

Report on the working of the Kerala State Statistical Commission for the period ending March 2022

1.0 Background and present status of the Commission

1.1 The Kerala State Statistical Commission (KSSC) was notified on 14th March 2020. The notification mentioned the need for timely and reliable data on state income, agriculture, industry and infrastructure etc. for formulation of Government policies and use by research scholars. The formation of a State Statistical Commission was also one of the key recommendations of the Workshop on State-Level Statistics for Kerala organized by the State Planning Board in February 2020. *(The copy of the order is appended to the report).*

1.2 However the onset of the Covid pandemic and the containment restrictions from the last week of March 2020 delayed further follow up measures. The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) was notified in July 2020 only. Another order providing for service conditions and organizational requirements was notified in October 2020. To firm up the basic requirements for the Commission, a meeting was held by Chairman with the full time Member and Director, DES on 24.12.2020 at Govt. Guest House. Director subsequently initiated steps to arrange the infrastructure needs of the Commission.

1.3 As the pandemic disruptions continued in one form or another, no further developments took place including the provision of accommodation for the Commission. The Chairman at his personal level visited government functionaries on three occasions to follow up on the initial order.

1.4 On 1st November 2021, a few rooms were hired for the Commission at the Regional Telecom Training Centre, owned by BSNL. The DES also deputed a few staff on working arrangement to run the secretariat. The Commission thereafter held a meeting with all members physically present.

1.5 Though the Commission formally started functioning from 1st November 2021, several constraints have inhibited its functioning. The Commission is constituted through a standalone government order and its position in the government is not clear. The Commission lacks a proper secretariat of regular staff and the administrative arrangements for its functioning are unclear. Proposal to have the secretariat with regular staff was not approved by the Government. No administrative and financial powers have been given to the Commission. After several requests that, the part time members were granted TA/DA for attending the Commission's meeting. This has not been granted to the Chairman and the full-time member, making it difficult for any field visits or outstation meetings.

1.6 Without a viable secretariat, the current rented office accommodation cannot be developed into a suitable office for the Commission. Being part of a hostel building meant for accommodating official and unofficial visitors, it does not support a proper working environment.

1.7 In the absence of a comprehensive order detailing the powers, resources and responsibilities, the Commission has not been able to make detailed studies in fulfillment of its TOR. It does not have any supervisory role for overseeing the state statistical system.

1.8 Thus, the Commission lacks the resources to undertake in-depth analysis of the statistical methodology especially for critical areas like state income as it requires consultation with external experts and inputs from the DES. Lack of supporting staff to initiate studies and consultations and administrative infrastructure are therefore urgently required. Above all, issues relating to the Commission and necessary steps to empower it are taken up on a piecemeal basis rather as a comprehensive one-time exercise. This has created a lot of uncertainties in the working of the Commission.

1.7 More important, in the absence of a mechanism to implement the recommendations of the Commission, the recommendations would become just suggestions and opinions from the Commission. It is also necessary to have certain powers for the Commission to direct statistical offices in different sectors to provide inputs and inform detailed procedures followed by them with regards to data collection, processing and dissemination. Commission also needs to be vested with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of its recommendations. Without a clearly defined role, the recommendations made by the Commission cannot be effectively disseminated to official agencies.

1.8 In this context it is worth noting that a Statistical Commission was earlier set up in February 2015 under the Chairmanship of Dr. A. M. Mathai, Director Center for Mathematical and Statistical Sciences with three external members. It is seen from the records that the Commission could not make much headway as it lacked any administrative or technical support. It could not actually take up any in-depth analysis of the State statistical system and make suggestions nor hold formal meetings. The Chairman and a Member is understood to have left the Commission prematurely.

2.0 Some technical contributions before the formal starting of the Commission

2.1 **Estimation of economic loss due to Covid:** The State Planning Board had initiated an exercise to evaluate the economic loss due to the Covid after the first wave of the pandemic covering the period April to May 2020. Chairman, with inputs from the DES, provided an estimate of GVA loss for this period which was used by the Planning Board in its report to the Government. The loss estimate was updated later for which the DES generated additional inputs through a quick survey of enterprises.

