequent revision of target time for completion in the Annual Action Plan.

The TMC took stock of the situation in its last meeting held on 8th January, 2007 and necessary measures are being taken to ensure completion of the studies by March 2008, if not by December, 2007."

13. Taking note of the delays in adhering to the Annual Action Plan for 2006-07, the Committee had desired to be apprised of the efforts made to obviate delays in releasing reports and publications of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. There is nothing in the action taken reply which discloses the efforts made by the Ministry to set things right. The Ministry appears to have derived satisfaction from simply spelling out the reasons for delay. It is no surprise that the Ministry had hinted about further slippage in completing the study in Natural Resource Accounting. The Committee urge the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation to take concrete steps to ensure that reports and publications are brought out within the targeted dates in future.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Sl.No. 1, Para Nos. 15 & 16)

The Committee note from an overview account of the Budget allocations of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation that, barring the provisions for MPLADS, there has been an excessive variation in the Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and the Actual expenditure, particularly in respect of plan expenditure in each of the last three financial years. While the plan expenditure proposed at the stage of BE in 2004-05 was Rs. 13533 lakh, it was reduced to Rs. 8500 lakh at the stage of RE and the Actual plan expenditure incurred in the year was to the tune of Rs. 8059 lakh. Likewise, the actual plan expenditure of Rs. 7587 lakhs incurred by the Ministry in 2005-06 and the expected expenditure of 6150 lakhs for 2006-07 is well short of the originally budgeted plan expenditure of Rs. 8710 lakhs and 8339 lakhs for 2005-06 and 2006-07 respectively. Considering the wide variation witnessed in the Budgetary Estimates, Revised Estimates and Actual expenditure incurred in the last three financial years, the Committee are inclined to express doubts on the objectivity with which a plan expenditure of Rs. 9200 lakhs has been proposed in the BE for the current year, 2007-08.

What the Committee finds to be particularly worrisome in this regard is that the underutilization of the budgeted plan funds in the preceding years has been mainly on account of the inability to take up, or slippages in implementing schemes that have a significant bearing on improving the credibility and adequacy of statistics. For instance, while a provision of Rs. 294 lakhs and Rs. 225.10 lakhs was proposed at the stage of BE for the years 2005-06 and 2006-07 respectively for the scheme, 'Development of Social, Environment and Price Statistics', the actual expenditure incurred during the years was only to the extent of Rs. 66.62 lakhs and 49.66 lakhs. Likewise, the actual expenditure incurred on the programmed on institutional Development and Capacity Building for the year 2005-06 was Rs. 244.61 lakhs as compared to the budgeted amount of Rs. 1678 lakhs and the expenditure estimated to be incurred under the scheme for the year 2006-07 is Rs. 1678 lakhs as compared to the budgeted amount of Rs. 2200 lakhs. The Committee note from the information made

available that the Ministry proposes to take up 10 plan schemes during 11th Plan period, which include nine ongoing schemes and one new scheme on 'Basic statistics for local level development'. Given the facts relating to the trend of plan expenditure of the Ministry in the preceding years, the Committee recommend the Government to conduct a detailed inquiry to identify the reasons for the shortfalls in meeting the plan expenditure and failure to undertake appropriate remedial measures to avoid large variation in the budget estimates, revised estimates and the actual expenditure'. The Committee also trust and hope that the Ministry shall make every endeavour to ensure timely and effective implementation of the plan schemes, which are, *inter alia* intended to overcome the deficiencies with respect to credibility, timeliness and adequacy of statistics.

Reply of the Government

It is submitted that while every effort is made to ensure that BE provisions under various plan schemes are fixed as realistically as possible, often due to extraneous circumstances the estimates have to be revised downwards. Some specific cases are cited below:

During 2005-06, under the plan scheme "Development of Social, Environment & Price Statistics", funds amounting to Rs. 138.56 lakh were allocated against "Salary" against which actuals were Rs. 9.36 lakh, since the Ministry of Finance did not approve the proposal for creation and appointment of contract employees to take up the work relating to 'Conduct of Market Survey for Development of New Indices CPI (Urban)', under which a Family Living Survey to revise the base year of CPI (UNME) was to be taken up. This has resulted in less expenditure on domestic travel meant for field inspection for the said Market survey. Thus against Rs. 71 lakh provided under 'Domestic Travel' the actual expenditure Was only Rs. 13.16 lakh. Hence expenditure could not be incurred under the Salary & Domestic Travel heads of one of the components of the scheme "Development of Social, Environment & Price Statistics".

