FORTY-SEVENTH REPORT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE (2011-2012)

(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

[Action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Finance on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation]

> Presented to Lok Sabha on 22.12.2011 Laid in Rajya Sabha on 22.12.2011



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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE (2011-2012)

Shri Yashwant Sinha — Chairman

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INTRODUCTION

- I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, having been authorised by the Committee, present this Forty-seventh Report on action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-sixth Report of the Committee (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- 2. The Thirty-sixth Report (15th Lok Sabha) was presented to Lok Sabha/laid in Rajya Sabha on 2 August, 2011. Replies indicating action taken on all the recommendations contained in the Report were furnished by the Government on 28 September, 2011.
- 3. The Committee considered and adopted this report at their sitting held on 19 December, 2011.
- 4. An analysis of action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-sixth 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: 19 December, 2011

28 Agrahayana, 1933 (Saka)

YASHWANT SINHA. Chairman. Standing Committee on Finance.

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Finance deals with action taken by Government on the recommendations/observations contained in their Thirty-Sixth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which was presented to Lok Sabha on 2 August, 2011 and simultaneously laid in Rajya Sabha on the same day.

- 2. Action taken notes have been received from the Government in respect of all the 16 recommendations contained in the Report. These have been analysed and categorized as follows:
 - (i) Recommendations/Observations that have been accepted by the Government:

Recommendation Nos. 1 to 8 and 10 to 15

(Total: 14) (Chapter II)

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

> (Total: Nil) (Chapter III)

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

Recommendation No. 9

(Total: 1) (Chapter IV)

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

Recommendation No. 16

(Total: 1) (Chapter V)

- 3. The Committee desire that the replies to the recommendations/ observations contained in Chapter I and final replies in respect of recommendation contained in Chapter V may be furnished to them expeditiously.
- 4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their recommendations.

A. Budgetary Allocation

Recommendation (Sl. No. 1)

5. The Committee recommended as under:

"The Committee are constrained to note the persistent underutilization of allocated funds in the Plan Expenditure of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation during the last five years. The unspent balance in the Plan Expenditure as compared to the Budget Estimates has been to the tune of Rs. 27.76 crore (33%) in 2006-07, Rs. 26.00 crore (28%) in 2007-08, Rs. 66.15 crore (51%) in 2008-09, Rs. 143.60 crore (63%) in 2009-10 and Rs. 145 crore (54%) in 2010-11. This persistent and rising trend of underutilization of funds in the Plan Expenditure shows the inability of Ministry to absorb the allocated funds and depicts poor management of budget planning on the part of the Ministry."

- 6. The Ministry of Planning, in their action taken reply stated as follows:
 - "I. The shortfall in the plan expenditure during the last three years is mainly on account of implementation of India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) and Economic Census. The main reasons for the shortfall in the expenditure are as under:
 - II. Processes involved in approvals of competent authorities for ISSP took a considerable amount of time to get completed due to the following reasons:
 - (a) Such a complex and large project for strengthening of the National Statistical System primarily through the strengthening of the State Statistical Systems in all their dimensions has been taken up for the first time ever in India.
 - (b) Significant difficulties faced in assigning monetary values to expected project costs and the envisaged project benefits, since most the targeted benefits, such

- as improvement in data quality, reduction in time lags in the compilation and dissemination of various types of socio-economic statistics, etc., by their very nature, are not easy to quantify.
- (c) The CCEA approved the project on 19th March, 2010.
- (d) The process of approval by the World Bank for the Project and the accrual of funds (as a loan from the World Bank) for the Project got completed in July, 2010.
- (e) Seed Money, for preparation of the required detailed State Strategic Statistical Plans (SSSPs) could be commenced only during Second Quarter of 2010-11.
- (f) States/UTs, were eventually found to consume much more time (than had been earlier anticipated by MOSPI) to complete their SSPs and the required approvals at the State Levels despite several earlier held regional workshops on SSSP.
- (g) A fairly long list of prescribed procedural requirements, at the State/UT level before the requisite approvals can be accorded at the State/UT level.
- (h) Since such a project, under an instrument of a detailed MoU, has been taken up for the first time ever in India, the process of securing required approvals at the ends of both the concerned State Governments and Government of India has also added to the time required for completion of the required formalities which are to precede implementation.
- III. In case of Economic Census (EC), Government decided to conduct Caste and BPL Censuses during June-September, 2011, the period earlier planned for Economic Census. Further dovetailing of EC with Population Census was not found feasible. In order to reduce pressure on State resources and ensure availability of manpower, it was decided in consultation with Ministry of Rural Development and Registrar General of India (RGI) to conduct EC after the conduct of both the Censuses preferably during January-June, 2012. Hence no money, involving printing of schedules, instruction manuals and training programmed, could be spent.
- IV. To ensure proper utilization of fund in respect of various schemes of the Ministry, stringent monitoring mechanism has been put in place. Towards this end, it has been decided

to adopt a two-pronged approach to monitor the expenditure in the Ministry. At the initial level, the expenditure would be reviewed by Director Generals of CSO and NSSO/Additional Secretary, as the case may be, on monthly basis; and corrective measures taken so as to ensure pro-rata expenditure *vis-a-vis* the budget allocations. Thereafter, on quarterly basis, the expenditure would be reviewed at the level of Secretary (S&PI) alongwith the physical monitoring of activities proposed, as part of the Annual Action Plan of the Ministry."

