

# 1. Introduction

Welcome to the series of E-learning modules on Acquaintance with working of NSSO and other agencies. In this module, we are going to cover the origin, objectives, functions and various activities of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), and Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) and its activities.

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Explain the origin of NSSO
- Explain the objectives and functions of NSSO
- Explain the various activities of NSSO
- Explain the CSO and other surveys

Independence in nineteen forty seven ushered an era of economic planning and emphasized the necessity of a strong database covering a variety of social and economic topics.

The system of data collection left behind by the colonial rulers was far from adequate to meet this immediate demand. It did not even provide the basic data required for estimation of national income.

## Origin of NSSO

The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), now National Sample Survey Office is an organization in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation of the [Government of India](#). It is the largest organisation in [India](#), conducting regular socio-economic surveys.

NSSO initiated in the year nineteen fifty, is a nation-wide, large-scale, continuous survey operation conducted in the form of successive rounds with the objective of obtaining comprehensive and continuing information relating to social, economic, demographic, industrial and agricultural statistics through sample surveys. It was established based on a proposal from P. C. Mahalanobis to fill up the data gaps for socio-economic planning and policy making through sample surveys.

A strong statistical base was built in fifties at the instance of the Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Today, the Department of Statistics of the Government of India is the apex body in the official statistical system of the country. It comprises of the Central Statistical Organization (CSO), the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) and the Computer Centre (CC).

The Government from time to time reviewed the work of the NSS. In July nineteen sixty nine, a three-man committee was set up to advice the Government on the lines of reorganization. The committee recommended the entrustment of all aspects of NSS work to a Single Government Organization located in the Cabinet Secretariat and governed by a governing council. The council was given sufficient independence and autonomy of decision to ensure that the collection, processing and publication of NSS data were free from undue influence.

The Government accepted the recommendations of the three-man committee and announced their decision to set up a National Sample Survey Organisation in the department of Statistics, Cabinet Secretariat and a Governing council to govern its activities.

On setting up of NSS organization, the directorate of National Sample Survey was renamed as the Field Operation Division of the Organization.

The National Sample Survey Directorate was first setup in the country in the ministry of finance in nineteen fifty. The directorate was subsequently transferred to the cabinet secretariat in nineteen fifty seven and subsequently in nineteen seventy, it became a part of NSSO in the department of statistics under the ministry of planning. From nineteen ninety nine it is under the newly created [Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation \(MOSPI\)](#).

The Governing Council consisted of experts from within and outside the Government and was headed by an eminent economist/statistician and the member-Secretary of the Council, the Director General and Chief Executive Officer of NSSO. The Governing Council was empowered to take all technical decisions with respect to survey work, from planning of survey to release of survey results.

## 2. NSSO and Four Divisions

From nineteen fifty, NSSO has been conducting sample surveys on a variety of subjects and the data have been widely used by the Government, social scientists and other users. The work of NSSO has won international acclaim and stimulated the creation of similar organizations in other developing countries. On completion of the reorganization, the NSSO had four divisions.

### 1. Survey Design and Research Division (SDRD)

The Survey Design and Research Division (SDRD) is located at Kolkata. It is responsible for technical planning of the survey, formulation of sample design, designing of enquiry schedules & other survey instruments and preparation of survey reports.

### 2. Field Operations Division (FOD)

The Field Operations Division (FOD) has its headquarters at Delhi / Faridabad with a network of six Zonal Offices, forty nine Regional Offices and hundred and sixteen Sub-Regional Offices spread throughout the country.

This Division is responsible for the collection of primary data for the various surveys undertaken by NSSO. It is responsible for sample selection, software development, processing and tabulation of the data collected through surveys.

### 3. Data Processing Division (DPD)

The Data Processing Division (DPD) has its headquarter at Kolkata. It has six Data Processing Centers located at Delhi, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Giridih and Kolkata.

### 4. Co-ordination and Publication Division (CPD)

The Coordination and Publication Division (CPD) functions as the secretariat of the Steering Committee of the NSSO and coordinates all the activities of different divisions. It also brings out the bi-annual journal of NSSO "Sarvekshana".

The divisions are to function under the overall executive control of the Chief Executive Officer.

The NSS is a continuing multi-subject integrated survey, which is being conducted in the form of successive rounds. A round covers several subjects but with emphasis on one or two of subjects during a specific period, generally coinciding with agricultural year.

The subjects covered more or less regularly in the past few rounds are the household income and consumer expenditure, rural retail prices of selected commodities, employment and unemployment particulars, labour force statistics, demographic characteristics and crop surveys.

Data on subjects like small-scale enterprises (manufacture, transport and trade), professions and services, village statistics, land holdings, saving and indebtedness etc. are collected periodically.

