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LEARNING MATERIAL

Re- Visiting Participation
Third Course Development Professional from South Asia Countries

**'Monitoring and Evaluation' .Compiled by V. Satyamurthi ,
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LEARNING MATERIAL

Monitoring and Evaluation

Need for M&E

"Social Programmes" are programmes designed to improve the quality of life by improving the capacity of citizens to participate fully in social, economic and political activities at the local or national level programmes. They may focus on improving physical well being and access to services, protecting vulnerable groups from adverse consequences of economic reform and structural adjustment or providing education literacy, employment and income generating opportunities. They may focus directly on local empowerment and equip in issues by strengthening community organisations, encouraging to participate in development or alleviating poverty. Significant number of these programmes fail to fully achieve their objectives. Little is known how well programmes are able to sustain and even less about the extent to which programmes are able to produce their intended impacts.

In some cases the information arrives too late, does not answer the right questions or too costly to collect.

Conventional Monitoring and Evaluation

The impacts for ensuring that development programmes are efficient, effective, increasingly equitable comes from different constituencies - International donors, national governments, project implementing agencies, pressure groups like the media and advocacy lobbies and occasionally from the "beneficiary communities themselves".

The evolution of the field of Monitoring and Evaluation provides a valuable historical format. Monitoring and Evaluation mechanisms are said to have been set up in the UN system in the early 1950's. The rapid growth in international development assistance in the 1970 saw the shoring up of M&E systems, as the need for control and accountability increased. M&E efforts were focused on physical inputs and outputs and financial expenditure against capital items.

The failure of many development projects, the shrinking resource base and the emergence of the basic needs movement led to new understanding, that development is a complex trial and error process and crude indicators of economic growth like per capita income alone were inadequate.

With the new - found emphasis on distribution rather than growth, satisfaction of human needs rather than production, and development of human resources rather than technology, new management tools were put in place to supplement traditional economic project appraisal and evaluation techniques.

The Critique of Conventional Monitoring and Evaluation

The conventional Monitoring and Evaluation has come under severe attack from different quarters. The major criticism has come from scholars and practitioners who have recognised the experimental nature of development programmes and the need for traditional blue print approaches to be replaced by learning process approach.

The example of Monitoring growth in under fives describes the linear and restricted perception of conventional monitoring and evaluation. Concept (physical growth) variable (Body weight) -- measuring instrument -- (weighing scale) - units of measurement (kilograms). As Paul Streeton has commented "The danger of social science research that attempts to emulate the hard sciences is that it focuses on the measurable and neglects the rest. Some of the most important obstacles to the eradication of poverty and the promotion of greater equality in life is in areas in which measurement is still very difficult or perhaps impossible".

The conventional monitoring and evaluation system has gained a pre-eminent position on the strength of three important claims. The first is that of reliability and validity. The second claim of the conventional system pertains to objectivity. But the idea that there is a social world which exists independent of people's subjective awareness of it has been seriously questioned. This has given rise to alternative paradigm.

Monitoring

Monitoring is an internal activity of programme management. A continuous internal management activity whose purpose is to ensure that the programme achieves its defined objectives within prescribed time-frame and budget. Monitoring involves the provision of regular feedback on the progress of programme implementation, and the problems faced during implementation.

Process monitoring is a means for

- Reviewing and planning work on a regular basis.
- Assessing whether activities are carried out as planned (for example according to standard criteria of quality)
- Identifying and dealing with problems as they arise
- Building on strengths and taking advantage of opportunities as they arise.

- Building on strengths and taking advantage of opportunities as they arise.
- Assessing whether the style of work and management is the best way to achieve the development objectives of the work.

Impact monitoring means an assessment of all of the effects that an action may have had on the environment in the broadest sense of the term (Technical Economic, Social, Political, Biological).

Impact monitoring is the means by which

- The work can be related to its overall purpose on a continuous basis.
- The work can be modified in response to changing circumstances without losing its overall direction.
- The need to change objectives can be identified.
- The need for further information or research can be identified.
- The assumption that the activities will help to achieve the stated objectives can be verified.

Monitoring system is not only a system of collecting information but also a communication system in which information flows in different directions to make timely decisions."

The essential components of a monitoring system are

- Selection of indicators for each activity
- The collection of data concerning the indicators
- The analysis of data
- Presenting the information
- In an appropriate way using this information to improve the work.