7. The Committee note the reply of the Ministry that the underutilization of allocated funds in the plan expenditure during the last three years is mainly on account of processes involved in approvals of competent authorities took considerable time, thereby delaying implementation of Indian Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) and Economic Census. The Committee are further given to understand that a stringent monitoring mechanism has been put in place in order to ensure proper utilisation of funds in respect of various schemes of the Ministry. The Committee, however, observe that had this monitoring mechanism been put in place earlier, this situation of underutilization of funds year after year would not have occurred. The Committee would like to be apprised of the effectiveness of the measures taken in this regard.

B. National Statistical Commission (NSC)

Recommendation (Sl. No. 9)

8. The Committee recommended as under:

"The Committee note that with regard to conferring statutory status to the National Statistical Commission, the Commission appointed a Committee on 8th November, 2010 under the Chairmanship of Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon to look into legislative measures on statistical matters, including a Bill to provide statutory status to the Commission. However, no timeframe has been fixed for introducing the Bill in Parliament. The Committee reiterates that conferring statutory status would enable the National Statistical Commission to function in an independent manner for strengthening the statistical system in the country. The Committee hope that the Committee, under the Chairmanship of Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon would submit their report on conferring statutory status to the NSC within the period of six months and the related Bill, which would enable the National Statistical Commission to function independently is brought before Parliament accordingly."

9. The Government, in their action taken reply stated as follows:

"The recommendation is noted. Steps are being taken to expedite the process."

10. The Committee are constrained to observe with dissatisfaction the evasive and short reply of the Ministry regarding the issue of conferring statutory status to the National Statistical Commission. Moreover, the Ministry has also not apprised the Committee about the status of Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon Committee's Report on the National Statistical Commission. The Committee would like to reiterate that the report of Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon Committee be expedited and urge upon the Government to bring the related Bill, which would enable the National Statistical Commission to function independently before, Parliament at the earliest.

Recommendation (Sl. No. 11)

11. The Committee recommended as under:

"The Committee note that with regard to the process of identifying core statistics, a statement indicating the views of different Central Ministries/Departments and a suggestive list of core statistics were placed before the National Statistics Commission in its 39th meeting held in December, 2010. The Commission desired that the list is to be recast in a sequential way and a concept paper may be prepared, keeping in view inter-alia the core statistics in the form of indicators, economic parameters, etc., and the statistical processes through which and the periodicity by which the core statistics are presently produced and the agencies that are presently involved in the production. The Committee further note that after notification of core statistics by the Government, the Commission would lay down standards in respect of methodology. The Committee desire that Government should expedite the preparation of the concept paper and list of core statistics as per the suggestions of the Commission so that the list of core statistics is notified and the Commission could formulate the standards in respect of methodology for collection of such statistics without any further delay."

12. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of Planning have stated as under:

"The draft concept paper and draft list of core statistics have been received in the Commission Secretariat. They will be placed before the Commission in its next meeting to be held in August, 2011 for its view in the matter."

13. The Committee note that concept paper and draft list of core statistics have been received in the Commission Secretariat and hope they might have been approved by the Commission. The Committee desire the Government to notify the list of core statistics and formulate the standards in respect of methodology for collection of core statistics expeditiously.

C. Infrastructure and Project Monitoring

Recommendation (Sl. No. 15)

14. The Committee recommended as under:

"The Committee are dismayed to note that 563 projects costing Rs. 150 crore and more which are on the monitor of the Ministry have experienced cost overrun of 20.3% and time overrun of 51%. 83 ongoing projects have both time and cost overrun, 54 projects have only cost overrun and 193 projects have only time overrun. The reasons attributed by the Ministry for time and cost overruns include, land acquisition and rehabilitation and resettlement, forest/ environment/wildlife clearances, delay in shifting utilities, removal of encroachments, law and order problems, lack of proper co-ordination at State level, lack of resources/fund constraints, change in scope, technology selection, geological surprises, etc. The Committee are of the firm opinion that persistent problems of time and cost overrun in the infrastructure projects, could be avoided if pre-project activities including clearance are completed before sanction of projects or before award of contract. Evidently, the Ministry has been lagging behind on this issue. The Committee expect that the recommendations of the in-house Group of the Ministry constituted at the behest of the Committee, under the Chairmanship of an Additional Secretary would be implemented by the Government in a time bound manner so as to resolve the issues related to time and cost overruns of Central Sector Projects. The Committee desire to be apprised of the outcome in this regard on quarterly basis."

15. In their action taken note the Ministry of Planning have submitted as below:

"The observations of the Committee have been communicated to all the concerned Ministries. The concerned infrastructure Ministries have been requested to take follow-up corrective action and report. It may be noted that this Ministry has always been emphasizing on the completion of pre-project activities and clearance while giving comments for appraisal of the projects for PIB/EFC, etc.

It may be added that on the advice of this Ministry, State Governments are now setting up a 'Central Sector Projects Coordination Committee (CSPCC)' under the Chairmanship of respective Chief Secretaries which is expected to remove various impediments like delays in land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement, forest/environment/wildlife clearances, delays in shifting of utilities, removal of encroachments, law and order problems, etc. so that time and cost overrun in Central Projects is minimized. This is expected to speed up execution of Central Projects within the approved cost."