Similarly, under "Professional Services" Rs. 75.00 lakh were provided against which actuals were Rs. 21.79 lakh. The Social Statistics Division outsourcers various projects to different organizations. This includes "Development of methodology for Natural Resources Accounting", "Social Development Index" etc. When the delay occurs as a result of default on the part of the outsourced organizations release of funds also get delayed. Similarly, if quality project proposals are not received, the fund earmarked remains unspent. During 2006-07, Rs. 77.00 lakh were provided under "Professional Services". Actuals were Rs. 15.45 lakh due to the reasons indicated in the above para.

During 2005-06 & 2006-07, savings under "Institutional Development & Capacity Building" arose due to slow progress of work by the CPWD on Civil Works on the "National Academy of Statistical Administration" located at Greater Noida.

It is submitted that utmost efforts would be made by the Ministry to ensure timely and effective implementation of the plan schemes and ensure that the budgeted provisions are judiciously and fully utilized during the current financial year for which weekly monitoring system has been initiated in the Ministry involving all senior officers responsible for project implementation.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 2, Para No. 29)

The Committee note that in pursuance of the recommendations of the Rangarajan Committee, which reviewed the statistical system in the Country in 2001, the Government have, vide notification dated 3rd July, 2006 constituted the National Statistical Commission. Though the setting up of the National Statistical Commission has, as pointed out by the Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, facilitated the initiation of corrective processes in the statistical system, the Committee cannot also help noting that the Rangarajan Committee had recommended for setting up the National Statistical Commission through an Act of Parliament so as to enable its functioning in an independent manner in respect of policy making, co-ordination and maintaining quality standards of core statistics. The Committee recall in this regard that while examining the Demands for Grants of the Ministry during 2005-06, they were informed that the Bill to set up the National Statistical Commission as a statutory body was being readied for introduction in Parliament. They are, however, dismayed to point out that despite the concern expressed by them in their earlier report, the Bill is yet to be submitted to the Cabinet for its approval before its introduction to Parliament. The Committee once again emphasize the need for ensuring that the related Bill, which would enable the National Statistical Commission to function in an effective manner as a statutory body be brought before Parliament without any further delay. The Committee also desires that appropriate initiatives be taken to implement those recommendations of the Rangarajan Committee for reform of administration of the Indian Statistical System which remain to be acted upon. The Committee further desire that the 'Collection of Statistics Bill', which would *inter alia*, enhance the support

mechanism for collection of various statistics is brought before Parliament without any undue delay.

Reply of the Government

The issue of setting up of the National Statistical Commission as a statutory body is under active consideration of the Commission and the Ministry.

It is expected that the draft Bill for the Legislation will be prepared by July, 2007 and after inter-ministerial consultations, the Bill is planned to be placed before the Cabinet for its approval by January 2008.

The Collection of Statistics Bill 2007 after due consultations has received approval of the Cabinet and has been placed before the Rajya Sabha on May 17, 2007.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 3, Para No. 56)

While the Infrastructure Monitoring Division (IMD) monitors the performance of the country's key infrastructure sector *vis-a-vis* pre-set targets, the Project Monitoring Division (PMD) plays the all important role of monitoring implementation of all Central sector projects costing Rs. 20 crore and above.

Reply of the Government

It is submitted that as a measure of rationalization, PMD and IMD were merged (sometime in 2004) and is now known as Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division (IPMD).

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 7, Para No. 74)

The Committee also wishes to recall here that in their report on the Demand for Grants of the Ministry (2005-06), they had emphasized on adhering to the practice of convening the Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO) at annual internals. The Committee note from the related information furnished that the 14th Conference of COCSSO, scheduled for 2006 is now proposed to be held in April, 2007. The Committee hope that the 14th conference of

COCSSO might have been held by now. They would like to be apprised of the outcome of the Conference. The Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations being a forum for regular interaction among the Central and States statisticians, the Committee reiterate the need for ensuring that the conference as invariably held at annual intervals.

Reply of the Government

The 14th Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO) was held during April 10-11, 2007 at New Delhi. The two days programme for the Conference included discussions on strengthening of State Statistical Bureaus including Core Statistics & role of Statistical Advisers; Basic Statistics for Local level Development and Problems in Horticulture Statistics. Besides, these three core subjects, the Processing of State Sample Data of National Sample Survey; and Standardized set up of statistical products/publications for the State were also discussed.