2.2 The Planning Board also brought to the notice of the Commission certain issues in the advance estimates of State income prepared by DES for 2021-22. After perusing the estimates certain inconsistencies were observed and the DES was accordingly advised to relook their estimates. Meetings were also held by the Chairman and DES officials with the State GST Commissioner to source GST data for State Income estimates. This was a follow up of a high level meeting in the Planning Board. The meeting with GST Commissioner was found useful as they provided data on monthly GST collection for three years which were used to prepare the advance estimates in the absence of other direct data. It is necessary to make more detailed studies on the GST data collection system and evolve formal formats and mechanisms for regular flow of GST summary data that can be input for improving state income estimates.

2.3 Chairman visited the Kozhikode District Statistical Office and the Quilandy Taluk Statistical Office and had detailed discussions with the Officers and Staff. He also visited Perumanna Panchayat Office to understand the maintenance of Panchayats level databases. Some of the insights from these visits are summarised below.

2.4 Agricultural statistics: Collection of agricultural statistics under the EARAS is the main field level activity in the Taluk Statistical Office. The field discussions pointed to the need for relooking at the workload in each Investigator Zone for possible reductions. Further there is scope to reduce number of visits in the case of dry land farms as very little variations in cropping and standing perennial crops is observed in the present condition. Detailed data entry by plots could also be relooked in view of the time required and utility of such granular data. Crop coverage for different seasons also could be relooked depending on the importance of the crop to the state or district economy. The cost of cultivation studies and its frequency also needs to be reviewed based on the utility of the data. The methodology of collecting agricultural wage data, farm gate prices and wholesale prices are possibly areas to be reviewed given the present agricultural marketing. The system of agricultural statistics has already been studied in great detail by an Expert Committee that had also recommended some reduction in workload. While most issues in the agricultural statistics data collection have been studied by The Expert Committee, there is a need to take a critical view of the resources deployed in the agricultural sector data collection, considering the declining role of agriculture in the States' economy.

2.5 Most of the activities of Panchayat offices having public interface have been computerised. However currently report generation facility for DES officers from Panchayat level databases is not available. It is also necessary to examine data fields and coding conventions for harmonising and generating Panchayat level data and its aggregation to higher levels. Though we have complete civil registration, Panchayat level population data could not be updated due to limitations of registration data. Similarly data on buildings and construction activity from permits and completion certificates issued by Panchayat requires to be studied for preparing state level estimates. This area needs to be studied by DES and Concerned department to see Panchayat level data aggregation and reporting done from these transaction level data available at the Panchayat offices.

3.0 Overview of the functioning of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES)

3.1 The Commission had a detailed presentation on the activities of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, the main agency for the collection, compilation, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of statistics relating to various sectors of Kerala economy. The department had its origin in the scheme "Improvement of Agriculture Statistics" started in 1949 as a post war Reconstruction Scheme under the Department of Research in the erstwhile Travancore University. The current staff positions in the department working at different offices areas follows.

Directorate of Economics and Statistics	: 256
District Statistical Offices	: 378
Taluk Statistical Offices	: 1153
Line departments	: 720
Total	: 2507

3.2 Main statistical activities of DES

DES prepares key indicators like Gross State Domestic Product, Net State Domestic Product, Per capita income, Capital Formation etc. These estimates are prepared by using the concept & methodology adopted by Central Statistical Office under the Central Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

3.3 Department conducts the Annual Survey of Industries with the assistance and guidance of Central Statistical Office (IS wing) Kolkata. ASI provides information on major characteristics of the industries viz, fixed capital, working capital, Invested capital, employment details, Gross Value Added, Input, output, profit etc. in the organised manufacturing sector of the state.

3.4 Index of Industrial Production (IIP) The DES has been computing Quarterly and Annual Index of Industrial Production of Kerala with the base year 2011 – 12 based on production data collected on monthly basis. The index covers (i) Mining and Quarrying (ii) Registered Manufacturing and (iii) Electricity generation transmission and distribution. The monthly production data of 'mining and quarrying' and 'electricity' for compiling state level IIP are collecting from Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) Nagpur and Central Electricity Authority respectively. In case of manufacturing sector, department collects monthly production data directly from the selected manufacturing units through District Statistical Offices.