16. The Committee appreciate the fact that on the advice of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, State Governments are now setting up a 'Central Sector Project Coordination Committee (CSPCC)' under the Chairmanship of respective Chief Secretaries to remove various impediments so that time and cost overrun in Central Projects is minimized. The Committee hope that CSPCC would also lay emphasis on the completion of pre-project activities in order to speed-up execution of Central Projects within the approved cost and timeframe.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Budgetary Allocation

Recommendation (Serial No. 1)

The Committee are constrained to note the persistent underutilization of allocated funds in the Plan Expenditure of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation during the last five years. The unspent balance in the Plan Expenditure as compared to the Budget Estimates has been to the tune of Rs. 27.76 crore (33%) in 2006-07, Rs. 26.00 crore (28%) in 2007-08, Rs. 66.15 crore (51%) in 2008-09, Rs. 143.60 crore (63%) in 2009-10 and Rs. 145 crore (54%) in 2010-11. This persistent and rising trend of underutilization of funds in the Plan Expenditure shows the inability of Ministry to absorb the allocated funds and depicts poor management of budget planning on the part of the Ministry.

- I. The shortfall in the plan expenditure during the last three years is mainly on account of implementation of India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) and Economic Census. The main reasons for the shortfall in the expenditure are as under.
- II. Processes involved in approvals of competent authorities for ISSP took a considerable amount of time to get completed due to the following reasons:
 - (a) Such a complex and large project for strengthening of the National Statistical System primarily through the strengthening of the State Statistical Systems in all their dimensions has been taken up for the first time ever in India.
 - (b) Significant difficulties faced in assigning monetary values to expected project costs and the envisaged project benefits, since most the targeted benefits, such as improvement in data quality, reduction in time lags in the compilation and dissemination of various types of socio-economic statistics etc., by their very nature, are not easy to quantify.

- (c) The CCEA approved the project on 19th March, 2010.
- (d) The process of approval by the World Bank for the Project and the accrual of funds (as a loan from the World Bank) for the Project got completed in July, 2010.
- (e) Seed Money, for preparation of the required detailed State Strategic Statistical Plans (SSSPs) could be commenced only during Second Quarter of 2010-11.
- (f) States/UTs, were eventually found to consume much more time (than had been earlier anticipated by MOSPI) to complete their SSPs and the required approvals at the State Levels despite several earlier held regional workshops on SSSP.
- (g) A fairly long list of prescribed procedural requirements, at the State/UT level before the requisite approvals can be accorded at the State/UT level.
- (h) Since such a project, under an instrument of a detailed MoU, has been taken up for the first time ever in India, the process of securing required approvals at the ends of both the concerned State Governments and Government of India has also added to the time required for completion of the required formalities which are to precede implementation.
- III. In case of Economic Census (EC), Government decided to conduct Caste and BPL Censuses during June-September, 2011, the period earlier planned for Economic Census. Further dovetailing of EC with Population Census was not found feasible. In order to reduce pressure on State resources and ensure availability of manpower, it was decided in consultation with Ministry of Rural Development and Registrar General of India (RGI) to conduct EC after the conduct of both the Censuses preferably during Jananuary-June, 2012. Hence no money, involving printing of schedules, instruction manuals and training programmed, could be spent.
- IV. To ensure proper utilization of fund in respect of various schemes of the Ministry, stringent monitoring mechanism has been put in place. Towards this end, it has been decided to adopt a two-pronged approach to monitor the expenditure in the Ministry. At the initial level, the expenditure would be reviewed by Director Generals of CSO and NSSO/Additional Secretary, as the case may be, on monthly basis; and corrective measures taken so as to ensure *pro-rata* expenditure *vis-a-vis*

the budget allocations. Thereafter, on quarterly basis, the expenditure would be reviewed at the level of Secretary (S&PI) along with the physical monitoring of activities proposed, as part of the Annual Action Plan of the Ministry.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Comments of the Committee

(Please See Para No. 7 of the Chapter-I)

Recommendation (Serial No. 2)

The Committee feel that keeping in view the fact that during the last three years, the Ministry were able to expend less than 50% of allocated budget on Plan Schemes, the demand of Rs. 600 crore for the year 2011-12 is unwarranted.

- 1. The consolidated Annual Plan 2011-12 proposals of the Ministry were prepared after the detailed discussion with the senior officers of the Ministry before they were sent to the Planning Commission so as to project realistic assessment of financial resources. Planning Commission has approved an outlay of Rs. 600 crore (excluding MPLADS) for the Annual Plan (2011-12) of the Ministry after the proposals were examined by Planning Commission in a Plan Meeting. The rise in Plan allocations of the Ministry for the year 2011-12 is mainly on account of allocation of Rs. 200 crores for the scheme "India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP)", which is basically meant to improve the capacity of States Statistical System, and; allocation of Rs. 220 crores for the scheme "Economic Census", to be launched during the year, which has the main objective of preparing a frame of enterprises in India, and to generate basic entrepreneurial data.
 - 2. In case of ISSP, plans for 2011-12 are as follows:—
 - (i) In case of three States *viz.* Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat, wherein MoUs have been already signed with GOI, all possible efforts are being made to ensure proper timely and effective implementation and release of funds.
 - (ii) In at least 10 States/UTs, it is proposed to commence the implementation of the project based on State Specific MoUs and release first installment of funds. Thus it would be possible to fully utilize the Plan budget for the year.
- 3. As regards Economic Census, it is proposed to take up the finalization work regarding conduct of census like finalization of census schedules, finalization of manual of instructions, finalization of

tabulation plan, conduct of All-India conference of State Planning Secretaries and All-India training of trainers and state level training during July-Feb. 2011-12, and start the field work in 6-7 States from March, 2012. EFC under the chairmanship of Secretary (Expenditure) has approved the proposal in its meeting held on 21.6.2011. The proposal is under submission for consideration of CCEA. Efforts are being made to obtain financial approval of scheme by Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) and thereafter by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA). It is expected that full allocation of funds would be utilized during the year.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Recommendation (Serial No. 3)