In accordance with the directions of the Hon'ble Committee, it is proposed to hold the conference at annual intervals.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9, Para No. 95)

The Committee note that the National Statistical Commission, which reviewed the Indian Statistical System and presented the report thereon in 2001 had *inter alia* observed that there were serious deficiencies in the current series of Price Indices. The Commission had recommended for development of an 'All-India Consumer Price Index' for rural and urban areas. Presently, while the CSO compiles and releases the Consumer Price Index for Urban Non-Manual Employees (CPI UNME), the Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour releases the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural/Rural Labbourers *viz.* CPI-AL and CPI-RL. From the information furnished on the current status of the initiatives towards developing the 'All-India Consumer Index; for urban and rural areas, the Committee observe that the 'weighting diagrams' for the new CPI (Rural) and CPI (Urban) series are being taken from the NSSO 61st round survey data on consumer expenditure. As admitted by the Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation while tendering evidence, there has been delay in the progress towards developing the 'All-India Consumer Price Index' for urban and rural areas. The Committee are of the view that having a consolidated price

index which captures and profiles of the urban and rural populations would be an immense value addition. The Committee, therefore, strongly urge that the work towards developing the 'All-India Consumer Price Index' for urban and rural population should be completed expeditiously.

Reply of the Government

For compilation of Consumer Price Index (CPI) for urban areas, the market survey covering 310 towns is in progress. This survey is likely to be completed by December 2007. Weighting diagram and software development for compilation of this index are expected to be finalized by March 2008. As regards to compilation of CPI for rural areas, basic tables for derivation of weighting diagram have been generated. Efforts are being made to conduct the market survey in the selected villages after completing the survey work in the urban areas.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl.No. 11, Para No. 112)

The Twenty Point Programme (TPP) initiated in 1975 was restructured first in 1982 and again in 1986. The TPP-86 covers socio-economic sectors including poverty alleviation, employment generation especially in rural areas and comprises 119 items of which 54 are monitored on the basis of evaluatory criteria and 65 against pre-set physical targets. The Committee have been informed that the TPP-1986 has been restructured to be called TPP-2006 mainly in view of the challenges of the 21st century with particular reference to the ongoing process of economic reforms, liberalization and globalization. The restructured TPP (TPP-2006) has 20 points and 66 items of which 25 items have been kept for monthly monitoring by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. the Committee note that the monitoring mechanism proposed under TPP-2006 involves, *inter alia* setting up of High Level Implementation and Monitoring Committees in States, which do not have such committees at present, establishing district and block level monitoring committees; and awarding evaluation of impact assessment studies to non-governmental organizations, institutions etc. Objective and realistic assessment of the effectiveness of programmes aimed at alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life of people being of utmost importance, the Committee desire to have a detailed note on the monitoring mechanism proposed under the restructured TPP-2006 *vis-a-vis* TPP-86, and the improvements expected of the revised monitoring mechanism.

Reply of the Government

Various items under Twenty Point Programme (TPP)-2006 are administered by Central Nodal Ministries concerned and executed by State/UT Administrations. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors the Programme in its entirety.

2. The States/UT Administrations are in the process of setting up the monitoring committees at Block level and also at District level and State level if not already in existence, as per the Guidelines issued for TPP-2006. The Guidelines also indicate that the State level committees meet twice a year, District level committees meet every quarter, and the Block level committees meet every month. The States of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh have informed that necessary notifications for setting up committees at Block level have been issued. The matter is being followed up with other States.

3. The number of items under TPP-2006 to be monitored on monthly basis has been tentatively kept as 25, compared to 20 items being monitored in TPP-1986. Out of the 25 monthly monitored items, States/UT administrations are required to send progress in respect of 21 items and for the remaining 4 items, concerned nodal Ministries *i.e.* Ministry of Labour & Employment, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Power will provide monthly information in respect of items concerning them.

4. The above changes in the monitoring mechanism of TPP-2006 are expected to bring improvements.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl.No. 12, Para No. 113)

With regard to the performance of the Twenty Point Programme *per se*, the Committee feel disappointed to note that as per the Annual Report of the Ministry, the performance in respect of community health centres, and electrification of villages is rated as 'poor' for the year 2005-06. Likewise, the performance in respect of 'area covered (under plantation)', Indira Awaas Yojana and primary health centres have been rated as 'poor' for the period, April 1, 2006 to December, 2006. The Committee are of the strong view that every effort must be made to ensuring that each of the socio-economic development schemes gets implemented effectively and serves the purposes for which it was

formulated. The Committee would, therefore, like to be informed how exactly the restructuring of TPP would result in better implementation of the programme.

