National Household Income Survey (NHIS)

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Why in news?

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MosPI) said that it will launch India's first nationwide household income survey in February 2026.

- **NHIS –** It will be the ***first-ever pan-India survey*** focused on measuring household income, expenditure patterns, and sources of income ***across rural and urban India***.
- **Conducted by –** National Statistics Office (NSO), under the MoSPI.
- **Will be Launched in –** February, 2026.
- **Aim –** To generate direct, comparable estimates of income levels, unlike the periodic consumption and employment surveys.

Key objectives & importance

- The NHIS marks a significant shift in how the country tracks household welfare and inequality.
- **Detailed income data –** It will collect information on various sources of household earnings, including wages, self-employment income, property income, pensions, stipends, gratuities, remittances, income from government schemes, etc.
- It will also gather details on household expenditure patterns, capturing both ***food and non-food items***.
- **Understanding inequality –** It will offer a clearer picture of income distribution across regions and social groups and crucial for analyzing household welfare and inequality.
- **Informing policy –** Data from the NHIS will inform ***evidence-based policymaking***, be used for rebasing the Consumer Price Index, and aid in the preparation of National Accounts.
- **Assessing technology's impact –** It will specifically investigate the effect of technology adoption on household wages and earnings.
- **Scope –** NHIS is designed to ***cover the entire country***, providing a

comprehensive picture of total household income.

Methodology and development

- **Best practices –** In preparing for the NHIS, MoSPI has incorporated international best practices from countries like the US, Canada, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, and Australia.
- **Expert guidance –** A Technical Expert Group (TEG) was constituted under the guidance of Dr. Surjit S. Bhalla to provide guidance on finalizing the survey's concepts, definitions, and methodology.
- **Pre-testing exercise –** A pre-testing of the draft questionnaire was carried out in August 2025 across 15 Regional Offices of the NSO to evaluate the clarity and acceptability of the questions.

Pre-testing of data collection *instruments is a standard practice in large-scale socio-economic surveys, helped NSO to refine the NHIS questionnaire and ensure that the final instrument is robust, reliable, and user-friendly.*

- **Public consultation –** Following the pre-testing, the refined draft was uploaded to the MoSPI website for wider consultation.

References

1. PIB | National Household Income Survey (NHIS), 2026
2. Economic Times | NHIS, 2026
3. Business Line | NHIS, 2026

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