The Committee had in their earlier reports on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation emphasized the need for undertaking an effective exercise for identifying the shortcomings in the mechanism of budgetary planning and ensuring proper utilization of funds. The Committee are dismayed to note that this advice has fallen on deaf ears and no concrete efforts have been made by the Ministry in this regard. The Committee, time and again, recommended that the Government should devise an effective mechanism for identifying and overcoming the deficiencies in the existing system of budgetary planning for assessment of funds required and in ensuring proper utilization of allocated funds. The Committee would like to be apprised of the concrete steps taken in this direction.

- 1. To ensure proper utilization of fund in respect of various schemes of the Ministry, stringent monitoring mechanism has been put in place. Towards this end, it has been decided to adopt a two-pronged approach to monitor the expenditure in the Ministry. At the initial level, the expenditure would be reviewed by Director Generals of CSO and NSSO/Additional Secretary, as the case may be, on monthly basis; and corrective measures taken so as to ensure *pro-rata* expenditure *vis-a-vis* the budget allocations. Thereafter, on quarterly basis, the expenditure would be reviewed at the level of Secretary (S&PI) along with the physical monitoring of activities proposed, as part of the Annual Action Plan of the Ministry.
- 2. In respect of schemes which are operated by more than one Divisions of the Ministry, during 2011-12, Division-wise allocations have been made by DG, CSO/DG, NSSO before the beginning of the year.

Each Division has been instructed to maintain an expenditure register, activity-wise and Head-wise, which should be put up to DGs on regular basis for perusal and for suggesting remedial measures. It is hoped that these measures would yield results.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Economic Census

Recommendation (Serial No. 4)

The Committee note that some preliminary work concerning the Sixth Economic Census has been taken up during the Annual Plans 2009-10 and 2010-11. The main work for conducting the census would start in January-June 2012 at a total cost of Rs. 750 crores. The Planning Commission has tentatively allocated Rs. 220 crore for the year 2011-12. Since the results of the Economic Census generate huge amount of information, which has immense value for the purpose of planning, development and research especially for the unorganized sector of the economy, the Committee desire that without any further delay the work concerning the Sixth Economic Census should be expedited and completed during the 11th Five Year Plan itself.

Reply of the Government

During 2010-11 it was decided to conduct Sixth Economic Census in the Second Quarter of 2011-12 namely June-September, 2011 so that the Field Work is completed during 11th Five Year Plan period. Therefore all preparations like printing of schedules, instruction manual, procurement of kits and training in few states were proposed. Meanwhile, Government decided to conduct Caste Census as well as BPL Census during May-Sept. 2011. Since involvement of same states and district administration for the conduct of three censuses during the same period would put pressure on them, it was decided in consultation with the Ministry of Rural Development and Registrar General of India on 27.01.2011 to defer the field work of Sixth Economic Census to avoid overlap. In the meanwhile the Govt. decided to dovetail the two Censuses and renamed it as Socio Economic & Caste Census (SECC), and to undertake the field work during June-December 2011. Keeping this in view and also recommendation of the EFC for Sixth Economic Census, the Sixth Economic Census would now be conducted between January to June 2012, after completion of the SECC only.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP)

Recommendation (Serial No. 5)

The Committee note that India Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP) is aimed to build up sound capacities at the State/UT level to collect, compile and disseminate relevant and reliable official statistics for planning and policy making at the State and Sub-State level. The Committee also note that the ISSP could not gain momentum as desired for being a project of complex and large nature, delay in the approval by the World Bank, (since the project is 80% funded by the World Bank), delay in the release of seed money for preparation of the required detailed State Strategic Statistical Plans (SSSPs).

- 1. The Committees notings, observations and concerns expressed in this para have been taken note of for the purpose of taking necessary follow-up actions and remedial measures in this regard.
- 2. It is to be informed in this connection that, in the meantime, various initiatives and follow-up actions/measures have been taken in this regard by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MOSPI) such as, for example, the following:
 - (a) Intensive initiatives taken by MOSPI to impress upon the States/UTs concerned about the enormous potential which the project *viz.* the ISSP holds for delivering a variety of benefits to them with regard to improving the State/UT level Statistical System in all respects,
 - (b) Several visits undertaken by concerned senior officials of the Ministry, including Secretary (Statistics & Programme Implementation) to different States to expedite progress of work on the project,
 - (c) Intensive reviews of the project at the annual meetings of Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO);
 - (d) Periodic reviews undertaken by the National Statistical Commission (NSC) with groups of States to discuss about all aspects of performance/functioning of their respective State Statistical System and
 - (e) National and Regional level workshops organized by the Ministry to provide necessary orientation, sensitization & hand-holding type of technical assistance to States/UTs.

