

Bill Summary

The Collection of Statistics Bill, 2007

- The Collection of Statistics Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on May 17, 2007 to replace the Collection of Statistics Act, 1953. The Bill was referred to the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance (Chairperson: Shri Ananth Kumar).
- This Bill grants any ministry or department in the central or state government or union territory administration, or any panchayat or municipality the authority to collect statistics on economic, demographic, social, scientific and environmental aspects, excluding the Census, the Survey of India and anything appearing in the Seventh Schedule.
- The appropriate government may appoint a statistics officer for any geographical unit to collect any statistics directed by it. Similarly, they may appoint any agency to help with the collection of such statistics.
- The statistics officer has the right to request any informant to furnish information for the purpose of collecting statistics. The officer may seek such information through tele fax, telephone, email or any other electronic form.
- Persons asked to furnish information are required to provide such information to the officer. The statistics officer has the right to access any relevant document in the person's possession, including entering any premises where he believes the document to be kept in order to inspect or take possession.
- Every agency is also required to furnish all information to the statistics officer, and shall make available for inspection of any necessary records, plans and other documents.
- The Bill requires that any information furnished to the statistics officer be used only for statistical purposes. Agencies may disclose individual returns or formats or information schedules to another agency, person, institution or university only for *bona fide* research or statistical purposes. The Bill provides certain provisions to ensure the security of this transfer.
- The Bill requires that all statistical information published by an agency be arranged so that information is not identifiable or traceable to individual informants, unless with the consent of the informant. Information available under any other Act or public information is excluded from this rule.
- Agencies are required to secure all recorded information. No information collected for statistical purposes may be used as evidence during a proceeding. They may release documents considered to have historical importance.
- The Bill outlines various penalties for failure to provide information, making false or misleading statements, and mutilation, destruction or defacement of documents. The Bill also outlines penalties for officers who fail to carry out their duties, as well as unauthorised persons pretending to be authorised to collect such information.
- The central government is permitted to identify and regulate any subject for collection of statistics of national importance as 'core statistics'.
- The Bill prohibits jurisdiction in a civil court for any action taking by the government, statistics officer or agency under this Act.

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