

*Challenges for official Statistics in the
Asia-Pacific Region: Existing processes
and capacity building at the regional
level*

5-6 December, 2011

Central Statistics Office (CSO)
Ministry of Statistics and
Programme Implementation
Government of India

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Provides:

- An accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful picture of the economy and society to support the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of economic and social policies and programmes by Government at all levels.
- Crucial indicators of the society & economy
- Acts as important instrument for measuring good governance
- **Hence indispensable**
- Fundamental principles of Official Statistics, UNSC 1994

Statistical System (in general)

To support development objectives of the economy by:-

- Providing decision support to administrative set up;
- Meeting the requirements of the State to manage its affairs.
- Ensuring meeting to a large extent users' need, Maintain standards, Quality, and Integrity of the information;
- to meet the requirement of the state to manage its affairs
Predominantly responsible for collection, compilation, Processing, analysis and timely dissemination of reliable and authoritative information;
- Promoting use of Statistics efficiently for informed decision, in all environments; - By Government agency, Trade/ Business/ Private Organisations/ Associations, Academicians/Researchers, Individual Users/Public at large, etc.

Statistical System (in general) Contd

Statistical Systems:

- Exist in most of the countries.
- More or less performing similar functions.
- Differ in size, structure and activities.
- Centralized/Decentralized – depend upon the political set up.
- Statistical capacity – varies

20th century saw Statistical revolution (similar to Industrial Revolution of 18-19th Century)

- INNOVATIVE NEW STANDARDS
- INNOVATIVE NEW INDICATORS
- INNOVATIVE NEW MEASUREMENTS
- INNOVATIVE NEW METHODOLOGIES FOR APPLIED AND THEORETICAL STATISTICS
- INNOVATIVE THOUGHTS / IDEAS and so on

Making Statistics as the “KEY TECHNOLOGY OF THE ERA”

Need to :

- Review statistical systems to respond to the new emerging needs/requirements
- Enhance statistical capacity
 - *Statistics must always have purpose, either in pursuit of knowledge or the promotion of human welfare*

STATISTICAL CAPACITY

- Ability of the statistical producers to serve the statistical needs (both quantitatively and qualitatively) of the users
- Grown significantly in the region.
- Further continues to grow due to:
 - (a) Size and complexity of the demand
 - (b) Increase in the demand both in the existing and new emerging areas
 - (c) Diversity of the stakeholders
 - (d) IT innovations
 - (e) Huge development in measurement of Governance
 - (f) Commitments at International level

Statistical Capacity Development

- A process whereby producers and users of statistics and related organizations improve and strengthen their abilities
- Continuous process but slow in less developed countries due to financial/infrastructural constraints
- Newer technological and statistical development
Major Issue: How to meet the rising expectations of expanding demand of more aware stakeholders and other users
- Systematic efforts/initiatives by countries in terms of:
 - (a) Statistical legislation
 - (b) Organizational structure both in terms of size & number
 - (c) Management & leadership
 - (d) Human resource development (Training)
 - (e) Enhanced allocation/Resources/Priorities
 - (f) Bilateral/Regional/International Cooperation /MOUs/Agreements.
 - (g) Enhanced usage in designing, developing, monitoring, evolving national policies and programmes

INDIAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM

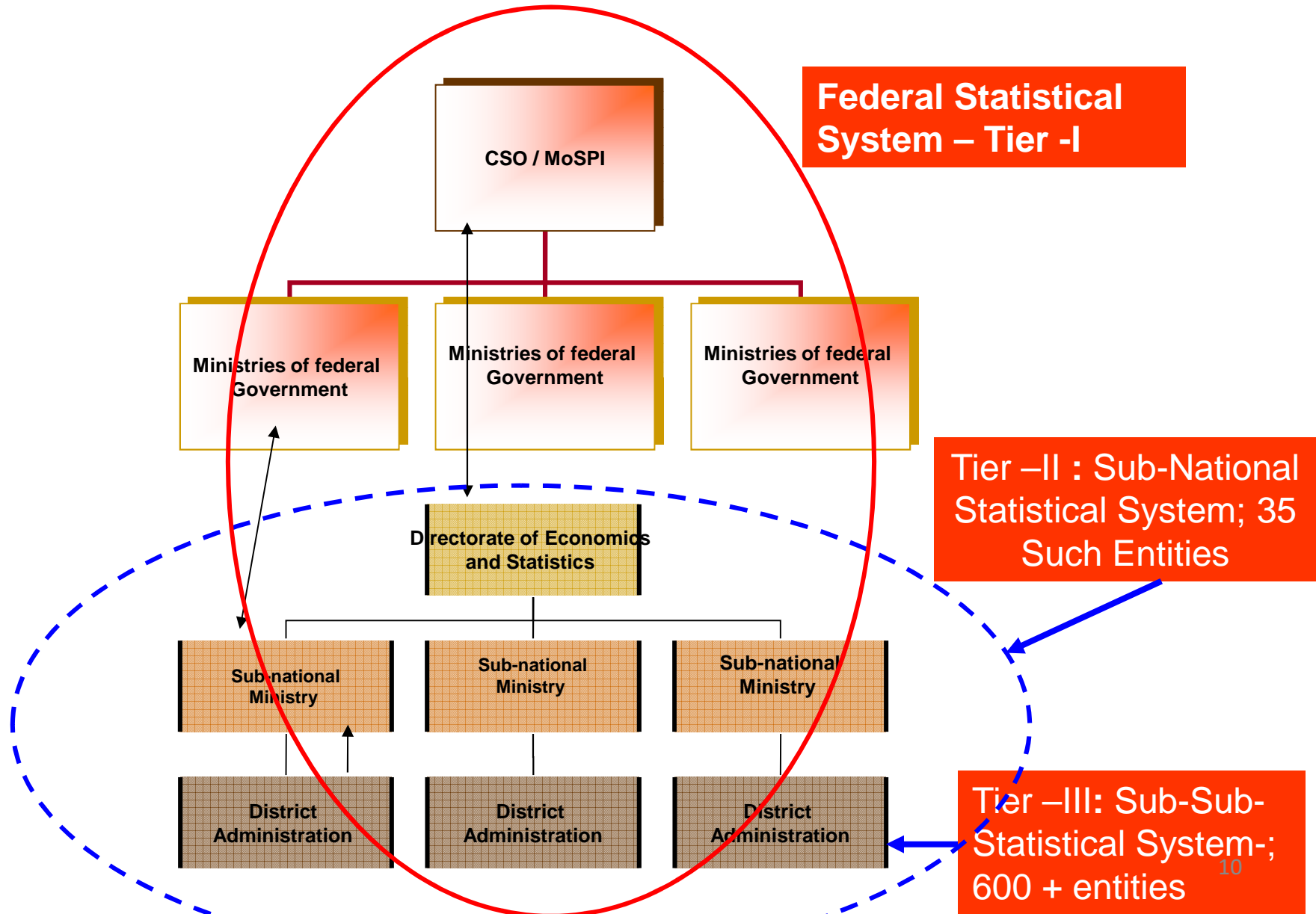
- Decentralized statistical system with considerable autonomy/independence
- NSO - A part of the government machinery
- Governing arrangements for major official statistics:
 - (a) Advisory Boards/councils, working groups, committees (Chairman/Members – eminent non-government officials/experts) –
 - (b) To provide guidance on a range of matters (hence making the system – autonomous/ independence)