3. By virtue of these measures/initiatives undertaken by MOSPI, especially for the past about a year or so, it appears that the required activities to be undertaken in this regard by the participating States have since started acquiring some momentum. As of now (viz. as of 16.9.2011), excepting for Chandigarh and Goa, all the other States/UTs have already agreed to participate in this project and have conveyed their decision to do so to MOSPI through their Letters of Participation (LOPs). The required seed money to help the States concerned to prepare their comprehensive State Strategic Statistical Plans (SSSPs) have since been released to all the aforesaid 33 States/UTs, excepting for Dadra & Nagar Haveli. The required individual State/UT specific Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on the ISSP, based on the duly approved SSSPs, have since been signed between the Government of India and the concerned State Governments on a case-specific basis in regard to five States viz. Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh & Bihar. For two more States viz. Kerala and Tamil Nadu, it is expected that the MoU on ISSP will be getting signed shortly. In respect of three of these States, viz. Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat, the Government of India has since also released the entitled (as per applicable MoU) 1st installment of funds to enable them to commence effective implementation of the project in accordance with the relevant MoU. It is expected that shortly, MOSPI would be in a position to release the corresponding 1st installment of funds (to facilitate commencement of implementation of the ISSP project) to two more States viz. Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. This apart, aided, among other things, by frequent and close work related interactions in the context of the ISSP project between MOSPI and the other participating States/UTs, the work on preparation of the respective State/UT specific SSSPs and the draft MoUs based thereon has since progressed to significant levels of completion in about nine other States/UTs such as, for example, Orissa, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Punjab, Mizoram, Sikkim and Haryana. In the remaining states (viz. Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chattisgarh, Daman & Diu, Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Puducherry, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.) have initiated work in preparation of respective SSSPs, but are yet to finalise the same. Karnataka, the first State to sign MoU, is implementing the project for about 6 months now. Encouraged by the momentum acquired in the meantime by the project and the levels of success achieved so far, especially during the last above a year or so, MOSPI would be taking all the required and possible measures to ensure that the momentum, which has since been gathered under the project, is not only sustained but also stepped up further in the months to come.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Recommendation (Serial No. 6)

The Committee feel that since the ISSP is the first project ever of its kind being implemented in India for the primary purpose of strengthening of the National Statistical System, it requires strengthening and improvement in all aspects. To expedite the pace and progress of the project during the 11th Plan period the Project Steering Committee of the Ministry should monitor the scheme periodically. Deficiencies noticed in the project should be addressed so as to build up a sound Statistical System and data support mechanism in the country. The Committee recommend that ISSP should be focused on building a strong statistical system with adequate and trained manpower at the Center, State and Sub-state level for maintaining and disseminating credible and reliable statistics. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Steering Committee on the ISSP in the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Secretary MoSPI has been meeting periodically to inter-alia monitor the scheme viz. ISSP and issue necessary directives/directions for expediting the pace and progress of the project during the 11th plan period. The aforesaid Steering Committee has so far hold seven meetings during which, among other things, the MoUs on ISSP for the States of Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Bihar have been discussed in detail and approved by the said Steering Committee to facilitate the next step/ stage of signing of the MoUs on ISSP between the Government of India and the concerned States. At its Meetings, the said Steering Committee takes due Cognizance of the issues raised and suggestions given herein such as the deficiencies noticed in the project, the need to build up a sound Statistical System and data support mechanisms in the country, especially at the level of the States/UTs, since the ISSP project is predominantly focused on the strengthening and improvement of the State Statistical Systems, in all its relevant dimensions, such as quality of data, timeliness, adequacy, comprehensiveness, relevance and utility of data produced and disseminated by the State Statistical Systems.

Apart from this, the MoU instrument on the ISSP has also got certain built-in provisions to facilitate and support the task of effective monitoring of the progress of the project from time to time. Capacity Building of the Statistical personnel, in particular, is one of the core underlying goals/objectives of the ISSP project and as such, all possible efforts are made and required assistance rendered by MoSPI to ensure that the project participating States/UTs take due note of and effectively address the issue of "Training of Personnel' in their respective SSSPs.

2. The aforesaid Steering Committee has been regularly monitoring the progress of the scheme periodically and so far, the Steering Committee on ISSP in the Government of India has met seven times and provided all the necessary policy directives and prescriptions related to the implementation of the project, approved schedules and time frame of the State Strategic Statistical Plans (SSSPs), provided clarity to the Memoranda of Understanding which were subsequently signed by the Government of India with the concerned State Governments for the implementation of the project. As per the directions and guidance of the said Steering Committee, workshops are also being organized to monitor the progress of the ISSP. Recently, viz. during June 16-17, 2011, a Workshop was held inter-alia for Monitoring the Implementation of the ISSP and reviewing the status of progress of work on the project in ten States which are either already implementing the project or else, are at an advanced level of preparation of their respective State Strategic Statistical Plans (SSSPs). Also, another workshop, for about fifteen other States/UTs, which have been somewhat considerably and relatively slow to progress on the project as of now has been planned to be organized at Gangtok during the month of August, 2011......

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Recommendation (Serial No. 7)

Considering the importance of statistics in respect of delivery of justice system, the Committee are happy to note that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation is in the process of setting up a Statistical Cell in the Ministry of Justice and the National Statistics Commission has also set up a Committee to look into various matters related to the judicial system. The Committee desire that the Government should expedite the process of establishing the Statistical Cell in the Ministry of Justice during the 11th Plan period itself. The Committee expect to be apprised of the Ministry's plan of action and progress in the direction.