# 3. NSSO and Its Objectives

NSSO is a unique setup to carry out surveys on socio-economic, demographic, agricultural and industrial subjects for collecting data from households and from enterprises located in villages and in the towns. It is a focal agency of the Government of India for collection of statistical data in the areas, which are vital for developmental planning.

## Objectives of NSSO:

- To provide statistical and other information for the purpose of state or national planning and policy requirements
- To evolve statistical techniques for the analysis of statistical data, the solutions of administrative problems and estimation of future trends
- To collect and publish information, which will be of use to those engaged in economic activities in the country
- To provide and analyse information, which are useful to research workers in socioeconomic fields

## Functions of NSSO:

- To conduct large scale sample surveys on subjects like household consumer expenditure, employment and unemployment, health and medical services etc.
- It decides the topics to be covered in a particular survey round
- Agricultural wing of FOD, NSSO has the overall responsibility of assisting the states by developing suitable survey techniques for obtaining reliable and timely estimates of crop yield
- It conducts annual survey of industries (ASI) every year
- NSSO every year brings out reports on status of estimation of agricultural production in India
- NSSO has the central responsibility of coordinating the results of the crop estimation surveys conducted by the states

## Major Activities

### 1) Agricultural Statistics:

From the start of the NSSO, the council has been of the view that the collection of the primary data and building up of estimates in the field of agriculture should be the responsibility of the State Government. The NSS organization should devote its attention for assisting the states in the improvement of these statistics. Accordingly, the NSS – LUS (National Sample Survey- Land Utilization Survey) was to be taken up mainly as a statistical check on the primary enumeration of crop areas by the state revenue agencies.

A scheme on improvement of crop statistics has been drawn for implementation, which lays emphasis on collection of ancillary data such as those of irrigation, fertilizers, high yielding varieties, multiple cropping patterns etc.

In addition to this, the AS wing will also undertake new studies relating to the field of agriculture like estimation of output of fish, live stock numbers, live stock products etc.

### 2) Socio-economic surveys:

At its first meeting, the council laid the stress on the need of studying the economic conditions of the weaker sections of the rural population. Accordingly, it directed that the socio-economic programme of the twenty fifth round be concentrated on the problems of the small cultivator households and the rural non-cultivating wage earner households.

In nineteen seventy one to seventy two, the Reserve Bank of India approached the NSS organization to organize an All Indian debt and investment survey to enable it to study the changes. At the same time, Ministry of Agriculture approached NSS to organize a sample survey of land holdings. In order to meet the requirements of both Ministry of Agriculture and Reserve Bank of India a survey period was extended.

3) Tabulation of NSS data:

The council has been laying stress on the need of expeditious tabulation of NSS data, so that the results at least on the major characteristics are made available within a reasonably short time after the completion of the fieldwork of each survey.

4) Sample size for newly carved out states:

Consequent upon the formation of the states of Punjab, Haryana, Assam and Meghalaya, the council decided to increase suitably the sample size and the investigator resources for the central NSS. This was done to obtain the comparable estimates separately for the newly formed states.

5) Extension of NSS:

The Governments of all other states of India decided to participate in the state matching programme of the NSS.

6) Request from other Ministries/organizations:

The council adopted a request from NBO to organise a separate survey on investment and financing of buildings in urban areas through NSSO.

7) Annual Survey of Industries:

This is a continuous survey. The census of manufacturing industries and sample survey of manufacturing industries were merged together and renamed as the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), which was started in nineteen sixty. The field of the survey is carried out by the NSS.

# 4. Data Quality Issues

## Data Quality Issues

In the absence of information from the regular agencies, the indicators generated by the NSSO is of vital use and interest to educational planners and policy makers but the same is not available on regular basis. A few indicators that have been generated are for population of certain age that is age six-ten and eleven - thirteen years. Distributions of students by level of education, average annual expenditure, proportion of dropout children etc. are few such indicators.

## Central Statistical Organisation (CSO)

For coordination of statistical activities of the different Central Ministries and the State Governments and for promotion of statistical standards, the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) was created in May nineteen fifty one. CSO prepares national accounts, compiles and publishes industrial statistics and conducts economic census and surveys.

The Computer Centre (CC) was set up in nineteen sixty seven as an attached office of the Department of Statistics to cater to the data processing needs of the Department and other Departments of the Union Government.

## First Sample Survey

The NSS conducted the first sample survey on multi-subject household enquiries, designed to fill gaps in the data required for planning, in randomly selected villages and urban blocks spread over the entire geographical area of the country.

The first 'round' (October nineteen fifty-March nineteen fifty one) and the second round (April-June nineteen fifty one) of NSS were conducted in a sample of eighteen thirty three and one thousand one hundred and sixty villages, respectively. Urban areas were first covered in the third round (August-November nineteen fifty one).