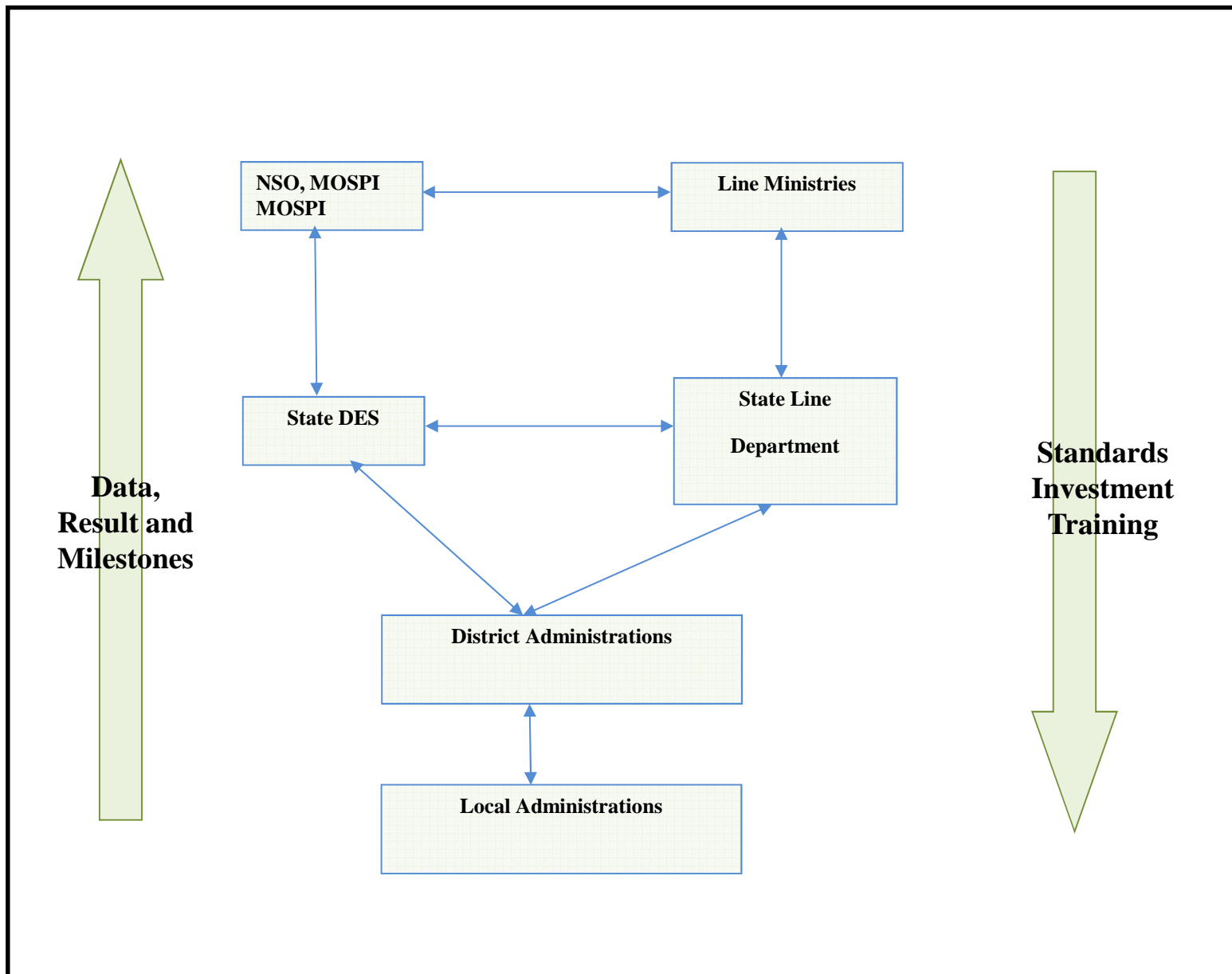
MISSION STATEMENT: To provide, within the decentralised structure of the system, reliable, timely and credible social and economic statistics, to assist decision making within and outside the government, stimulates research and promote debate relating to conditions affecting people's life

Indian Statistical System

- Evolution – Ancient time, medieval time, pre & post independence
– *needs and requirements varied*
- The 3-tier System (National, State and District) is a highly decentralized and enjoys constitutionally mandated independence in its working.
- The authority and responsibility for the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics relating to a particular subject is determined by allocation of the responsibility between the Federal and the sub-national Governments, as per the Constitution.
- At Federal level - Central Statistics Office in NSO, functioning within the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) is the Apex Statistical body in the country.
- Broad structure of the system remains in place for decades.
- Detailed structure evolved over time with change of policy paradigm, IT advancement and enhanced and diversified demand

Three Tier Decentralised System : Complex System





Issues of concern

- India being a vast country with a federal set up collects very large amount of data
- Decentralized national statistical system:
 - Led to certain deficiencies
 - In terms of Quality, Timeliness, Duplication and Omission in the production of statistics
- **Major reasons:-**
- weak infrastructure at sub-national and below level
- Insufficient human/financial resources
- Insufficient trained/professional staff
- Low priority to statistics
- Gap between demand and supply in availability of needed information
- Lack of transparency in the statistical processes
- Research in official statistics – neglected/ low priority

Other Major Challenges

- Statistics - not given due and deserving importance
- Widening gap between ever increasing demand and shrinking supply of qualitative young statisticians to occupy statistical position (govt./pvt. sector)
- No systematic and regular mechanism between academicians and official statisticians
- Growing and diversified stakeholders
- Ever growing array of issues – due to new demands driven by changes in demography, govt. structure, economy, environment and S&T
- Growing Information base – Market research, scientific research, commercial statistics
- Changes in statistical process and methodologies due to IT advances

Major Challenges – contd.....