Reply of the Government

The issue of establishing of permanent full-fledged Statistical Cell in the Ministry of Justice with suitable component of ISS officers like 1 HAG, 2 SAG, 2 JAG, 2 STS and 2 JTS (as in the major ministries) will be taken up by ISS Division along with the proposed comprehensive cadre review. However, this Ministry in consultation with D/o Justice has agreed to create the Statistical Cell immediately

by loaning 1 SAG, 1 JAG, 4 SSS officers. The cell will be operational immediately on availability of office accommodation etc. to the cell by the D/o Justice.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Basic Statistics for Local Level Development (BSLLD)

Recommendation (Serial No. 8)

The Committee note that Basic Statistics for Local Level Development (BSLLD) is a centrally sponsored scheme with the objective to develop the decentralized data bases at village/Block level for Local Level Planning in all States. The scheme envisages generating village level statistics at the Gram Panchayat level by compilation of information through Panchayat Secretary in coordination with the village level functionaries. The Committee further note that Panchayati Raj Institutions are fully involved in implementation of the Scheme. However, at present the PRIs are not capable of handling data and ensuring reasonable quality. Since the success of BSLLD would depend upon the extent to which the Panchayati Raj institutions are able to organize the continuing data collection, which, they are not capable of handling by ensuring reasonable quality, the Committee desire that the Government should ensure availability of qualified and competent manpower at the local level for the Scheme. Capacity building for the PRI personnel and other local level institutions for compilation work should be made a major part of the Scheme. The Committee are not happy with the existing trend of utilisation of budgetary allocations. Budget estimates are revised southwards continuously but these are not being spent fully. The Committee also desire that realistic assessment of budgetary requirements for the Scheme should be projected so as to avoid underutilization of funds. The Committee expect to be apprised of the specific action taken in this regard.

Reply of the Government

At present, Basic Statistics for Local Level Development (BSLLD) scheme is being implemented as a large Centrally Sponsored pilot scheme covering around 500 Panchayats in one or two districts each of the 32 States/UTs which are implementing the scheme. The observations made by the Standing Committee revolves around mainly two issues:

The Panchayat Secretaries, who compile village level statistics with the help of village level functionaries, are not qualified enough to compile quality data and therefore capacity building at the level of PRI is essential. Under-Utilization of the allocated budget is also a concern of the Committee. As regards the first issue, it is informed that, sufficient budget provision was kept for training at different level during implementation of the pilot scheme. At the time of formulation of the full fledged scheme, sufficient fund provision will be kept for capacity building at different levels of PRIs functionaries on the basis of the findings of the pilot scheme, the States/UTs are categorized according to the level of statistical capability for compiling and processing of data. For the States/UTs which are relatively less capable in collection/compilation of quality data, special efforts will be made for their capacity building.

The BSLLD pilot scheme has been implemented in two phases; in Phase-I, data for 2008-09 has been compiled while in Phase-II, data for 2009-10 will be compiled. So far as, the under utilization of budget allocation is concerned in last three years, proposals for Phase-II could not be materialized during 2010-11 due to delayed completion of Phase-I of the pilot scheme. In fact, many of the States/UTs could complete Phase-I only towards the last two quarters of 2010-11. As a result, the States/UTs have started sending proposals for Phase-II only during 2011-12. While processing data of Phase-I, many States/U'Ts faced difficulties in solving data collation problems; these States/U'Ts are continuously assisted in tackling the data processing problems through engagement of software agency, who developed the application software. It is expected therefore, that States/UTs will complete Phase-II of the pilot scheme as scheduled and funds have been released to the States/UTs for conducting second phase of the pilot with faster pace and as of now, about Half of the budget allocation for the current FY 2011-12 has been released in the first quarter itself.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

National Statistical Commission (NSC)

Recommendation (Serial No. 10)

The Committee note that the National Statistical Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr. C. Rangarajan has made 623 recommendations covering 11 sectors of the economy. 261 recommendations have been implemented and the remaining 362 recommendations are being processed by the various implementing agencies. The Committee desire that the remaining 362 recommendations should be implemented by the concerned implementing agencies in a time bound manner and the Committee, which has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Sudipto Mundle, member, NSC should monitor the progress of implementation of remaining 362 recommendations on priority basis for their implementation.

Reply of the Government

Efforts are being made to implement the remaining recommendations of the Dr. C. Rangarajan Commission. All concerned agencies—Central and State are being pursued to furnish the status of implementation of specific recommendations. Letters have been sent to Central Ministries and States/UTs followed by regular reminders. Member NSC is regularly monitoring the progress of implementation of recommendations.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Recommendation (Serial No. 11)

The Committee note that with regard to the process of identifying core statistics, a statement indicating the views of different Central Ministries/Departments and a suggestive list of core statistics were placed before the National Statistics Commission in its 39th meeting held in December, 2010. The Commission desired that the list is to be recast in a sequential way and a concept paper may be prepared, keeping in view inter-alia the core statistics in the form of indicators, economic parameters etc., and the statistical processes through which and the periodicity by which the core statistics are presently produced and the agencies that are presently involved in the production. The Committee further note that after notification of core statistics by the Government, the Commission would lay down standards in respect of methodology. The Committee desire that Government should expedite the preparation of the concept paper and list of core statistics as per the suggestions of the Commission so that the list of core Statistics is notified and the Commission could formulate the standards in respect of methodology for collection of such statistics without any further delay.

