



Standing Committee Report Summary

The Collection of Statistics Bill, 2007

- The Standing Committee on Finance submitted its 66th Report on 'The Collection of Statistics Bill, 2007' on March 18, 2008. The Chairperson was Shri Ananth Kumar.
- The Bill enables the appropriate government to employ on contract basis, any agency or company or person for the purpose of collecting the specified statistics. However, no safeguards have been prescribed although the statistics might be sensitive in nature. The Committee suggests that general principles governing outsourcing should be prescribed by the central government in the Bill.
- The Bill defines "appropriate government" as any ministry or department of the central and state governments or their instrumentality and any local government (Panchayats or Municipalities). The Committee recommends that instrumentalities should be excluded from the definition because it can cover a wide range of institutions not intended for the purpose.
- The Committee suggests that a separate Bill (which is on the anvil) for the standardization of statistical activities and coordination, with specific reference to 'core statistics' of national importance should be introduced.
- The Bill states that every agency shall furnish such information to other agencies or statistics officer as maybe required and make available records and plans for inspection and examination. The statistics officer may enter any premise at a reasonable time to inspect relevant records. The Committee suggests that appropriate safeguards to check misuse of authority should be included in the Bill. The Committee also suggests that the right to enter any premise be exercised only by government officials of a minimum rank, only with prior notice and only during prescribed hours of the day.
- The Bill provides for the disclosure of certain information or document by the agency authorised for collection of statistics. The Committee is of the view that the responsibility of releasing information should vest with the appropriate government and not with the agency authorised to collect statistics.
- The Bill provides for monetary penalty if a person is convicted for making a false statement or breaks the secrecy requirement of the information gathered. The Committee recommends that there should be a provision for simple imprisonment in the event of anyone wilfully furnishing false information.

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