- Weak coordination among stakeholders (Horizontal & vertical)
- Duplication of Data
- No proper documentation
- Absence of manuals on core subjects
- Inadequate or no separate infrastructure for HRD
- Inadequate or no teaching faculty for trainees
- No training strategy /training needs assesment
- Acute statistical manpower shortage
- Research in official statistics – neglected/ low priority

REVAMPING OF STATISTICAL SYSTEM

- A National Commission comprising of members from economics and statistical fields (representing user Groups) set up in 2000 for critical examination of the entire system.
- Adopted the following five broad approaches to rejuvenate the existing system viz.
 - Reform in the administrative structure of the Indian Statistical System and upgrading its infrastructure to ensure autonomy;
 - Improvement in the system of data collection;
 - Explore alternative techniques in relation to existing statistics;
 - Identification of new data series that may be necessary to keep pace with the changes occurring in the socio-economic sectors; and
 - Evolution of appropriate methodologies for collection of data in relation to new data techniques.
- The Commissions report, placed in the Parliament in 2001 contained several recommendations for restructuring the system and recommended remedial measures for strengthening the system.

IMPROVING/STRENGTHENING OF STATISTICAL SYSTEM

Major Initiatives/steps taken:

Core Statistics:-

- The setting up of a permanent National Statistical Commission (NSC)
- independent of the government and responsible to the Parliament in respect of policy making, coordination and certification of quality of core statistics.
- To serve as a nodal empowered body for all core statistical activities of the country; evolve, monitor and enforce statistical priorities and standards, and ensure strong coordination through a closer linkage between the National Statistical Organization (NSO) and state statistical organizations.

IMPROVING/STRENGTHENING OF STATISTICAL SYSTEM - Condt.....

Coordination:-

- – Strengthened by COCSSO, Advisory Groups, Committees, Seminars, Workshops etc.
- Appointing and designating Senior Officers as the Statistical Advisers in States/UTs and in other union line ministries

Legal Framework:-

- Improved/strengthened through the enactment of 'the Collection of Statistics Act 2008 replacing the earlier one (1953).

Human Resource Development:-

- setting up of a full-fledged National Institute for Training in official statistics known as National Academy of Statistical Administration (NASA) equipped with modern state of the art facilities to impart training in official statistics and related statistical disciplines besides promoting research in the country.

Strengthening/Improving of the System:-

- Undertaking a World Bank assisted India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) for improvement and strengthening of the Statistical System in India focusing on the capacity building needs particularly at the regional (state) level.

Other initiatives:-

- Improvement in quality, coverage and timeliness of National and State Accounts Statistics, Social, Environment and Allied Statistics, Consumer Price Index Series, Index of Industrial Production Series and Data generated through Annual Survey of Industries, Strengthening and enhancing capabilities of National Sample Survey Organization in the matter of Field Survey.

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INDIA STATISTICAL STRENGTHENING PROJECT (ISSP)

- **To strengthen the State Statistical Systems which is most critical in the context of strengthening the National Statistical System to meet growing data requirements both at national and international levels.**

- **Broad area of activities/support envisaged at:**
 - **Improving management and coordination of statistical activities.**
 - **Human Resource Development (improvement of statistical skills and capacity).**
 - **Developing statistical infrastructure including civil works and creation of extensive ICT facilities.**
 - **Conducting Surveys and Studies.**
 - **Improving statistical operations (data collection, processing, management and dissemination) particularly for 20 key areas.**
 - **Statutory support to the State statistical system.**

