

# INDIA'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATABASE : A Review and Critique

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## *An Overview*

At the outset it must be mentioned that, while often the accuracy or usefulness of data on Indian economy and society is questioned, yet it cannot be denied that a large part of our data systems are comparable to the best in the world. The unfortunate part is that data management, collation, distribution etc.. has been a virtual monopoly of state institutions. The private sector has shown very little interest in this area even though it is the larger part of the economy and uses to its advantage profitably a large part of the database that exists.

With the entire burden on its shoulders the state has evolved large institutions, some dealing with general data and others with highly specialised data. The usual pattern of these institutions is that for most institutions set up by the union govt. there exists a counterpart in the state govt. Today many of these institutions are huge and suffer from the same bureaucratic problems which ails the government in general. Nevertheless, many of these institutions have made contributions to the country's database which is outstanding and gives global credibility to our database.

The first institution which comes to mind is the Census of India and the Registrar Generals Office. If India has a historical database today the entire credit goes to the Census Operations which began way back in 1870. The National Sample Survey Organisation is another institution which also collects large scale primary data; they have done innumerable surveys on a wide range of social and economic themes over the years without which India's socio-economic database would have been very poor. A third crucial organisation which has helped build India's massive socio-economic database is the Central Statistical Organisation - their Basic Statistics Relating to the Indian Economy and Statistical Abstract of India (also a Pocketbook version) are two of the most widely used compilations used the world over and they cover virtually all aspects of India's life and living. These two publications derive from various sector-special publications. At the district level too a socioeconomic statistical abstract exists which records a wide variety of socio-economic information at the taluka level, but over the years one gets to see less and less of this, especially in the backward states. In relation to this NICNET has also been compiling information on some 60 variables at the village level and this is available in district statistical offices. A number of similar privately compiled documents which derive from publications of these institutions are also available - Tata Services' Statistical Outline of India (which does not acknowledge sources!) and CMIE's Basic Statistics in different volumes India, States and District level, among others; recently CMIE has got corporatised and access to it has become difficult because now they are more in the business of making money! Similarly there are other useful compilations which bring together a wide range of information with a perspective, like the annual Economic Survey presented before the annual budget and the Five Year Plan documents.

Apart from these there are specialised data agencies. Each Ministry and its departments bring out specialised publications giving data pertaining to their sector. For instance the Ministry of Agriculture's Dir. of Economics and Statistics brings out the volume Indian Agricultural Statistics, the Ministry of Health's Central Bureau of

Health Intelligence brings out Health Information of India, Ministry of Finance's Dept of Economic Affairs brings out Indian Public Finance Statistics, Ministry of Human Resource Development's Dept. of Education publishes Education in India, Ministry of Labour's Indian Labour Yearbook is published by the Labour Bureau, Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation's Central Statistical Organisation publishes regularly the National Accounts Statistics, Ministry of Home Affairs' National Crime Record Bureau publishes a YearBook - Crime in India, Reserve Bank of India's Report On Currency and Finance is published each year, the Ministry of Environment and Forests brings out the State of the Forest Report, Ministry of Industry publishes the Annual Survey of Industries - The Factory Sector etc... In most cases there are counterpart publications at the state level which give similar data in a more disaggregated form.

Thus the state and its agencies are involved in the process of generation, collation, collection, and distribution of data on a very wide scale for virtually all spheres of human life. Some of the data is very reliable and of high quality, some is incomplete or inadequate because all state level agencies are not equally efficient and timely, some data even though of poor quality is extremely useful and some data is entirely worthless. Apart from the various specialised agencies it is the CSO which plays a pivotal role in compiling and bringing together a wide range of data in its general publications referred to above. While the CSO has been performing its thankless task quite efficiently over the years, many of the agencies which feed into it have become increasingly inefficient and callous and this has affected the overall quality of the data in the more recent years - there is a general deterioration in data management and supply over the years.

In this paper we review critically the wide range of India's socio-economic database in an effort to bring together in one place the major databases. While we will look at most major areas of activity, the review is not intended to be an exhaustive compilation and hence a number of areas are bound to remain uncovered. Further, time constraint has not permitted the review of all sectors/activities identified and hence detailed information on only selected sectors has been documented.

