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MAGAZINE NOTES

India's First National Household Income Sample Survey

15 January 2026

ECONOMY

POLITY

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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India's First National Household Income Sample Survey

🌱 Down to Earth Chapter 5 · 1 min read ·

🔗 WHY IN NEWS

India launched its first-ever survey to directly calculate household “profits,” asset values, and welfare benefits — a pivotal shift from expenditure-based poverty measurement.

Significance

- India previously relied on **expenditure surveys** (last official poverty estimate: 2012; poverty line update: 2014)
- Past pilot tests (1955, 1983) and **August 2025 pre-test** all failed

What It Measures

- Household incomes and expenditures; farmer input/output costs; tax payments and loan burdens
- Investment earnings; irregular and multiple income sources; welfare benefits; household assets

Challenges (2025 Pre-Test)

- **~95% respondent hesitation** on income disclosure
- Similar proportion refused tax information revelation
- **Expenditures overstated, incomes understated** — threatens deeply flawed macroeconomic data
- Respondent unawareness of small/irregular earnings (interest, dividends)

UPSC Angle

- **GS3:** Poverty measurement, data governance, statistics, macroeconomic planning



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