## Other Surveys

The all-India household consumer expenditure survey started with the first round of NSS, giving the first all-India picture. The NSS enquiries on consumer expenditure are now the main source of data on level of living of the Indian population. The data thrown up by these enquiries forms the basis of all poverty calculations carried out by the Planning Commission, which includes setting up of the poverty line and estimation of the number and proportion of poor in different regions of the country. Then, the survey on employment and unemployment was started to assess the volume and structure of employment and unemployment.

Data on literacy, education, health and morbidity are essentials for evaluation of the need for government action in each of these areas. The NSSO is the only source that provides periodic estimates of literacy, school enrolment, utilisation of educational services, general morbidity, maternity and childcare and utilisation of medical services. It also conducts survey to estimate the total number of physically disabled persons in the country and utilisation of the public distribution system.

The rural retail prices are used by the Labour Bureau to construct Consumer Price Index

(CPI) numbers for agricultural labourers. The urban retail prices are used by the CSO to construct CPI numbers for non-manual workers. NSS data on socio-economic surveys are regularly released through the quarterly publication Sarvekshana issued by the Department of Statistics.

Two additional data processing centres have been set up in Ahmedabad and Bangalore to enhance the processing capabilities of NSSO. The estimates based on the surveys conducted in nineteen ninety three to ninety four were finalized in nineteen ninety five and could be used by the Planning Commission for formulation of the Ninth Five Year Plan.

The NSSO, equipped with upgraded hardware, has enhanced its capabilities of data processing immensely. A number of innovative data-processing packages have been developed in-house to strengthen the existing systems design.

The Survey Design & Research Division of NSSO is constantly striving to shorten the length of the schedule as also to improve upon its content through extensive pilot studies. This will not only improve the quality of data by reducing informant fatigue, but also cut down on processing time significantly.

# 5. National Accounts

## National Accounts

The first official estimates of the national income was prepared by the CSO at constant prices with base year nineteen forty eight-forty nine, as well as official estimates were brought out in nineteen fifty six with current prices. The coverage of the National Accounts Statistics was gradually extended to incorporate, successively, estimates of private consumption, expenditure, capital formation and savings, factor incomes, consolidated accounts of the nation and detailed accounts of the public sector.

In nineteen seventy eight, a White Paper was published introducing another change in base year, nineteen seventy-seventy one, for the constant prices series. Estimates of this new series were published in "National Accounts Statistics", nineteen seventy eight.

## Index of Industrial Production

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) prepared by the CSO is the most up-to-date indicator of industrial growth in the Indian economy. The index of industrial production with base year nineteen eighty-eighty one is compiled and released every month, which are revised subsequently on receipt of updated data.

## Economic Census (EC)

Economic Census (EC) and follow-up surveys were introduced in nineteen seventy seven. EC provides basic details about all economic enterprises in the country. The follow-up surveys are the only dependable source of information on the unorganized sector of non-agricultural production for the preparation of the national accounts. The second EC was conducted in nineteen eighty with the house-listing operations of the nineteen eighty one population census and the third EC was carried out in nineteen ninety.

## Human Development Statistics

The CSO plays the role of a coordinator covering the fields of population, human development, manpower, employment, health, education and social welfare, and maintenance of specific standards in these fields. As a follow-up action of the ESCAP Project on Improvement of Statistics on Gender Issues, the CSO has brought out the second issue of the publication "Women and Men in India, nineteen ninety five".

The CSO has assumed the responsibility for development of statistical standards in environment statistics and strengthening of database in the area of environment statistics. A country paper on Review of Current Status of Environment Statistics in India has been prepared for the purpose.

## Price Statistics

Data on urban retail prices are collected every month in fifty nine selected urban centres throughout India for about two fifty items, including fifteen items of selected service charges. Information is also collected on house rent and off take of commodities. Based on this data, on a monthly basis, CSO prepares the Consumer Price Index (CPI) numbers for urban non-manual employees (UNME) with base nineteen eighty four to eighty five.



These indices are used for planning and policy formulations by the Government as well as private and public agencies. A six- monthly brochure giving subgroup and group wise CPI for UNME pertaining to the period Jan-June nineteen ninety five has also been prepared.

NFHS (National Family Health Survey)

Some unique features of the NFHS are uniform method of sampling, uniform method of data collection, uniform method of analysis of data and uniform way of presentation of data. It provides information on population, health and nutrition in India and each of its states. NFHS provides trend data on key indicators and includes information on several new topics, such as HIV/AIDS-related behaviour and the health of slum populations.

The Organization functions under the overall direction of National Statistical Commission and Steering Committee of NSS. Thus, has requisite autonomy in matters relating to data collection, its processing and publication/dissemination of results. Director General and Chief Executive Officer (DG& CEO) is responsible for coordinating and supervising all activities of the organization and is assisted by three Additional Director Generals and sixty five Deputy Director Generals.

Here's a summary of our learning, where we have understood the:

- NSSO and its origin
- Objectives and functions of NSSO
- Activities of NSSO
- CSO and other organizations