

HOUSEHOLD INCOME SURVEY, 2026

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The National Sample Survey (NSS) is internationally recognized for the pioneering scale and scope of its household surveys, conducted annually and quarterly on a wide range of subjects since its inception. The first survey was launched in 1950 and since then NSS has played a crucial role in providing data-driven insights for policymaking. However, despite its extensive experience NSS has not yet undertaken a comprehensive full-fledged survey on income distribution. Although pilot surveys have been attempted in the past, these efforts did not culminate in a nationwide survey. Recognizing the growing significance of such data, NSS acknowledges the urgent need for a dedicated income distribution survey to better understand the profound structural changes that have occurred in the Indian economy over the past 75 years.

Recently, NSS has taken a number of initiatives to plug-in the data gaps in different spheres of social and economic interests. It has started annual surveys on unincorporated sector enterprises, services sectors, forward looking survey on private sector capital expenditure, domestic travel and tourism, etc. with a view to make available data on important macro-economic indicators. The household income survey is another important initiative of the Ministry to generate vital information for deriving income distribution and welfare thereof.

MoSPI in past has made efforts for collecting information on household income along with the consumer expenditure surveys on experimental basis in the 9th round (May 1955 - September 1955) and 14th round (July 1958 - June 1959) though for which no information was released. Later, it undertook collection of data on receipts and disbursements as part of the Integrated Household Survey (IHS) in its 19th round (July 1964 - June 1965) and 24th round (July 1969 - June 1970) with the aim of obtaining a complete picture of transactions of household income. However, these efforts were not continued as it was found that the estimates of income were lower than the estimates of consumption and savings put together. In 1983 - 84, the NSS once again attempted a pilot enquiry on household income to explore the possibility of evolving an operationally feasible for collection of data on household income, however this too could not transform to an All India Survey.

Experience from these surveys showed that there were difficulties in collecting reliable income data in the field and to overcome all these issues and having more clarity in the surveys procedures and to oversee the overall activities of the Household Income Survey and in view of the experiences of survey conducted by countries like Australia, USA, Canada and South Africa. MoSPI has constituted a Technical Expert Group (TEG) under the Chairmanship of Dr. Surjit S. Bhalla, Former Executive Director of India, International Monetary Fund. The TEG will guide the National Statistics Office towards conducting an all-India income distribution survey, tentatively scheduled for 2026. The Expert Group will provide guidance with regard to finalisation of concepts and definitions, preparation of the survey method and instruments, sampling design and method of estimation, and incorporate best country practices as adopted across the world. The survey will also strive to assess impact of adoption of technology on household income (wages). The TEG will also provide guidance for finalization of the survey results and report for release.

In addition to having Chairman and several official members from MoSPI and different Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, the other members of the Technical Expert Group are as follows:

- i. Shri Alope Kar, Former Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata,
- ii. Prof. Sonalde Desai, National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi,
- iii. Prof. Praveen Jha, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, JNU,
- iv. Prof. Srijit Mishra, School of Economics, University of Hyderabad,
- v. Dr. Tirthankar Patnaik, Chief Economist, National Stock Exchange of India,

vi. Dr. Rajesh Shukla, Managing Director & CEO, People Research on India's Consumer Economy,

vii. Prof. Ram Singh, Director, Delhi School of Economics.

The TEG may enlist the assistance of subject matter experts within and/ or outside the Government and may co-opt them as members according to necessity with the approval from the competent authority. The TEG may invite subject experts in the meeting as special invitee, if necessary, in order to meet specific requirements.

Samrat/Allen

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