

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Review of National Statistical Survey Office (NSSO) and Central Statistics Office (CSO)

- The Standing Committee on Finance (Chair: Dr. M. Veerappa Moily) submitted a report on the ‘Review of NSSO and CSO and streamlining of statistics collection machinery in the country including Management Information System for project monitoring/appraisal’ on December 18, 2017. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation comprises of: (i) the Statistics wing (National Statistical Organisation), and (ii) the Programme Implementation wing. The National Statistical Organisation consists of Central Statistics Office (CSO), and National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).
- Vacancies:** As of December 2016, 22% (861) of the sanctioned posts of junior and senior officers (statistical cadre) (3,977) were vacant in the Ministry (see Table 1). The Committee recommended that vacancies in the statistical cadre should be filled immediately. It also recommended that a study be conducted to find out reasons of the high level of shortfall in manpower, and the inability to attract talent. In this regard, the Committee stated that enumerators used for data collection should be appointed on a contractual basis, instead of out-sourcing data collection.

**Table 1: Vacancies in the Ministry**

	Sanctioned	Vacancies	% of vacancies
Senior statistical officer	1,781	361	20%
Junior statistical officer	2,196	500	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,977</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>22%</b>

Note: Data as of December, 2016.

Sources: Report No. 50, Standing Committee on Finance, December 2017; PRS.

- The Committee recommended that teaching methodologies and curriculum at the university-level should be changed to reflect the changing industry requirements. Further, an incentive structure should be devised to attract expertise and quality statisticians for government duties. The Committee recommended that the field level statistical machinery should be strengthened, and the field staff should be trained to use modern methods of data collection.
- Variations in data standards and methodologies:** The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is the nodal agency for coordination with central Ministries and states for

collection and standardisation of statistics. The Committee observed that there are variations between the sample survey data collected by the NSSO and the states governments. Further, it noted that different standards are used by the NSSO and the CSO. The Committee recommended that such variations should be addressed to ensure uniformity of statistics. It noted that collection of data and compilation of various indices are spread across different government agencies. The Committee suggested that all statistical work including publication of various indices by the Ministry should be integrated.

- Consumer Price Index (CPI):** The Committee noted that the CPI does not capture the increasing cost of services such as education, healthcare, and transport. It recommended that there should be an exclusive Service Price Index for essential services. Further, the Committee stated that indices compiled and published by the government should reflect current market conditions at the consumer level.
- Employment data:** The Committee stated that absence of regular employment and unemployment data is a major gap. It observed that the official unemployment figures are out-of-date and unrealistic. The Committee noted that accurate and reliable data on employment should be available to assess the employment situation, and formulate appropriate policy responses.
- Programme implementation:** The Ministry monitors the implementation of central sector projects, schemes, and the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, the Committee suggested that the Ministry should develop methodologies and tools to play a pro-active role for real-time monitoring instead of just being a compilation agency.
- Commercial/Marketing unit:** The Committee recommended that the Ministry should modernise data collection, compilation, and presentation. Further, it should aid and advise both the governments, and corporations and organisations in the private and public sectors. In this context, the Committee suggested that the Ministry can set up an internal Commercial or Marketing Unit, which can share relevant data with users on a commercial basis. Further, free access to data can be provided to universities, researchers, and students.

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