

25  
YEARS OF PROGRESS  
1951-1976

B28.2.wN51:1.N7  
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STATISTICAL ORGANISATION

NEW DELHI

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CENTRAL STATISTICAL ORGANISATION

TWENTY FIVE YEARS  
OF  
PROGRESS

1951—1976

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS  
MINISTRY OF PLANNING  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

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## INTRODUCTION

India has a federal structure and according to the Constitution the subjects are grouped into Union, State and Concurrent lists, the last category representing the areas where both the Union and State Governments can operate. The authority and responsibility for collection of statistics relating to a particular subject are determined by the overall responsibility for the subject under the Constitution. In most cases the statistical activities are organised basically at the State level and the resulting data are later integrated to produce national statistical series. Some statistical activities such as the population census are, however, carried on by the Centre.

2 Perhaps the first significant event in the development of statistics in India was the setting up of the Statistical Committee in 1862 for designing model statistical forms to collect data on trade, finance, education, agriculture, etc., which later led to the issue of 'Statistical Abstracts for British India' in 1868. The first countrywide synchronised population census was organised in 1881. The first issue of 'Agricultural Statistics of British India' was published in 1886. A Statistical Bureau headed by a Director General of Statistics, was formed at the Centre in 1895 to coordinate both agricultural and foreign trade statistics and to collect statistics relating to prices, wages and industry. Later the Bureau was placed under the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics in 1905 who was assigned the additional function of liaison with the trading community.

3 Among other major events were the creation of the Statistical Division in the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 1931, which ultimately grew into the Institute of Agricultural Research Statistics (IARS), the founding of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in 1932, and the establishment of the Office of the Economic Adviser in the then Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 1933. The Directorate of Economics and Statistics in the Ministry of Agriculture and the Labour Bureau were also established in the forties.

4 The Economic Enquiry Committee set up in 1925 recommended that all statistical work in the country should be coordinated and centralised in one Department and that this Central Authority should advise the Government on all statistical matters. The recommendations could not, however, be implemented. But later, on the recommendation of the Bowley-Roberston Enquiry Committee (1934), the Government of India decided to establish the Central Statistical Organisation. However, financial difficulties came in the way of implementing the decision. With the outbreak of Second World War in 1939, the Government

convened an Inter-Departmental Committee to suggest ways and means of meeting the statistical requirements in both military and civil spheres of activity. The Committee again recommended the formation of a Central Statistical Office, institution of a statistical cadre, establishment of Statistical Bureaus in States and maintenance of all important Statistics for the entire country. These recommendations were also not given effect to.

5 The years since independence have witnessed a great spurt in the statistical activities in India. Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis was appointed Hony. Statistical Adviser to the Cabinet in 1949 and a proper statistical organisation began to take shape. A Central Statistical Unit was set up in the Cabinet Secretariat in 1949 which developed into the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) in 1951 with the object of providing technical leadership in building up the statistical system. Initially the CSO was charged with the responsibilities of coordinating the statistical activities in the country, laying down and maintenance of standards (concepts, definitions and procedures), providing consultancy and advisory support to other statistical agencies, disseminating statistical intelligence and keeping liaison with the international statistical agencies.

6 The functions of the CSO expanded with the transfer of the National Income Unit from the Ministry of Finance in 1954, setting up of a separate unit in the same year to look after the statistical work relating to planning in collaboration with the Planning Commission, creation of training facilities for Central and State statistical personnel, and the transfer of the Directorate of Industrial Statistics in 1957 from the then Ministry of Commerce and Industry. These later developments resulted in the additional functions of preparing and publishing national accounts statistics; plan work relating to statistics development; processing, analysis and publication of industrial statistics and organising training programmes in official statistics and related methodology. The Government of India further decided in 1961 that the CSO should have the authority and status of a separate Department to carry on its functions in relation to Central Departments and State Governments, and accordingly the Department of Statistics was created.

7 The CSO has its headquarters at New Delhi. However, work relating to industrial statistics is mainly carried out at Calcutta. The organisation is headed by a Director who is ex-officio Additional Secretary of the Department of Statistics. He is assisted at New Delhi by one Additional Director, six Joint Directors, nine Officers-on-Special Duty, thirty Deputy Directors, fiftytwo Assistant Directors and supporting staff. The Industrial Statistics Wing at Calcutta is under the charge of a Joint Director, and has in addition, one Officer-on-Special Duty, two Deputy Directors, seven Assistant Directors and supporting staff.

8 This Brochure traces the progress of the CSO since its inception

mainly by emphasising its role in the development of statistical organisation and the improvement of data base in the country. The section on statistical organisation includes statistical offices, machinery for coordination, statutory powers, statistical cadres, data processing facilities and training of statisticians. The portion on improvement of data base describes the efforts of the CSO in setting up and maintenance of standards and providing consultative and advisory support in various fields of official statistics. The work on national accounts is next dealt with. Thereafter follow brief descriptions of the activities of the CSO in statistical dissemination and international relations. The Brochure is concluded with an account of some of the important tasks which lie ahead.