The first question that arises in making a presentation about India's socio-economic database is how do we classify or categorise the data which is available. One approach could be to classify them on the basis of major Resource Centres - Census, NSSO, CSO, Ministries, other large-scale studies like the NFHS, ASI etc.. Another approach could be a sectoral classification - agriculture, industry, finance, trade, infrastructure, social sector, environment etc.. Another alternate approach which I would prefer to use is making a broader two-fold classification - Natural Resources and Environment, and Political Economy.

**Natural Resources and Environment** would include the entire gamut of nature with which we interact in the context of human development, that is, Land, Minerals, Forests, the Animal and Plant World, Water and Rainfall, Atmosphere (Climate, Air, Temperature Light, etc..), and natural phenomena (disasters) like earthquakes, volcanoes, landslides, floods, cyclones, typhoons, storms etc..

**Political Economy** would include the outcomes of human interaction with the Natural Resources and Environment , like agriculture, industry, harnessing energy, demography, infrastructure, finance, governance, health, education, language and

culture, housing, pollution, watershed management and irrigation, income-distribution and poverty, entertainment and sports, etc.. etc..

## **A. Natural Resources and Environment**

### **A.1 Land and Water**

Land and water are the most basic resources for human existence and development. Most struggles in pre-historic as well as historic times have been to acquire supremacy over this. There has been a shift from collective ownership to private ownership over centuries and back and forth as political economies have changed. Today in India both private and public ownership exist. While agricultural land (revenue land) is overwhelmingly privately owned, forests, hill/mountainous regions, surface water resources, minerals etc... are in public domain. The type of ownership is important because it determines what kind of exploitation takes place.

General data pertaining to land in India is available in the reports of the Surveyor General of India where data at district level is compiled. The Census of India gives geographical area data at village level also (Primary Census Abstract). The Geological Survey of India's Reports gives data on technical aspects of land formation and mineral wealth. Data related to agricultural lands is available in publications of the Ministry of Agriculture like Indian Agricultural Statistics, and the Agricultural Census (once in 5 years since 1970-71). Apart from this the National Sample Survey carries out Surveys on landholding at regular intervals (8th, 17th, 26th, 37th and 40th Rounds - 1954-55 to 1992). While the Agricultural Census has its basis in land records the NSS surveys are household based. These documents also provide information on forest areas, but Ministry of Environment and Forests' Reports like the State of the Forests Report, remote sensing satellite data of Space Applications Centre give more detailed information about forests.

Data on water resources is available in reports of departments dealing with irrigation, water resources - especially river basins, and geological surveys, and ocean development. Rainfall data is very systematically compiled by the Meteorological Department, and now supported by satellite information from Space Applications Center, in their monthly bulletins and annual reports. This data is also available in district and taluka level statistical abstracts on a time series basis.

### **A.2 Animal and Plant Information**

Biological diversity and species have become a special concern today in the concern for conservation of the environment on one hand and the growing commercial interest to exploit this on the other. Vast databases both in the public and private domain exist which have a rich documentation, like the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, Botanical Survey of India, Zoological Survey of India, Annual Reports of Ministry of Environment and Forest etc.....

### **A.3 Atmosphere and Climate**

India being largely a monsoon dependent economy, climate and atmospheric conditions are crucial. The Indian Meteorological Department headquartered at Pune brings out regular bulletins and an Annual Report and other special documents on atmosphere and climate related issues. The reports of the Ministry of Agriculture mentioned above also carry most of the data on climate and atmosphere related to the economy. The Space Applications Centre supports the Met. Dept. with satellite

information which has in recent years considerably improved forecasting of weather conditions, rainfall, storms etc..

#### A.4 Natural Disasters

Natural disasters like floods, coastal storms and earthquakes are a regular feature of India's natural environment and with the impact of development processes their frequency and intensity have also increased. The main agencies documenting this data are the Met. Dept and the Geological Survey of India. A number of states also have disaster management agencies which document and monitor such events.

## **B. POLITICAL ECONOMY**

### B.1 Agriculture

Agriculture is the lifeline of India's economy on which over two-thirds of people depend on for their livelihood. And India's economic development and growth is very closely linked to the growth of the agriculture sector. The Ministry of Agriculture's Directorate of Economics and Statistics is the main source for the database on agriculture in India. Publications like Indian Agricultural Statistics, Indian Agriculture in Brief, Agriculture Statistics at a Glance, Estimates of Area and Production of Principal Crops, Cost of Cultivation Surveys, and Season and Crop Reports are the main source books for data on agriculture in India. In addition there is the Agricultural Census carried out periodically and NSS surveys on agriculture and related matters.