3.5 Agriculture and Allied Sector. Major data sources in this Sector are EARAS scheme (100% CSS), Agriculture Census (100% CSS), Cost of Cultivation Survey, Agriculture Price Statistics data collection etc. The sectors like Animal Husbandry and Fisheries relevant Statistics are published from the Statistical Cells attached with the Departments concerned. For EARAS Survey a Multi stage Stratified random sampling methodology is adopted. The entire state is divided into 811 investigator zones having more or less equal area for the purpose of the survey. At State level 81100 clusters are formed with an average of 25 to 30 lakhs survey sub-divisions and area covered around 3.5 lakhs Ha. Each cluster has an area of 10 Acres. These 100 clusters are distributed among the wet and dry clusters in proportion to wet land and dry land area. Wet land clusters are visited thrice and Dry land clusters are visited twice in an agriculture year and collects data.

Types of data published at State/District/Block level

- a. Land utilization Statistics (13 way classification)
- b. Crop Area Statistics-80 crops
- c. Crop Production Statistics - 40 crops
- d. Crop Productivity Statistics – 20 crops
- e. Irrigation Statistics (Crop wise & source wise)
- f. Four advance estimates on important crops

3.6 Agriculture Census: It was decided to start the field work of 11th Agriculture Census on July 2021, but due to Covid 19 pandemic Government of India postponed the survey to the next year. Preliminary work is currently on to organise pre-testing etc.

3.7 Cost of Cultivation: The Cost of Cultivation survey is taking place in all the districts of Kerala and the survey covers 12 important crops in the State. The crops covered are paddy (3 seasons), coconut, arecanut, tapioca, banana, pepper, ginger, turmeric, pineapple, bitter guard, cowpea and cardamom. The main objective of the survey is to estimate the cost of cultivation per hectare of important crops in Kerala and to compare the cost under different concepts over a period and also estimate the value of output received per hectare of each crop.

3.8 Social Sector (Gender Statistics): The Department is publishing Report on Gender Statistics in Kerala since 2014-15 onwards. The publication brings Sex-desegregated data to provided information on the status of women in the State in respect of the structure of population, education, health, participation in economy, Crime against women, participation in decision making, Women specific Government Schemes. Reports up to 2017-18 are published.

3.9 Demography, Labour and Migration: Main sources of demographic data in the State are from the Civil Registration System (CRS), Sample Registration System (SRS) and Medical Certification of Cause of Death (MCCD)

3.10 Labour Statistics: The Labour Statistics are scrutinized, tabulated and prepared in Annual, Quarterly and Monthly reports in the prescribed format in DES, and submitted to Labour Bureau, Government of India.

3.11 Price: The price data collected by the department on different marketing Stages are Farm price, Whole sale price, Retail price, Price paid by farmer. Farm Prices are usually classified into Farm Wholesale prices and Farm Retail Prices. The Farm Wholesale Price data are being collected from all Taluks in the State on a fortnightly basis from selected farmers. For this purpose, 60 wholesale commodities are selected which have marketable surplus

The Daily Wholesale prices of 41 agricultural commodities are collected from selected markets during peak transaction periods of the day. Directorate receives the data after proper scrutiny from all districts. Daily wholesale price bulletin is broadcasted through All India Radio Kozhikode, Kannur, Thiruvananthapuram, Devikulam, Kochi and Thrissur.

Weekly collection of wholesale prices of 46 agricultural commodities is used for the preparation of Wholesale Price Index of agricultural commodities in Kerala.

Retail Prices collected by department are Daily/Weekly prices of 50 Essential Commodities from district headquarters and consolidated reports are sent to the office of Chief Minister, Minister for Food and Civil supplies, Minister for Agriculture, Chief Secretary, and Food Secretary etc.

Other price data collected by the DES are:

Retail prices of 18 notified species of Forest produce

Wholesale prices of Fruits for Horticultural Corporation

Coir, raw and rotted husk, coconut shells

Weekly prices of spices

Wholesale and retail price of Salt

Besides prices mentioned above prices of some other items are also collected by the department based on various needs as mentioned below.

Retail prices of Ayurveda raw materials.

Market Rate of Waste Paper

Retail prices of dietary articles.