Reply of the Government

The Twenty Point Programme has been restructured keeping in view the introduction of several new schemes/programmes launched by the Government of India. The UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the SAARC Social Charter have also been considered at the time of restructuring the programme. Various items under Twenty Point Programme (TPP)-2006 are administered by Central Nodal Ministries concerned and executed by State/UT Administrations. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors the programme in totality.

2. The total number of items that will be monitored under TPP-2006 is 66. Out of 66 items of TPP-2006, 25 items have been tentatively identified for monitoring on monthly basis. The remaining items shall be monitored on annual basis. The three tier monitoring mechanism at Central, State and district level for TPP 1986 has been widened by including Block level monitoring for TPP-2006. The State/UT Administrations are in the process of setting up the monitoring committees at Block level and also at District level and State level if not already in existence, as per the Guidelines issued for TPP-2006. The Guidelines also indicate that the State level committees meet twice a year, District level committees meet every quarter, and the Block level committees meet every month.

3. With the restructuring of the Twenty Point Programme, there will be more focused monitoring on 66 items instead of 119, by the States, Central Nodal Ministries and this Ministry. This should definitely result in better implementation of the programme.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl.No. 15, Para No. 123)

The Committee regret to observe that there has been a wide variation in the budget estimates, revised estimates and the actual expenditure under the Head Overtime Allowance (OTA). While allocations of Rs. 13.61 lakh and Rs. 12.32 lakh were proposed at the stage of BE for 2004-05 and 2005-06, the budgeted amounts were reduced to Rs. 12.32 lakh and Rs. 11.49 lakhs at the stage of RE and the actual expenditure for the years 2004-05 and 2005-06, totalled to a

higher amount of Rs. 13.42 and 13.40 lakhs. As informed by the Ministry, the actual expenditure on OTA during 2004-05 was higher than the RE allocation as some unforeseen OTA Bills had to be cleared. The Committee do not find this information of the Ministry to be completely tenable as the pending Bills could have been accounted for while proposing the revised estimates under the Head for the year. The Committee also take exception to the unhealthy practice of appropriating amounts from other Heads of account to meet the additional expenditure. The Committee, therefore, expresses the view that every care should be taken to make realistic and objective projections so that the funds available are judiciously distributed and made use of by the Ministry.

Reply of the Government

Instructions have been issued to all the concerned officers in the Ministry to make a realistic assessment taking into consideration past patterns of OTA payments and all the pending bills while proposing the RE and thereafter to incur expenditure in conformity with the RE finalized by the Ministry.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

Recommendation (Sl.No. 13, Para No. 117)

The Committee are concerned to note that there has been a substantial underutilization of the budgeted amount under the Head, Development of Social, Environment and Price Statistics year after year. The actual utilization during 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 has been only Rs. 110.04 lakhs, Rs. 59.02 lakhs and Rs. 50 lakhs respectively as against a budgetary allocation of Rs. 463 lakhs, Rs. 267 lakhs and Rs. 212 lakhs respectively during these years. As per the information furnished by the Ministry, the budgeted amount could not be utilized during the years 2005-06 and 2006-07 as the 'Conduct of Market Survey for Development of New Indices CPI (Urban)', under which a Family Living Survey to revise the base year of CPI (UNME) could not be taken up as it was decided to use the results of the 61st round of NSSO instead of carrying out a fresh survey. The Committee do not find much credence in the reasoning furnished by the Ministry for the shortfall in utilizing the budget amounts, as significant outlays continued to be made under the Head. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the objectivity and the empirical basis on which the budgetary allocations are to be made is not, in any way foregone or compromised.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Finance did not approve the proposal for appointment of contract employees to take up the work relating to 'Conduct of Market Survey for Development of New Indices CPI (Urban)', under which a Family Living Survey to revise the base year of CPI (UNME) was to be taken up. Hence targeted expenditure could not be incurred under the component "Development of Price statistics of the scheme "Development of Social, Environment & Price Statistics.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No.
G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl.No. 14, Para No. 120)