The range of information includes type and class of landholding, its size, nature and type of irrigation, cropped area, cropping patterns, type of crops, type of fertilizers and other inputs, implements and machinery used, institutional and other credit, leasing, crop production, cost of production, index numbers, rainfall, land use (forest, pasture, barren, fallow etc..). With regard to crops data is available on both food and non-food crops like cereals and pulses, sugarcane, condiments and spices, fruits and vegetables, tea and coffee, oilseeds, fibres, dyes and tanning material, drugs and narcotics, fodder crops, green manure crops etc... Food availability and public distribution system data is available in the Annual Report of the Ministry of Food.

### B.2 Mining

As mentioned earlier this is largely a state monopoly and hence reports of the Ministry of Steel and Mines, Indian Bureau of Mines like the Indian Minerals Yearbook and Mineral Statistics of India, and Ministry of Petroleum's Indian Petroleum and Petrochemicals Statistics are the main sources for information. Data on extraction, production, investment, employment, export, import etc.. is available in these reports for minerals like iron ore, coal, manganese, mica, limestone, gold, chalk, sulphur, copper ore, lead, gypsum, zinc, bauxite, motor spirit, diesel, aviation fuel, kerosene, LPG, naphtha etc....

### B.3 Livestock

Livestock is important both from the point of livelihood and food. Here again the resource ministry is the Ministry of Agriculture. The same resources referred to in B.1 give information on livestock of all kinds, milch cattle, sheep, goat, poultry etc... Data about population size, production of milk, eggs, meat, wool, consumption of feed, age distribution, mortality etc.. is available. Other more specific documents are the

Livestock Census (declining coverage), NSSO surveys, the Integrated Sample Survey and reports of state animal husbandry departments.

#### B.4 Industry

Another major feature of the economy is industry. Industrial production in what is known as the Factory Sector is well documented and has a reasonably good database. The Annual Survey of Industries covers the manufacturing sector which is under the purview of the Factories Act. It also includes industry under the Beedi and Cigar Act and some service sectors like electricity, water supply, Construction, Repairs etc.. The ASI is carried out by the NSSO in collaboration with the CSO, Labour Bureau, and the National Buildings Organisation. A very wide range of data is covered - fixed capital, working capital, invested capital, wages and emoluments, materials consumed, fuels used, sales turnover, value added, profits, social security benefits, mandays worked, absenteeism, house construction by employers etc.. For more updated information the CSO's Monthly Statistics of Production of Selected Industry is useful. The Ministry of Industry also brings out a Handbook of Industrial Statistics.

Further there is the Economic Census which covers all enterprises except crop production. This is periodic and has so far been conducted in 1977, 1980, 1990, 1996 by the CSO for state level data and by the state Directorates of Economics and Statistics for district level data. There is also a Census of small-scale industries. The range of data covered is more or less similar to ASI.

#### B.5 Infrastructure

Infrastructure development is crucial for any kind of economy. In infrastructure we include transportation, communications, energy, and media. Transportation includes personal motor vehicles, taxis, trucks, buses, ships, roads etc.. all covered by the Ministry of Surface Transport. The Transport Research Division of this ministry in its annual Report, and report on Motor Transport Statistics publishes data related to road length, type of roads, vehicle numbers and types, person-kilometers travelled on public transport, energy/fuel consumption etc.. In the case of shipping cargo imports and exports are also given. Further Port Authorities give further details on all shipping activities in their reports. For inland water transport the Annual Reports of the Inland Waterway Authority and of the 3 National Waterways (Allahabad-Haldia, Sadhiya-Dhubri and the West Coast Canal) provide necessary information on their operations.

Rail transport is under the Ministry of Railways and this is a state monopoly. The ministry's Annual report contains information on all aspects of rail transportation from kilometer length of different rail routes, to passenger-kilometres handled, to commodity movement, earnings from passenger and goods services, finances of railways etc..

Air Transport is under the purview of Ministry of Civil Aviation and their Annual Report includes data on hours flown, passengers carried, kilometres flown, freight and mail carried etc.. separately for domestic and international sectors. The national and international airport authorities and the immigration department too publishes data on movement of passengers and cargo.