3.12 Index Numbers: Consumer Price Index numbers for industrial and agricultural labours are being computed monthly for 17 centres in Kerala. Regulation of DA of the working class to compensate the

rise in prices is in accordance with this index. Base year for the present series of index is 2011 – 12. Index for the months up to January 2022 are published. (CPI up to May 2022 is published at present)

Consumer Price Index numbers (Rural / Urban / Combined) is newly launched by the department. This index number is calculated using price data collected from 149 market centres across State. District level and State level consumer price index numbers (rural, urban/combined) can be calculated. It is useful for District level Income calculation, State income calculation and for planning purposes. Base year is 2019 – 20.

3.13 National Sample surveys (NSS): Kerala has been participating in the National Sample Surveys (NSS) from the very beginning with matching samples for supplementing the Central Sample data to derive reliable state specific estimates for various socio-economic variables. Kerala has undertaken the exercise of pooling of central and state sample data for 66th round, as per the methodology approved by the National Statistical Commission.

3.14 Survey and Studies: In 2021-22 the department conducted two ad-hoc Surveys viz. Survey on Markets in Kerala to find number of markets functioning in Kerala, facilities available in markets, Volume of trade and changes required in present system. And Survey on Organic farming and Marketing in Kerala to find out Production, Storage and Distribution of agriculture products produced under organic cultivation.

3.15 Local Level Statistics: BSLLD is a regular data collection mechanism for collection, consolidation and analysis of secondary data at Local Body level to provide data support for Local level Planning. Web-based application software is in developing stage to access data at different administrative levels in the State. Data for the year 2019-20 is ready for publishing.

3.16 Decentralization round Survey: State Planning Board suggested the survey to assess the physical achievement of LSGIs during the last five years through decentralized planning and it would help future plan preparations. In this context, after a series of discussion with State Resource Group and Planning board, Department formulated decentralization Round Survey under the close guidance of State planning board. It is formed as a regular data collection mechanism for every Year. For the first time department collected physical and financial achievement for the year 2015-16 to 2019-20 from the 12 implementing departments of LSGIs. Department developed online data entry software for the survey and the implementing officers entered data in the software and department staff help them to enter the data. Reports are presented in almost all the Grama Panchayats in the state.

3.17 Mission Antyodaya Survey: Mission Antyodaya Survey carried out across the Country coterminous with people's Plan Campaign (PPC) of Ministry of Panchayath Raj. From year 2018 onward Mission Antyodaya Survey in the State done by Department of Economics and Statistics.

4. Areas for action

4.1 A major concern with the Statistical System in the country covering both the national and state level statistics is their inability to meet the current requirements. There is also a lack of critical review of the outcomes of the extensive efforts by DES and other agencies in collecting data from various sources. The Commission has identified some areas for close study and critical examination as soon as it acquires the necessary infrastructure and resources.

4.2 Reports of expert Committee set under the Indian Statistical Strengthening Project

Currently three reports are available viz on Agricultural Statistics, Price Statistics and State Income. Their implementation needs to be taken up by the DES after substantive suggestions are identified. The action taken report has been sought from the DES on each of the three reports.

Improving State Income Estimates and bringing out quarterly estimates. One of the key objectives of setting up the present Commission is to improve the State income estimates. Though the report of the Expert Committee provides certain recommendations in this direction, it is necessary to look at more reliable and consistent data sources like GSTN and also develop a methodology for this purpose. Detailed technical consultations with national experts are required for this. The objective should be to provide the DES with a methodology that is technically sound and consistent with the concepts and procedures recommended by the NSO.

Data dissemination practices

Recognizing that government websites are means to provide services to the public, the DES website should focus more on data dissemination and data analytics. In this context the current efforts of the DES in Kerala to provide interactive data form various sources in their website should be encouraged and supported. The recent initiatives from NITI Aayog and the National Statistical Office (NSO) in including the Open Data Portal of MeITY need to be examined for adoption by the DES.