The Committee express their deep concern at the mismatch between the budget estimates, revised estimates and the actual expenditure year after year under the Head Strengthening of Field Survey Capability of NSSO. For instance, while an amount of Rs. 215 lakh was allocated at the stage of BE for 2004-05, the amount was reduced to Rs. 170 lakh at the stage of RE and the actual expenditure, which totaled to Rs. 250 lakhs was in excess of the originally budgeted amount under the Head. Similarly, for the year 2005-06 an amount of Rs. 175 lakh was allocated at the stage of BE, which was revised upwards to Rs. 245.84 lakh at the stage of RE and the actual expenditure for the year, at Rs. 267.93 lakh was on the higher side of the Revised Estimates. Further, while there has been an increase in the budgetary allocation under the Head for 2006-07 at Rs. 351.81 lakh, the expenditure expected during the year is to the tune of Rs. 445.26 lakh. The Committee understands that the excess expenditure under the Head during 2004-05 and 2005-06 was mainly on account of additional office and travel expenses, which was incurred through re-appropriation of savings from other Heads of account. The wide mismatch between the budgetary allocations and expenditure under this Head of account is indicative of serious deficiencies in formulating the budget proposals. The Committee, therefore, while recommending that utmost care is taken while finalizing the budget estimates so that large scale variations between BE, RE and the actual expenditure do not continue to occur, also desire that an enquiry be conducted on the reasons for the continued shortfall in meeting the budgeted expenditure and they be informed of the outcome of the same within one month.

Reply of the Government

In accordance with the directions of the Hon'ble Committee, a detailed enquiry has been conducted for the wide divergences between BE, RE and the actuals. The exercise has exceeded the time target allotted by the Hon'ble Committee as the Field Operations Division of the NSSO, which operates the plan scheme, has a network of sub-regional, regional and zonal offices located in 182 locations of the country and hence it took time to collect, compile and tally the information. However the delay caused is highly regretted.

It is also submitted that the BE & RE figures do not include the provision for the NE States, while the total expenditure includes the expenditure on NE States also.

2004-05: The BE 2004-05 was Rs. 215.00 lakh which was revised to Rs. 170.00 lakh, whereas the actual expenditure incurred was Rs. 250.21 lakh. The excess expenditure over BE 2004-05 included reappropriation for the NE region of Rs. 83.21 lakh. One of the functional heads to which reappropriation was carried out was under "Office Expenses" from the relevant dummy head. Thus against an RE of Rs. 170.00 lakh, expenditure under heads, other than for NER was Rs. 131.79 lakh, which was less than the RE provision.

2005-06: The BE 2005-06 was Rs. 175.00 lakh while RE was Rs. 245.84 lakh, and the actual expenditure incurred was Rs. 267.93 lakh. The actuals includes an expenditure of Rs. 43.49 lakh an account of reappropriation from the relevant dummy heads to the functional heads to incur expenditure in the NER. Thus against an RE of Rs. 245.84 lakh, expenditure under heads, other than for NER was Rs. 224.44 lakh, which was less than the RE provision.

It is submitted that the Field Operations Division which operates the scheme has not spent over and above the approved outlays. However, as per the directions of the Hon'ble Committee utmost care will be exercised while finalizing the Budget estimates.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation (Sl.No. 5, Para No. 59)

With specific reference to monitoring implementation of Central Sector Projects, the Committee note with concern that of the 837 projects on the monitoring list, which involve an estimated investment of Rs. 3,69,499 crore, as many as 233 projects have experienced cost escalation to the tune of 65% as compared to the original sanctioned estimates; and 257 projects have experienced time-overruns ranging from 1 to 159 months. The Committee feels particularly concerned to note that despite initiating several well-thought of and reasoned measures, the twin problems of time and cost overruns continue to hinder the progress of implementation of many infrastructure projects. The Committee, therefore, reiterates the need for identifying and analyzing the specific contributory factors for the cost escalation of each of the projects and initiating appropriate corrective measures, so as to minimize the impact of this negative aspect, which does not augur well for the economy. The Committee also desire to be apprised of the action taken against those held to be responsible for lapses that contributed to the cost escalation of projects as reported by the Standing Committees on Project Monitoring of the nodal Ministries concerned, within one month.