Communications too is a near state monopoly under the Ministry of Telecommunications. They publish data on number of post offices, deliveries of different types of mail, postal savings, insurance and securities, number of telephone

connections, number of effective calls, telex and other related services in their publication Annual report and Activities.

Another crucial infrastructure for development is power or energy. This is vested in the Ministry of Energy. The Central Electricity Authority has two important publications : Public Electricity Supply - All India Statistics, and Power Supply Position in the Country. The data includes installed capacities and generation of electricity from different sources of power (coal, hydro, nuclear,gasetc..), consumption by different sectors of the economy etc.. The NSSO surveys too provide information on consumption in greater detail by class and also cover a wider variety of sources like use of firewood, dung etc.. TERI's Energy Data Directory and Year Book is also a useful information source.

Dams and Irrigation infrastructure are crucial not only for hydro-electric power but also for irrigation. Each major project has its own Authority which brings out Annual Reports. Data on smaller irrigation projects are documented in the reports of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Media is another important infrastructure which facilitates transmission of information, knowledge, news. Radio, television, registered newspapers and periodicals are covered by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Data available includes readership/viewership, circulation, language etc..

#### B.6 Health

While the health sector is dominated by private services most available data pertains to the public sector. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has two main source documents, the Health Information of India published by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence and the Family Welfare Yearbook published by the Dept. of Family Welfare. The data published includes population characteristics (numbers, place of residence, age/sex profile, growth rates, marital status, migration etc..), vital statistics (mortality and fertility statistics, including age and gender specific, life expectancy etc..), availability and education and training of health care personnel (doctors, nurses and other paramedics), availability and types of hospitals, dispensaries and beds, primary health care services, national disease control programs (TB, leprosy, malaria, STD and AIDS, Blindness, Diarrohea etc..), cause of death statistics, health insurance, production of drugs and pharmaceuticals, investment and expenditure by governments in health care provision, contraception nature, types, protection rates, immunisation coverage, antenatal and postnatal care etc.. While most data pertains to public domain activities some of it does include private sector also like number of doctors and nurses registered with respective Councils, number of hospitals, dispensaries and beds, drug production etc.. Except for public services data the Ministry does not generate most of the data - it is provided by various institutions like the Medical and Nursing Councils for personnel related data, local governments for hospitals and dispensaries data, Registrar General for population and vital statistics etc..

Apart from this the Census gives data on health care personnel for census years, the Economic Census give data on all health care establishments like clinics and hospitals, the Indian systems of medicine and the homoeopathic Councils give data relating to their system of medicine, the national Accounts Statistics give data on private expenditure by households on health care based on consumption expenditure

estimates. NSSO surveys provide data on utilisation and expenditure based on household studies.

A special effort has been made by the Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT), with which I am also associated, to compile the entire health sector database of the country on electronic media so that its importance in the public domain can be advocated by those concerned with the development of this sector. Presently the draft database is ready and is being circulated for peer review before it is made available publicly. The database includes selected population and vital statistics data, health personnel availability, hospitals, dispensaries and beds, public expenditure on health care for major programs and subsector of public health services. It is a time series database from 1951 upto the latest year separately for each state and union territory.

#### B.7 Education

Data on education has similar importance to that on health being part of the social sector wherein the state has a very important role to play in the framework of social justice. Assuring basic education too is part of the Directive Principles enshrined in the Constitution and is presently on political agenda for being mandated as a right. The education database includes information on enrolment at different levels, relevant age-group enrolment rates, costs, fees, availability of teachers, donations, information on technical and higher education etc..

The major sources are publications of the Ministry of Education like, Education in India, Selected Education Statistics, Education in States in India. Census and the Institute of Applied Manpower Research are other important sources for selected data. The NSSO surveys too provide important information, especially class inequalities in education and private expenditure on fees etc.. Then there is also the All India Educational Survey since 1957 and the last (6th) survey was conducted in 1993.

#### B.8 Rural Development

Recognising the large rural economy and the overwhelming share of employment in the rural and specifically the agrarian sector, the state has developed since the First Five Year Plan special programs of development for rural areas, including large subsidies. The Annual Report of the Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment gives detailed data on the various rural development programs and the coverage in terms of beneficiaries of these programs. In recent years the major programs include Integrated Rural Development Program, Watershed Development Programs, Wasteland Development Programs, Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, Indira Awas Yojana etc... The data pertains to benefits received, class of beneficiaries, employment created, assets created etc..