5. Commission meetings held so far

5.1 The First meeting of the Kerala State Statistical Commission (KSSC) held on 09.09.2020 at 11 am through WEBEX platform. Shri P C Mohanan, Chairman, Kerala State Statistical Commission presided over the meeting. Those present included Dr. V K Ramachandran, Vice Chairman, Kerala State Planning Board (KSPB), Dr. V. Venu, Additional Chief Secretary, Planning & Economics Affairs Dept, Shri. A. Meera Sahib, Full time Member, Dr. Surjit Vikraman, Member, Commission and Prof. Madhura Swaminadhan, Member, Kerala State Statistical Commission and Shri. P.V.Babu, Director, Dept. of Economics & Statistics (DES) and Ex-officio Member

The Chairman welcomed the Vice Chairman, State Planning Board, Additional Chief Secretary (Planning and Economic affairs Dept.) and Members of the Commission. He noted that the Commission notified in March 2020 could not effectively function due to the prevailing circumstances. As the terms of Reference have now been notified, it is important that the Commission start deliberating on the tasks assigned to it. Thus the first meeting was being organized on virtual platform. He requested the Vice-Chairman, State Planning Board, Dr.V.K Ramachandran to formally open the Commission's first meeting and give his perspectives on the role of the Commission. In his opening remarks Vice-Chairman explained the need for the Commission and how the Commission can effectively help in the governance of the State. He recalled that Honourable Chief Minister had outlined the need for such a Commission and announced its formation while opening the Workshop on State Level Statistics for Kerala organized by the State Planning Board in July 2019. Vice Chairman opined that the Commission will be a permanent asset, a model in the field and an institution that serves the statistical needs of Government besides contributing to the Social & Economic development in the State for years to come. He also stressed the

areas where the Commission needs to give immediate attention. Vice Chairman also requested the Additional Chief Secretary and Director, DES to provide resources and support for the smooth functioning of the Commission.

3. Opening the discussion the Chairman requested the Additional Chief Secretary and Member Secretary State Planning Board noted that this meeting may be considered as the date of formal functioning of the Commission. He also shared his views on the statistical system at the national level and the limitations in the State system to produce quarterly GDP numbers due to both methodological issues and data gaps. The Chairman brought to the notice of the Additional Chief Secretary that there is some delay in Government Orders regarding the support system for the commission. The Additional Chief Secretary, in his remarks assured full support to the Commission and promised to expedite the administrative steps.

Shri. A. Meera Sahib, member of the Commission mentioned about the need to get the support system and budget allocation at the earliest for full- fledged functioning of the Commission. Prof. Madhura Swaminathan requested State Planning Board, to circulate the report of last Statistical Workshop and also suggested that the Commission members may be provided a detailed note on the database and methodology used for national/state income compilation by CSO and State DES. Dr. Surjit Vikraman spoke on the statistical issues in various sectors of the economy and suggested the need to form working groups and consultations with institutions and experts to identify key issues and provide inputs for improving methodologies. He also suggested that DES may do some ground work for implementing recommendations of the National Statistical Commission.

The Director, DES mentioned that any change in the methodology of State Income estimation leads to comparability issues as all States follow the methodology developed by CSO. Within the limitations of data gaps and methodology in quarterly estimates, DES recently has made some projections on the loss happening in the State due to COVID 19 pandemic. He also reiterated lack of data availability and the need of data sharing of other departments with DES which helps DES to produce better estimates and database on time. The Director also requested the commission to think of user consultation workshops and give recommendation to DES, on restructuring the system and how data can be produced in a systematic way to meet the requirement of data users. He extended every possible support to the Commission from the department side.

The Chairman suggested that DES prepare a note on the current methodology used for State Income calculation and circulate it to the members of the commission and also asked the Planning Board to circulate the report of the Workshop on State Statistical System.

It was also suggested that some quick surveys for studying the post pandemic effects in informal sector could be done, besides the need for preparing certain high frequency indicators in the State. It was explained that DES has already done a survey to study the pandemic effect in the economy and announced that the Commission's activities formally started with this first meeting. He thanked the Planning Board for providing the WEBEX platform for the meeting.

5.2 The second meeting of the Kerala State Statistical Commission (KSSC) held on 07/10/2020 at 3.00 pm through Google meet platform. Chairman presided over the meeting. The Chairman briefed the members that the Planning Board had sought information from DES to make an assessment of the economic loss due to Covid pandemic in May. The DES had provided an estimate

of loss in gross value addition (GVA) to the state's economy based on sectoral assessment of the impact and using the quick estimates of GVA for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20 and projected estimates for 2020-21. Chairman had also given his comments on the estimates provided by DES. Subsequently in July the Planning Board suggested to update the estimates with the latest information available. The DES after consulting Chairman had done a quick assessment of the establishments in the unorganized sectors basing on the 73rd of NSS. Later the DES also attempted to identify the extent of units closed due to the pandemic restrictions.