Reply of the Government

The draft concept paper and draft list of core statistics have been received in the Commission Secretariat. They will be placed before the Commission in its next meeting to be held in August 2011 for its view in the matter.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Comments of the Committee

(Please See Para No. 13 of the Chapter I)

Shortage of Manpower

Recommendation (Serial No. 12)

The Committee notes that there are about 117 vacancies in Indian Statistical Service (ISS) and 1138 vacancies in the Subordinate Statistical Service (SSS). Shortage of manpower has been affecting the quality of data collected by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) and National Academy of Statistical Administration (NASA) besides adversely affecting the functioning of prestigious schemes of the Ministry. The Committee are given to understand that the vacancies in Indian Statistical Service (ISS) are mainly dependent on promotion which is within the purview of the Ministry. The Committee note that Ministry has drawn a programme to fill the vacancies. Hence, the Committee expect that suitable action will be taken expeditiously for filling up the vacant promotional posts so as to address the problem of shortage of manpower. As regards manpower shortage in Subordinate Statistical Services (SSS), Staff Selection Commission has initiated steps for recruitment of Investigator Grade-II. Recruitment Rules have been sent to Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) for their approval. The Committee expect the Ministry to pursue the matter with DoPT for early approval of the revised Recruitment Rules.

Reply of the Government

Out of the 117 vacancies reported earlier, majority of them are at the JTS and STS level. The proposal to fill all the vacant post of STS in connection with relaxation in qualifying service was sent to DoPT and DoPT has agreed to fill 65 posts of STS on promotion. In addition to the above, 44 vacancies at the level of JTS were reported to the UPSC for the ISS Examination, 2010 and UPSC completed the process of selection. On promotion of 65 JTS officers to STS, the resultant vacancies will also be filled from the feeder grade officers immediately on *ad-hoc* basis. Therefore, the problem of large vacancies will be solved and this issue may be closed.

As regards shortage of Manpower, in Subordinate Statistical Service is concerned, it is stated that all the vacant posts in Statistical Investigator Gr.-I as on 31.3.2011 have been filled-up by making *Ad-hoc* promotions from Statistical Investigator Gr.-II. However, this has caused further vacancies in S.I Gr.-II. As on 1.7.2011 about 1215 posts in S.I Gr.-II are lying vacant. SSS division is taking all possible measures to fill up existing vacancies by recruiting statistical investigators Gr.-II through SSC. Out of 250 dossiers received from Staff Selection Commission against 2010 examination, 248 offers of

appointments are expected to be issued shortly on completion of pre-appointment formalities. There is a shortfall of 175 candidates recommended by Staff Selection Commission against 423 vacancies confirmed by this Ministry against 2010 Examination. 525 more vacancies have been communicated to SSC for 2011 Examination and the shortfall of 175 vacancies will be added at the time of confirming the number of vacancies to SSC. It is proposed to recruit about 500 candidates per year as per the Strategic Action Plan till all the vacancies are filled up.

It is mentioned that, in the absence of Recruitment Rules, SSS cadre is unable to consider promotions in S.I Grade I on regular basis and as such, all the vacancies are not reported to SSC. The Draft RRs have been got approved from DoP&T and the same are under finalization by UPSC. Pending the finalization of RRs, on the advice of DoP&T, UPSC has been requested to consider one time exemption for allowing Subordinate Statistical Service to make promotion on regular basis as per existing/old RRs.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Recommendation (Serial No. 13)

The Committee have noted that large attrition rate due to lack of promotional avenues and lower grade are major reasons for shortage of manpower. The Committee want that the matter relating to the revision of grade pay for certain posts should be pursued with the Ministry of Finance for an early decision so as to check the attrition rate thereby overcoming the shortage of manpower.

Reply of the Government

As noted by the Committee the rate of high attrition in Subordinate Statistical Service, is mainly due to lower grade pay in comparison to other Group B Central Services. The issue was taken up with Ministry of Finance at ministerial level but unfortunately the proposal of this Ministry for enhancement of Grade pay has been turned down by the Finance Ministry. However, Finance Ministry will be once again approached for revising the Grade Pay through Cadre Review of SSS which is already under process.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Infrastructure and Project Monitoring

Recommendation (Serial No. 14)

The Committee note that the overall infrastructure sectors performance during 2010-11 (April-November) has shown moderate growth. However, as compared to the targets set for this period, except refinery production and highway up-gradation, most of the sectors have lagged behind their targets. The Committee in their 14th Report on Demands for Grants (2010-11) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation *inter-alia* recommended that the reasons for inability to achieve the set targets should be properly examined and analyzed to impress upon the concerned Ministries/Departments/PSUs for taking appropriate remedial measures for meeting the targets and improving the growth rate. The Committee expects the Ministry to pursue the matter with the concerned Ministries/Departments/PSUs in the right earnest.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation apart from time and cost overruns also monitors the performance of the key infrastructure sectors. This monitoring of the performance of the infrastructure sector is against the set targets. The Ministry brings out every month a Review and Capsule Report on the performance of the infrastructure sector and share this with all concerned including the line Ministries. The shortfalls in the achievements of performance whenever observed are also brought to the notice of the concerned Ministries through D.O. letters for corrective action and also discussed during MoU meetings, QPR meetings etc.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Recommendation (Serial No. 15)

The Committee are dismayed to note that 563 projects costing Rs. 150 crore and more which are on the monitor of the Ministry have experienced cost overrun of 20.3% and time overrun of 51%. 83 ongoing projects have both time and cost overrun, 54 projects have only cost overrun and 193 projects have only time overrun. The reasons attributed by the Ministry for time and cost overruns include, land acquisition and rehabilitation and resettlement, forest/environment/wildlife clearances, delay in shifting utilities, removal of encroachments, law and order problems, lack of proper co-ordination at State level, lack of resources/fund constraints, change in scope, technology selection, geological surprises etc. The

Committee are of the firm opinion that persistent problems of time and cost overrun in the infrastructure projects, could be avoided if pre-project activities including clearance are completed before sanction of projects or before award of contract. Evidently, the Ministry has been lagging behind on this issue. The Committee expect that the recommendations of the in-house Group of the Ministry constituted at the behest of the Committee, under the Chairmanship of an Additional Secretary would be implemented by the Government in a time bound manner so as to resolve the issues related to time and cost overruns of Central Sector Projects. The Committee desire to be apprised of the outcome in this regard on quarterly basis.