#### B.9 Banking, Finance and Trade

Data on this sector is the most organised and the most easily accessible also. This is the domain of macro economics and this has received unflinching support because economic development is driven in India by policies of macro-economics. The Ministry of Finance and more specifically the Reserve Bank of India play the premier role in compiling and distributing the database pertaining to banking and finance and the Ministry of Commerce's Dept. of Commercial Intelligence on trade.

Public Finance data is available in government budget papers but the Ministry of Finance's Dept of Economic Affairs (Economic Division) compiles the nation's finance statistics and public expenditures at the all India level in its annual publication, Indian Public Finance Statistics. The Reserve Bank of India's Annual Report and the RBI Bulletin keeps all concerned updated on the economy and its financial performance on a regular basis. Similarly there is the CSO's National Accounts Statistics which gives the same data on a time-series basis. Data includes domestic and national product and consumption expenditures for each sector, capital formation, value added, exports, imports, taxation, subsidies, savings, interest payments, balance of payments, forex reserves, money supply, gold and securities etc.

For the Banking and Insurance sector again the RBI provides the basic database. RBI's Trends and Progress in Banking, Banking Statistics - Basic Statistical Returns, and Statistical Tables Relating to Banks in India are the base for the banking database. Also, Performance Highlights of Banks and Indian Banking Yearbook of the Indian Banks Association gives more micro level information on banks. Data categories include deposits, advances, interest rates, interest income, interest expenditure, non-performing assets, profitability, credit-deposit ratios, cash-reserve ratio, statutory liquidity ratio, and other rates and ratios etc.. Data on Cooperative Banks is also provided by RBI in its publication Statistical Statements Relating to the Cooperative Movement in India. There are also a number of NABARD publications giving data on Cooperative Banks. Insurance data covers both life and general insurance giving information on insured numbers, premium incomes, profitability, insurance payouts etc..

Foreign and Internal trade statistics are published by the Dept. of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics of the Ministry of Commerce in their monthly bulletins and Annual Reports. They cover imports and exports quantum and value data of various commodities and movement of commodities in internal trade. Also data on custom duties and related revenues is available in these and RBI reports referred to above.

Data on securities, stock markets, and other financial instruments like Debt instruments, mutual funds etc.. are very well documented by the private sector, such as the stock exchanges, CMIE and many other commercial associations and journals.

#### B.10 Labor, Employment and Wages

The Directorate General of Employment and Training's Employment Review, Labour Bureau's Indian Labor Statistics and Indian Labour Yearbook are the basic sources for this set of data. Data includes employment by sector, earnings by sector, data on industrial disputes and unrest, trade unions, mandays employment, absenteeism, social securities and benefits etc.. NSSO surveys give more analytic information on employment and wages (27, 32, 38 and 43rd rounds)

#### B.11 Housing

The National Buildings Organisation's Annual Report contains data on housing statistics, especially social housing schemes, loans for housing etc.. Census Housing tables and NSSO's surveys reports also provide very detailed data on type, quality, size, occupancy, ownership etc.. of houses.

#### B.12 Poverty and Inequality



The best source of data on poverty and inequality are the NSSO's surveys, especially the regular consumption expenditure rounds where classwise data on consumption is available over the years for each state. The Five Year Plans and Economic Surveys also deal with poverty data. The rural development data referred to above also gives a profile of poverty and inequality in the country. The CMIE has developed an index of poverty and inequality for the country and it publishes this in their Basic Statistics as well as has a separate publication called Standard of Living. The Labour Bureau also monitors consumption and earnings of labouring classes and publishes reports (in recent years one sees less and less of them).

#### B.13 Governance

Here we include categories like elections, bureaucracy, government employment, local self government, policing and crime, etc.. Electoral statistics of Parliament, state Assemblies with various characteristics are provided in Reports of the Election Commission after each election. The secretariats of Parliament and assemblies also publish this data in their Reports. Data on government employees in each ministry is compiled by the CSO, the Ministry of Labour and the Dept. of Personnel. Data on local self government is published by the CSO in its Statistical Abstracts. The Annual Report of the Ministry of Home Affairs publishes information on policing and other internal security related matters. The National Crime Research Bureau of the Ministry of Home publishes Crime in India which records data pertaining to all sorts of offences and convictions - murder, thefts, dacoity, rapes, riots, juvenile delinquency etc.. Data on police strength, distribution etc.. is also published. Further social background of criminals is also made available in these reports. Data on accidents by types, place etc., suicides is published as Accident statistics.