Deputy Director who was in charge of State Income Division explained the findings of the survey done by DES for studying the economic loss due to the impact of COVID 19. He briefly explained the survey and the findings of income loss in un-organized sector during the Lock-down period. He informed that the initial estimates were further revised by considering information about closed units using 73rd round NSS Survey frame. The revised estimated loss of GVA in the first and second quarter of 2020-21 was provided to the SPB in October.

The Chairman sought comments from members about identifying areas from the TOR on which members can work on. In the present situation there appeared no possibility of having physical meetings with stake holders. In this context Prof. Madhura Swaminathan volunteered to work on gender disaggregated data and development of new indicators for measuring quality of education as well as educational outcomes. This would require the formation of working groups on the area of education, gender etc. Regarding Gender disaggregated data, it was informed that from 2016-17 onwards DES is releasing annual Gender Statistics report collecting all available disaggregated data and the report for 2018-19 will be published within two or three months.

Sri. A. Meera Sahib requested DES to circulate the four Expert Committee Reports regarding Agricultural Statistics, Price Statistics, State Income and Technical Advisory Committee formed as part of KLSSSP to the members. He also pointed out that item No.6 of the terms of reference of the Commission is to formulate opinion and suggest guidelines for implementation of the recommendations on the above subjects.

Dr. Surjit Vikraman agreed with the proposal to examine earlier working group reports and appreciated work done in collecting Village level data through Mission Anthyodaya Survey recently. He noted that BSLLD data will help to make a concrete framework to integrate departments at various levels. Director, DES mentioned that his department is now working with BSLLD data and to ensure that the BSLLD data of almost all the local bodies of the State will be prepared and released before the forthcoming local body elections. On data availability, Chairman reminded that a lot of data are generated at the local level, and the need is to integrate these data lying with the field offices.

Director mentioned that a copy of the report of Karavaram Panchayat in Trivandrum District was sent to the Chairman. On the report, the chairman commented that the report should become more dynamic by bringing some day to day kind of transaction data into the database and develop an online server based system which can be updated on a regular basis and bring some geo-spatial elements in the data. He also mentioned that a web-based application may be developed to aggregate the data to Block, District and State levels.

The Director clarified that the BSLLD data is not a static one because DES has already developed software for capturing the data and the data will be available in the Department server, and that regular updating is possible.

The Chairman pointed out the importance of some value additions in the report of Gender disaggregated statistics in the form of analysis to find out the sectors in which specific actions can be taken by the Government. Prof. Madhura Swaminathan also mentioned the importance of preparing report on gender gaps and need for conducting survey on crime against women. It was suggested that the Member could explore the gender issue with the Social Welfare Department and set up meetings, once the Commission has a functioning secretariat.

Director, DES mentioned the Order issued by the Government on the Service conditions and creation of infrastructure facilities for the Commission. However it was noted that in the absence of budget provisions and secretariat the Commission cannot be effective. Most of the work would require the support of experts for which it will be necessary to hold consultations and arrange meetings for which a functioning secretariat is essential.

Implementing these expert committee reports is one of the tasks of the Commission. Out of the four reports the agriculture committee report was very comprehensive. As regards the State Income, it is necessary to pay serious attention to strengthen the system of preparing state income including the production of quarterly estimates. This is an item noted while setting up the Commission.

It was suggested that the commission should make some recommendation to the government or submit survey/study proposals in the case of gender as well as educational outcomes after consulting experts. A detailed discussion would be carried out on this subject to develop more data sets and making them available in the public domain. The Commission appreciated the work done by DES to estimate economic loss in State economy due to Covid-19 pandemic.

5.3 Third meeting: The third meeting of the Commission was convened as a meeting of available members of the Commission on 24/12/2020 at Government Guest House, Kovalam. This meeting was attended by Chairman and two members including the Director, DES, Ex- Officio Member.

