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Statistical Policy in Less Developed Countries

**IDS COMMUNICATION 114**  
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## STATISTICAL POLICY IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Based on discussions at the Conference on Statistical Policy in Less Developed Countries, May 12-16, 1975, at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

### Editors:

*Biplab Dasgupta*

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### Summary

This monograph is based on the deliberations of a five-day conference held at the Institute of Development Studies on May 12-16, 1975, and attended by 62 participants from 26 countries, including Directors of Statistics, representatives of international organisations, and distinguished academics from various social science disciplines. The Conference brought together people from diverse backgrounds and holding conflicting views on socio-economic issues to discuss the question of priorities of statistical work in less developed countries.

This monograph reflects a high degree of agreement among the participants regarding the need for better and disaggregative measures of social and economic health of a nation, such as the proportion of the population below poverty level, the distribution of income and wealth among various income and ethnic groups and regions, the degree and pattern of labour utilization, and the nature and extent of malnutrition. In view of the high cost of statistical work, the monograph emphasizes the need for a greater use of administrative data, and a greater effort on the analysis and interpretation of data, and urges the governments to provide more resources for statistical work as an aid to development planning. One of the major issues discussed at length in the monograph is how to reconcile the needs for international comparability (and hence, conformity with the standards laid down by the international agencies) with the specific domestic needs of an individual country. Another major issue is the role of a statistician *vis-à-vis* his government, and in particular how the need for statistics to be useful and available to the government should be balanced against the risk of 'political bias' creeping into the data or its presentation. The monograph also discusses the need for quantifying semi-legal or illegal activities such as smuggling, transfer pricing, transactions financed by 'black money', and both sides of the issue of 'confidentiality'.

### Acknowledgements

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