#### B.14 Demography

The Registrar General's Office generates and publishes data on demographic aspects of the country. Census is one major source which gives decennial data on a wide range of characteristics from area, number of households and population to age/sex structure of the population, rural/urban residence, birth and death rates, education and literacy levels, employment and type of occupations, migration, socio-cultural characteristics like religion, language, caste etc..

Sample Registration Reports give monthly and annual data for fertility, mortality, medical attention at birth and death etc... RGO also carries out special studies on various demographic and related aspects from time to time.

#### B.15 Environment Degradation and Pollution

Central Pollution Control Board and the state counterparts and the Ministry of Environment and Forests provide information on environment degradation and pollution. Air and water quality, solid waste management, conservation of biodiversity - especially forests, soil, plant and animal species are issues of concern and data is documented on them at various levels. The Annual Report of the Ministry of Environment and CPCBs Annual Reports give the basic information on type and level of pollutants, extent of degradation of environment like forest cover, endangered species etc..

#### B.16 Sports and Entertainment

Data on sports is documented by the Sports Authority of India. Apart from this each major sports Federation like cricket, hockey, tennis, athletics etc.. would have detailed

data on the sporting event it governs. Entertainment industry come under the purview of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting which covers cinema, television, radio, theatre etc.. Also the Department of Culture under Ministry of Human Resource Development would cover cultural entertainment media like dance, music etc.. Reports of the Ministries and other agencies like the Censor Board of India, National Film Development Corporation, Federations of the film industry etc.. would have all the information pertaining to entertainment and related matters.

#### B.17 Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism brings out an Annual Report which has information pertaining to tourist flows, hospitality industry, tourist sites and their development etc.. The India Tourist Development Corporation and the state counterparts too publish a lot of information on tourism and related matters.

### C. RESOURCE CENTRES

Having reviewed the data and its sources, the question which arises is how does one get access to all this information. In most cases the need for information is always limited and restricted to a narrow set of issues. For instance, if I am an agricultural researcher my interests would focus on agriculture, livestock, forestry and climate in the broadest sense. Most of my needs would be met by visiting the agriculture ministry and procuring some of their crucial documents referred to above. If that is not possible as I live in a remote area then the nearest sources for me would be the district statistical office (if it is functioning) or the nearest university library. It is a reality that if I am in Delhi then resource centres accessible to me are numerous, at the State capital a little less and at a district place probably very little.

Nevertheless here I attempt to list some well known general resource centres which are easily accessible. In Delhi the Parliament library and the Library in Shastri Bhawan are two useful places where most documents listed above should be available for reference. Those interested in historical data can visit the National Archives in Delhi. If you are in Delhi then for specific data it would be best to visit the relevant ministry. Delhi also has a number of other special resource centres like the National Medical Library, Indian Council of Agricultural Research etc.. but I will not get into such details. Also in Delhi there are the government publications shops like Kitab Mahal or a private store like Jaina Books which receives most of the government publications. Every few years the CSO brings out two publications which are an important source for listing - one is the A Guide to Official Statistics and the other is A Guide to Government Publications. Another development to note is that many of the government publications which were hitherto non-priced publications have now been priced and hence its availability is now improved.

In State capitals the Press Information Bureau is an important resource centre which gets limited copies of most government publications from the Central Government. Also most states have a reasonably good library where publications from the Centre would definitely be there but often also from other states. Amongst the National Libraries the one at Calcutta is the best and most organised one. Bombay has the Jawaharlal Nehru Library (University) and the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research Library.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of everyone to the Economic and Political Weekly, which is a weekly journal published from Bombay. This is the only journal of its kind which is most widely read and referred to and is perhaps one of the very few journals from India which have an international standing. EPW, a few years ago set up a research foundation called the EPW Research Foundation, and one of its objectives was to meet the information gap in the arena of socio-economic data. In the EPW every few months data set on a given theme is published which is also usually time-series. So far about 18 sectors of the economy like banking, money supply, trade, poverty, social sectors, health sector etc.. have been covered.