

Public Policy Evaluation



Sachin Chowdhry



What Is Policy Evaluation?

- The activity through which we develop an understanding of the merit, worth, and utility of a policy.
- It works as feedback to ensure that policy making is informed by evidence on what works to achieve key long-term objectives.



Purpose of the evaluation

- To decide whether to terminate or continue the programmes;
- To find ways to improve the programmes ; and
- To inform and educate society



Types of evaluation

- Evaluating Policy Content
- Evaluating Policy Implementation
- Evaluating Policy Impact



Criteria for Evaluation

- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Adequacy
- Appropriateness
- Equity
- Responsiveness



Policy evaluation in India

- Post-independence centralised planning as the dominant strategy of development.
- State support to establish new research institutions.
- National Council of Applied Economic Research established in 1956 and the Institute of Economic Growth in 1958.



Role of research institutions

- Many new institutions came up between 1956-65
- They supplemented the work of the government by filling gaps in analysis and providing alternative sources of data.
- The resultant policy failures were seen as failures of implementation.
- The questioning of policies began since 1980s
- New research Institutions emerged which had different perspectives.
- Focussed on policy consequences.
- Policy debates became more open and flourished as India began on a path of liberal economy.

Role of Programme Evaluation Organization



- PEO was established in October, 1952 under the general guidance and direction of the Planning Commission
- Undertake evaluation of government programmes / schemes.
- The evaluation studies designed to assess the performance, process of implementation, effectiveness of the delivery systems and impact of programmes.



Issues

- PEO had no systematic mechanism to ensure quality of the reports of the outsourced agencies.
- It had no proper mechanism to validate the findings.
- Quite often reports were not submitted as per time schedule.
- Due to preoccupation with their work, the agencies did not get sufficient time from the government officials to interact for information.
- Every ministry/department getting its schemes evaluated on its own is against the evaluation principle.



Efforts to strengthen evaluation

- During the 11th Plan, in 2006-07 a new Central Plan Scheme- Strengthening Evaluation Capacity in government was introduced.
- 11th Plan also proposed to network with evaluation capacity that existed outside the government.
- 12th Plan highlighted the need for strong web-based monitoring and evaluation system programmes/schemes.
- PEO often outsourced studies to private institutions.



Development Monitoring And Evaluation Office

- Constituted in September 2015 by merging the erstwhile Program Evaluation Office (PEO) and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO).
- An attached office under NITI Aayog,
- Aimed at fulfilling the organization's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mandate.
- DMEO has advisory powers.



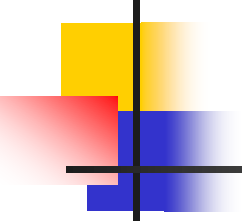
Potential Policy Evaluation Challenges

- Lack of resources or clear responsibility for evaluation
- Lack of strong evidence base to support policy
- Fear of evaluation and lack of familiarity with policy evaluation methods
- External and contextual factors
- Access to appropriate data
- Rapid pace of policy
- Political scrutiny and desire for quick production of results

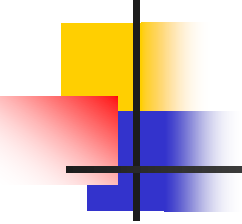


Policy failures

- Highly ambitious expectations
 - Underestimation of time, costs and risks, and overestimation of benefits
- Dispersed governance
 - State and downward interpretation of central rules and guidelines
- Inadequate collaborations
 - Requires continuous collaboration among local agencies
- Demands of political cycle
 - Long term policy changes may not be politically feasible

- 
-
- To what extent the evaluation findings help the policy process depends on the political leadership because
 - *'Ideology, not research, plays a greater role in policymaking'.*

Peter deLeon



Thank you