Reply of the Government

As directed by the Hon'ble Committee, the Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division requested the 10 concerned administrative Ministries to furnish action taken or proposed to be taken within one month, *vide* D.O. No. 11025/3/2007-IPMD dated May 17, 2007. Feedback has been received from 6 Ministries/Departments and reminders issued to remaining 4 Ministries/Departments for providing necessary information for the preparation of the report for submission to the Standing Committee on Finance. On the basis of the feedback received from 6 Ministries/Departments as interim report will be submitted shortly for the information of the Hon'ble Committee. The final report will be submitted once reports are received from the 4 other Ministries also.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No.
G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

Recommendation (Sl.No. 4, Para Nos. 57 & 58)

From the review of the infrastructure performance during the period, April to December, 2006 as contained in the Annual Report of the Ministry (2006-07), the Committee find to their dismay that except for the areas of power, cement and refinery production, most of the key infrastructure sectors, which includes, coal and steel production, shipping and ports, as well as roads have lagged behind the pre-set targets for the period. While the production of coking coal and washed coal in Coal India Mines Ltd. registered a negative growth of 5.4% and 28.2% respectively during the period, the production of finished steel was short of the pre-set target by 5.1%. The shortfall in meeting the targets envisaged has been more pronounced in the case of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), which could undertake widening/upgradation of only 321 Km of highways as compared to the target of 543 Km set for the period.

The Committee recognizes the existence of strong linkages between infrastructure performance on the one hand and economic progress and poverty alleviation on the other. Though policy issues and matters regarding infrastructure performance are in the domain of the administrative Ministries concerned, the Committee expects the Infrastructure Monitoring Division (IMD) to play an effective role in highlighting performance slippages and taking corrective measures. The Committee also expects the Ministry to play an effective role of coordination in bringing about necessary amendments to the Land Acquisition Act and formulating a standard rehabilitation package, which are perceived to be major contributory factors in slowing down the implementation of plan schemes and programmes of roadways and railways in particular.

Reply of the Government

The suggestions made by the Committee are duly noted for future guidance. However, it is submitted that proposals relating to amendment of the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, is dealt by the Ministry of Rural Development (M/RD) and the M/RD have been requested to furnish the latest status in this respect.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No.
G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl.No. 6, Para No. 73)

The Committee had, in their report on the Demand for Grants (2005-06), of the Ministry expressed serious concern on the slippages in implementing the World Bank aided programme for modernizing the statistical system in the Country *viz.*, India Statistical Strengthening Project. A review of the progress of implementation of the project *inter alia* reveals that significant budgetary allocations being made for the project each year continue to be underutilized and surrendered on account of slippages and frequent rescheduling of the project. From the information furnished on the current status of the project, the Committee note that the work on only two of the four components of Tier-I of the project *viz.*, Creation and Maintenance of Business Register and Improvement of Service Sector Statistics, which was scheduled to be completed in entirety in 2005 have since been completed. Work on the all important Tier-I components of strengthening of 'State Statistical Bureaus' as well as 'assessment of survey capabilities of private sector', which are a prelude to proceeding to the actual implementation of the modernization programme under Tier-II of the project remain to be completed. As admitted by the Secretary, strengthening the State Statistical Bureaus is an immediate necessity for improving the quality, reliability and adequacy of statistics. The India Statistical Strengthening Project, being a flagship programme, which would bring in immense value addition to the Country by way of improving the quality of statistics, the Committee reiterate the need of ensuring that the project is implemented in the right earnest, without further time lags and undue delays. The Committee also desire to be apprised of the progress of implementation of the project at quarterly intervals.

Reply of the Government

India-Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) was formulated with the assistance from the World Bank for strengthening of India Statistical System with primary focus on strengthening of State Statistical System. The ISSP has a 2-Tier approach for its implementation. Tier-I consists of four studies, concerning (1) Creation and Maintenance of Business Register, (ii) Improvement of Service Sector Statistics, (iii) Assessment of Survey Capabilities of Private Sector, and (iv) Strengthening of State Statistical Bureaus. The framework for reporting quarterly progress to the Hon'ble Standing Committee will be finalised shortly. However, an interim report as on 15.05.07 in respect of the activities under the ISSP is given below:

Sl.No.	Name of sub-component	Present Status
Tier-I		
1.	Creation and Maintenance of Business Register	This study has been completed. As a follow up action, a special cell for Business Register has been created under the charge of one director level officer.
2.	Improvement of Service Sector Statistics	This study has been completed.
3.	Assessment of Survey Capabilities of Private Sector	This study has been completed.
4.	Strengthening of State Statistical Bureaus	The Phase-I of Tier-I has been completed. Consultants have been identified to take up the Phase-II of the project.
Tier-II		
5.	The work relates to strengthening of State Statistical Bureaus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Note for Tier-II has since receive the approval of the Department of Economic Affairs and formally placed it before the World Bank. • The International Consultant is being given the responsibility of preparing detailed Strategic Statistical Master Plan for submission to the World Bank.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1), dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl.No. 6, Para No. 83)