Reply of the Government

The observations of the Committee have been communicated to all the concerned Ministries. The concerned infrastructure Ministries have been requested to take follow up corrective action and report. It may be noted that this Ministry has always been emphasizing on the completion of pre-project activities and clearance while giving comments for appraisal of the projects for PIB/EFC etc.

It may be added that on the advice of this Ministry, State Governments are now setting up a "Central Sector Projects Coordination Committee (CSPCC)" under the Chairmanship of respective Chief Secretaries which is expected to remove various impediments like delays in land acquisition, rehabilitation & re-settlement, forest/environment/wildlife clearances, delays in shifting of utilities, removal of encroachments, law and order problems etc. so that time and cost overrun in Central Projects is minimized. This is expected to speed up execution of Central Projects within the approved cost.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Comments of the Committee

(Please See Para No. 16 of the Chapter I)

CHAPTER III

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

-NIL-

CHAPTER IV

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

National Statistical Commission (NSC)

Recommendation (Serial No. 9)

The Committee note that with regard to conferring statutory status to the National Statistical Commission, the Commission appointed a Committee on 8th November, 2010 under the Chairmanship of Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon to look into legislative measures on statistical matters, including a Bill to provide statutory status to the Commission. However, no timeframe has been fixed for introducing the Bill in Parliament. The Committee reiterates that conferring statutory status would enable the National Statistical Commission to function in an independent manner for strengthening the statistical system in the country. The Committee hope that the Committee, under the Chairmanship of Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon would submit their report on conferring statutory status to the NSC within the period of six months and the related Bill, which would enable the National Statistical Commission to function independently is brought before Parliament accordingly.

Reply of the Government

The recommendation is noted. Steps are being taken to expedite the process.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

Comments of the Committee

(Please See Para No. 10 of the Chapter I)

CHAPTER V

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

Infrastructure and Project Monitoring

Recommendation (Serial No. 16)

The Committee are constrained to note that a large number of projects have been initiated by Railways without adequate funds and without definite date of completion. The projects of Railways have time overruns ranging from 3 to 225 months with substantial cost overruns. The Committee feel that this is a very pathetic situation and needs to be addressed quickly with regard to conceptualizing the projects especially. The Committee desire that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation convey the Committee's displeasure in this regard to the Ministry of Railways and take corrective measures for addressing issues which contribute to delays and cost escalation. The Committee wants the dates should be fixed without further delay for commissioning the projects of Railways and ensure that the projects take off within time. The Committee desire to be apprised of the outcome in this regard.

Reply of the Government

The Ministry of Railways has been conveyed the observations of the Committee. The reply from Ministry of Railways is awaited.

[Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, O.M. No. G-20017/3/2011-B&F/dated 28.9.2011]

New Delhi; 19 *December*, 2011 28 *Agrahayana*, 1933 (*Saka*) YASHWANT SINHA, Chairman, Standing Committee on Finance.

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE (2011-12)

The Committee sat on Monday, the 19th December, 2011 from 1700 hrs. to 1800 hrs.

PRESENT

Shri Yashwant Sinha—Chairman

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

- 2. Shri Bhakta Charan Das
- 3. Shri Nishikant Dubey
- 4. Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab
- 5. Shri Prem Das Rai
- 6. Shri Rayapati S. Rao
- 7. Shri Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy
- 8. Dr. M. Thambidurai
- 9. Shri Shivkumar Udasi

Rajya Sabha

10. Shri Piyush Goyal

SECRETARIAT

- 1. Shri R.K. Jain Director
- 2. Shri Ramkumar Suryanarayanan Deputy Secretary
- 3. Smt. Meenakshi Sharma Deputy Secretary
- 2. The Committee took up the following draft Reports for consideration and adoption:—
 - (i) Draft Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-third Report (15th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Finance (Departments of Economic Affairs, Financial Services, Expenditure and Disinvestment);

- (ii) Draft Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-fourth Report (15th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue);
- (iii) Draft Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-fifth Report (15th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Planning;
- (iv) Draft Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-sixth Report (15th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; and
- (v) Draft Report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Thirty-seventh Report (15th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2011-12) of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- 3. The Committee adopted the draft reports at Sl. Nos. (ii) and (iv) without any modification and those at Sl. Nos. (i), (iii) and (v) with minor modifications. The Committee authorised the Chairman to finalise the Reports in the light of the modifications suggested and present these Reports to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX

(Vide Para 4 of the Introduction)

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRTY-SIXTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE (FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA) ON DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2011-2012) OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

		Total	% of Total
(i)	Total number of Recommendations	16	
(ii)	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government (<i>Vide</i> Recommendations at Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15)	14	87.50
(iii)	Recommendation/Observation which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	Nil	0.00
(iv)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee (<i>Vide</i> Recommendation at Sl. No. 9)	01	6.25
(v)	Recommendation/Observations in respect of which final reply of the Government is still awaited (<i>Vide</i> Recommendation at Sl. No. 16)	01	6.25