SOME KEY EXPECTED BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF ISSP

- Identify and Effectively address unmet and under-met demands for data/information, including that concerning emerging needs and sun rise sectors (e.g. climate change, gender, domestic violence...).
- Statistical System – Better Co-ordinated.
- More efficient use of Resources by Statistical Agencies and/or for Statistical Operations.
- Greater client focus.
- More Policy Relevant Data, in alignment with the ever changing socio-economic milieu.
- Enhanced Levels of Transparency (Metadat).
- Safeguarding of and ensuring statistical integrity

- Capacity creation/development on a long term and sustainable basis.
- Compilation of district level estimates of key socio-economic characteristics.
- Manuals of Statistical Standards.
- Statistical Personnel Better equipped/Better endowed inter-alia for reasons of operational efficiency and multi-tasking.
- Information on improvements effected in State statistical systems to be periodically updated and published on ISSP web pages.
- Substantial improvements in the collection basic statistics, especially those derived/derivable from **ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS.**

FUTURE CHALLENGES

LOCAL LEVEL DEVELOPMENT

- Major shift in the framework of Governance.
- Decentralization of Governance (73 and 74 constitutional amendments.)
- Democratically elected grass root institutions of Local Self Governance.
- About 2.5 lakhs panchayats and 5000 Town Council.
- Elected bodies to evolve their local plans for economic and social development.

BASIC STATISTICS FOR VILLAGE LEVEL DEVELOPMENT (BSVLD)

Outcome:

- Formulation of realistic and effective development plan at local level.
- Local level database to measure the development indicators for the villages/ Panchayats/ Districts as unit to be used for allocation of plan funds judiciously.

Future Tasks

- Capacity Development:
 - Dissemination
 - Technology Adoption
- HRD/Training:
 - Training Needs Assessment
 - Curriculum Development
 - Coordination
- Statistical audit for quality assurance & improvement
- New Products

- Developed/update NSDS
- Align capacity building around NSDS priorities
- Adequate resources for production and dissemination of statistics
- Documentation of the processes and methods/manuals
- Professional competence
- Strengthening of statistical education in colleges/ universities
- International Cooperation - Strengthening

Capabilities Development

A continuous process

- **Capabilities**
 - to be meaningful
 - relevant to the contemporary environment,
 - need to be multifaceted,
 - synergized to the demand,
 - abreast with the supporting technological advancements,
 - harmonized with the standards for much wider comparability over time and space
 - to meet the rising expectations of expanding domain of more aware stakeholders and other users.
- **Role of donors/international agencies - vital**

Initialives taken sofar - summary

- The setting up of a permanent National Statistical Commission (NSC) independent of the government and responsible to the Parliament in respect of policy making, coordination and certification of quality of core statistics.
- Commission serves as a nodal empowered body for all core statistical activities of the country; evolve, monitor and enforce statistical priorities and standards, and ensure strong coordination through a closer linkage between the National Statistical Organization (NSO) and state statistical organizations. The Secretary of the Commission is the Chief Statistician of the country who also heads the NSO.
- Manpower development to Improve Lateral Coordination at the national level by posting Statistical Advisors at various line Ministries.
- Coordination – Strengthened, COCSSO, Advisory Groups, Committees, Seminars, Workshops etc.
- Appointing and designating a Senior Officer of Union Government posted in states as the Statistical Advisers for the State
- To support, regulate and strengthen the statistical system of the country, the Collection of Statistics Act 2008 has been enacted replacing the earlier one (1953).

Initiatives taken sofar

- contd....

- Establishment of a data warehouse to provide value added services in Statistical data dissemination.
- Human Resource Development by setting up of a full-fledged National Institute for Training in official statistics known as National Academy of Statistical Administration (NASA) equipped with modern state of the art facilities to impart training in official statistics and related statistical methodologies besides promoting research in the country.
- Undertaking a World Bank assisted India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) for improvement and strengthening of the Statistical System in India focusing on the capacity building needs particularly at the regional (state) level.
- Other initiatives pertains to – improvement in quality, coverage and timeliness of National and State Accounts Statistics, Social, Environment and Allied Statistics, Consumer Price Index Series, Index of Industrial Production Series and Data generated through Annual Survey of Industries, Strengthening and enhancing capabilities of National Sample Survey Organization in the matter of Field Survey, International Coordination.