The Committee is dismayed to note that there have been significant slippages and undue delays in adhering to the Annual Action Plan of the Ministry for 2006-07. For instance, the 'Input—Output Transaction Table, 2003-04, which was scheduled to be brought out in March, 2007 as per the Annual Plan is now expected to be ready by December, 2007, and a number of project reports on National Resource Accounting

originally scheduled to be finalised by July, 2006 and March, 2007 are now expected to be released by December, 2007. More significantly, reports and publications containing data of vital importance such as the All India Report of the 5th Economic Census, which provides an up-to-date frame of units/enterprises and related information as well as the Monthly Abstract of Statistics (January, 2006-December, 2006), Annual Issue of India in Figures, 2006, the yearly publications, Statistical Pocket Book, India-2005 and Statistical Abstract, India, 2005 have been unduly delayed for release. The Committee had, time and again, emphasized that the reports and publications are released in a timely manner, so as to ensure that the relevance of statistical data is not lost. The Committee, upon reviewing the slippages in adhering to the annual action plan of the Ministry is inclined to believe that the lack of IT readiness/preparedness could be a major contributory factor to the undue delays in bringing out publications and reports containing statistical data of importance. The Committee, therefore, desires that appropriate remedial measures be taken to ensure that the delays being witnessed in bringing out the reports of the Ministry are overcome. they would like to be apprised of the efforts made in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The action plan of CSO to bring out the Input-Output Transactions Table 2003-04, by March, 2007 envisaged reducing the time-lag in releasing this data from 6 years to 3 years. This is an extremely challenging task involving certain amount of risk overshooting the deadline. The CSO has now planned this release by December 2007.

The detailed reasons for delay of various reports and publications are given in the following paragraphs:

Economic Census:

Central Statistical Organisation undertook countrywide Economic Census, 5th in the series during the year 2005-06 in all the States/UTs in collaboration with State/UT, Directorate of Economics & Statistics (DESS). The field work of the 5th Economic Census was completed in all the States and UTs by March, 2006. The provisional results indicating important parameters *viz.*, State-wise number of enterprises, employment therein, growth rate over previous census classified by agriculture and non-agricultural activities, rural/urban area, etc. were released during June, 2006.

For detailed results, the data collected by the State/UT Governments was scanned/digitized by RGI followed by processing

through Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) automated process. The error lists so generated were provided to the State/UT Government for editing so that after receiving error free files from them, the tabulation can be made for detailed results. The error free files from the State of Jharkhand and Bihar are still awaited inspite of several reminders. The Ministry is pursuing the matter at various levels including Planning Secretaries/Chief Secretaries of the States/UTs to expedite error correction work without any delay. As soon as the same is received from these four States, the tabulation for detailed results of Economic Census would be completed and all-India reports would be released.

Natural Resource Accounting:

The eight pilot studies on Natural Resource Accounting (NRA) in different Sectors were entrusted by the Ministry to specialized institutes working in the field of environment science or related socio-economic subjects.

A Technical Monitoring Committee (TMC) was constituted by the Ministry under the Chairmanship of Prof. Amitabh Kundu, Member, National Statistical Commission and Dean, School of Social Sciences, JNU to monitor the progress of these eight studies periodically and also to provide technical guidance.

NRA is an emerging area. These studies on NRA for developing methodologies under SEEA (System of Integrated Economic and Environmental Accounting) were taken up for the first time through outsourcing. The Institutes conducting these studies on NRA had also taken up such studies for the first time although they had past experience of conducting NRA under general framework and the studies aimed at development of sector specific standard methodology under SEEA, which could be applicable under Indian scenario. The project directors faced a number of conceptual and methodological problems from time to time. These problems had to be ironed out and placed before the TMC for guidance. All these led to delay in completion of the studies necessitating subsequent revision of target time for completion in the Annual Action Plan.

The TMC took stock of the situation in its last meeting held on 8th January, 2007 and necessary measures are being taken to ensure completion of the studies by March 2008, if not by December, 2007.