This was necessitated to chalk out plans for the urgent and proper utilization of funds sanctioned under Contingency Fund vide G.O(Rt.) 7396/2020/Fin dated 21-12-2020. The functioning of the Commission state was being affected not only by the COVID-19 pandemic but also the delay in issuing necessary orders from Govt in time. Now that the initial funds for establishing the office has been sanctioned, the meeting is necessary to discuss the modalities for setting up of the Commission's office with infrastructure facilities including furniture and computer peripherals for the smooth takeoff at the earliest possible time. After detailed deliberations and necessary modifications the proposals brought by the Director, DES were agreed to by the Commission.

The Commission entrusted the Director, DES to prepare a detailed proposal based on the decisions. After obtaining the approval of the Chairman, it is decided to entrust Director to take urgent necessary action for implement the decision, observing the government rules within the stipulated time.

5.4 Fourth meeting held on 14th and 15th of December 2021 at the Kerala State Statistical Commission, Kaimanam. This was the first full physical meeting of the Commission to discuss and prepare a framework for the Commission's functioning, identify priority areas from the TOR and prepare suitable work plans, identify areas of TOR for possible assignment of responsibility within the Commission, discussion on the recommendations of three Expert Committee Reports. A presentation was also made on the State Income estimation.

The meeting noted that the Commission does not have sufficient infrastructure facilities or proper administrative support, while the Government and the Planning Board have great expectations from the Commission. It is important for the Commission to study the problems in data availability with different agencies and suggest solutions to improve the state statistical system. The Director, DES informed that the office of the Commission is now functioning with the officers in the Directorate posted 'on other duty' basis. Government has rejected the application for appointment of staff on deputation. He mentioned that a request has again been made to the Government in this regard. It was proposed to seek permission again from the Government to appoint officers on deputation basis to facilitate the office work of the Commission. Till then, the meeting approved the general proposal to continue the service of at least two officers on other duty in addition to the Joint Director. To facilitate financial matters, the Commission directed the Secretary to expedite the process for obtaining Government approval for the provision of DDO to the Commission's Secretary. Shri A Meera Sahib told the Commission that he had informed the Government of his willingness to work without honorarium.

The DES officials presented the work of the State Income Division. The methodology prepared by the Department for calculating GSDP was explained. The department is collecting data from the various agencies like Rubber Board, Tea Board, Electricity Board, NSO etc. Data collected in EARAS, IIP and Price sections in the department are also using for making analysis about the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary sectors for the estimation of GSDP. The data provided by the CSO on tax, subsidy and consumption are also used for this purpose.

It was felt that that DES is now using very old Rates & Ratios and a new survey should be conducted to revise it. The department has started a new series of CPI (R / U / C) and it is now available and that efforts should be made to use this series in the future. Steps may also be taken to prepare a new WPI for Kerala. Tamil Nadu has done it successfully. This has been recommended on by the Expert Committee on Price & Price Indices (TOR 6& 7 and Page 57,58,59 of the report).

DES is now collecting data relating to postal & communication from BSNL, but it would be better to get data from TRAI. It is also pointed out that in the case of data relating to financial institutions, besides RBI data from SLBC also may be collected. It was also informed that the preparation of Quarterly Estimates will increase the workload of the State Income Division and more staff will be required to do it on time.

Labour and Housing Division of DES made a presentation on Building Materials Survey and Labor Survey. Director of Economics and statistics also made a presentation on the origin, history, structure, surveys and publications of the Department of Economic Statistics.

The Department of Economic Statistics is the State Statistical Authority. The DES holds all the functions of the Official Statistics, including the State Agricultural Statistics Authority (SASA) and

various key positions like Additional Chief Register of Birth & Death, authority of price statistics, Agriculture Census and the Economic Census etc. Yet various surveys in the state are now being conducted without the knowledge of the DES. Many surveys are being conducted without following even the basic principles of statistics. It was opined that Government should consult the DES and follow the recommendations of the Commission before approving statistical surveys by state government agencies. Government can seek the services of the State Statistical Commission in this regard. The government order, G.O (P) No.16 / 09 / Plg dated 23.04.2009, issued in this regard should also be brought to the notice of the Government besides the order declaring the DES as the nodal agency for all matters relating to official statistics.

Annexure:

1. Government order constitution the Commission
2. Terms of Reference of Kerala State Statistical Commission



Chairman