Statistical Publications:

An action plan has been prepared to reduce the time lag for one monthly and three annual publications by the end of 2007-08. The present position of these publications is as below:

- (i) Monthly Abstract of Statistics (January, 2006-December 2007); Monthly issues for the month of January, 2006-September, 2006 and combined issue of Oct.-Dec. 2006 have been released.
- (ii) Annual issue of India in figures, 2006: Title changed to 'India in figures 2007', is under preparation and will be completed by August, 2007.
- (iii) Statistical Pocket Book, India-2005: released in March, 2007.
- (iv) Statistical Abstract, India 2005: Title changed to Statistical Abstract India, 2006 released.

The Action Plan 2007-08 is being kept under strict watch to clear the backlog of these publications.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1) dated July 26, 2007]

Recommendation (Sl.No. 10, Para No. 96)

As regards, the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), which is presently of the base, 1993-94, the Committee had in their report on the Demand for Grants (2005-06) of the Ministry referred to observation of the National Statistical Commission, that the 'index' was an inadequate measure of inflation. From the information furnished on the current status of the work relating to revising the WPI series, The Committee observe that the Working Group set-up in 2003 to revise the current WPI series has completed its deliberations on major technical issues and construction of 'weighting diagram' etc. The new series of WPI is to be given a trial run once sufficient price quotations are available. The Committee understands that another expert group, namely the Chadha Committee had recommended accounting the cost of services too in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI). The Committee, while reiterating the need for ensuring that the work on revising the WPI series is completed at an early date, desire that the recommendations made by this Expert Group for including 'services' in the WPI basket is also given due consideration'.

Reply of the Government

The office of the Economic Adviser (OEA), Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry is responsible for compilation and release of Wholesale Price Index. In accordance with the directions of the Hon'ble Committee, CSO would urge the OEA to explore the possibility of including 'services' in the WPI.

[Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/2/2007-B&F (Part-1), dated July 26, 2007]

NEW DELHI;
28 November, 2007

7 Agrahayana, 1929 (Saka)

ANANTH KUMAR,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Finance.

MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 28th November, 2007 from 1600 hrs. to 1700 hrs. in Committee Room No. 'E', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Ananth Kumar — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Gurudas Dasgupta
3. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
4. Shri Rupchand Pal
5. Shri K.S. Rao
6. Shri Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy
7. Shri M.A. Kharabela Swain

Rajya Sabha

8. Shri Santosh Bagrodia
9. Shri Mangani Lal Mandal
10. Shri S. Anbalagan
11. Shri Moinul Hassan

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri A. Louis Martin — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri T.G. Chandrasekhar — *Deputy Secretary*
3. Shri G. Srinivasulu — *Deputy Secretary-II*

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee, then took up the following draft reports for consideration:—

- (i) Draft action Report on the recommendations/observations contained in the 51st Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Finance (Departments of Economic Affairs, Expenditure and Disinvestment);

- (ii) Draft action taken Report on the recommendations/ observations contained in the 54th Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- (iii) Draft action taken Report on the recommendations/ observations contained in the 41st Report on 'Introduction of New Income Tax Return Form';
- (iv) Draft action taken Report on the recommendations/ observations contained in the 52nd Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue);
- (v) Draft action taken Report on the recommendations/ observations contained in the 53rd Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Planning;
- (vi) Draft action taken Report on the recommendations/ observations contained in the 55th Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs; and
- (vii) Draft action taken Report on the recommendations/ observations contained in the 43rd Report on 'Efficacy of Reform Process in Capital Market—Recent IPO Scam'.

The Committee adopted the reports at (i), (ii) and (iii) above without any amendment and the reports at (iv), (v), (vi) and (vii) above with modification as shown in the annexure.

4. The Committee then authorized the Chairman to finalise the reports in the light of the modifications made and present the same to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX
(Vide Para 3 of the Introduction)

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE FIFTY-FOURTH
REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA) ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2007-2008) OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND
PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION)

	Total	% of Total
(i) Total number of recommendations	15	
(ii) Recommendations/observations which have been accepted by the Government [Vide Recommendation at Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12 & 13]	8	53.33%
(iii) Recommendations/observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies [Vide Recommendation at Sl. Nos. 13 & 14]	2	13.34%
(iv) Recommendations/observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee [Vide Recommendations at Sl. Nos 2 & 5]	1	6.67%
(v) Recommendations/observations in respect of which final reply of the Government is still awaited [Vide Recommendation at Sl. Nos. 4, 6, 8 & 10]	4	26.66%