Indicators

An indicator is a sign and which tells us how people think or feel. An indicator is variable whose purpose is to measure change in a phenomena or process.

A variable is a factor which can change in quality, quantity or size, which you have to take into account when looking at a situation as a whole, e.g. How long your shoes will last depends on a lot of variables, such as how much you weigh, how far you walk?

Processes indicators show whether the activities that were planned are actually being carried out and carried out effectively. They are needed to show the volume, efficiency and quality of work. They need to show what is being done and how it is being done some process indicators are routinely collected for the day to day running of the programme. For example clinic records will contain information about people seen, their main complaints, diagnoses by clinic staff and the prescribed treatment.

Impact indicators

Impact indicators are needed to assess what progress is being made towards reaching the objectives and what impact the programme has laid on the different groups of people affected by the programme. The impact can be positive or negative. The indicators should be able to demonstrate changes which reflects the impact of programmes in relation to its objectives.

- A quality belonging to a particular mathematical or logical set that can have a number of different values-

a technical term

eg. T becomes the dependent variable

Indicators for monitoring are used to measure the progress of all aspects of the transformation processes which an organisation wants to accomplish in society.

Some indicators may be useful for monitoring both the process and impact. For example, if the objective of a programme is to raise awareness about maternal and child health in the community and to improve anti-natal and post-natal care. One impact indicator might be a decrease in maternal and neo-natal mortality. A process indicator might be the number of health workers trained. An indicator for monitoring both process and impact

would be to see how much health workers remember from their training six months later and whether it has affected the way they work.

Proxy Indicator

Although a sample survey may yield valuable and useful information, it may be relatively expensive if frequent information is needed and therefore an indirect indicator may be formulated. This is called proxy indicator. Good proxy indicator should be at least.

- Sufficiently valid
- Measures with an acceptable degree of accuracy
- Sensitive enough to changes in the phenomena of interaction
- Cost effective

Evaluation

Evaluation is an internal or external management activity to assess the appropriateness of a programme's design and implementation methods in achieving both specified objectives and more general development objectives and to assess a programme's results both intended and un-intended and to assess the factors affecting the level and distribution of benefits produced.

Evaluation fulfills two functions. It fulfills an internal support function. It aims to analyse the past and to orient the future. Evaluation also fulfills a control function. This includes control of accounts and financial operations. It is important to make a proper distinction between these two functions (Both of which is necessary) as any confusion between the two always leads to emphasizing the control function and depriving one self of the function of internal support which of course is more important one.

An evaluation is to "appraise" an action, an accurate statement should be made as to what level is being appraised. Therefore criteria have to be determined. A criteria is a sign, a point of view making it possible to assess reality, to clarify it. The question which may be asked concerning a development action can be summarised under the following criteria, effectiveness, efficiency, viability/reproductibility. Intervention strategy, beneficiaries participation/satisfaction and impact.

1. Effectiveness

The effectiveness is obtained by comparing objectives with results, by assessing the deviations between what has been achieved and what had been planned to be achieved.

2. Efficiency

Measuring efficiency means comparing the results obtained with the means being implemented.

3. Viability

An analysis of viability involves assessing the potential for the autonomous continuance of any action. An action's chances of survival once outside support comes to a stop has to be appraised.

Reproductivity is an extension of the viability criteria. During an evaluation every attempt is made to determine whether an action may be reproduced in other circumstances or if the means required to implement it successfully are such that the action necessarily constitutes an isolated non-reproducible experience.

4. Intervention Strategy

It examines that in the face of problem, at stake, is the answer provided by the activity appropriate? Has the best approach been selected?

5. Beneficiaries Participation/Satisfaction

The criterion is necessary, when it comes to obtaining the opinions of partners directly involved in an action.

6. Impact

Impact analysis means an assessment of all of the effects that an action may have had on the environment in the broadest sense of the term. (Technical, economic, social, political and ecological).

These six categories of criteria together with their variants make it possible to assess all of the sides of an action. However all of the criteria do not necessarily have to be applied to

every case. Depending on who is seeking to have the evaluation carried out and depending on the time available, some will be gone into in greater depth than others.

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation is a way of learning from and with community members to investigate, analyse and evaluate constraints and opportunities and make informed and timely decisions regarding development programmes. It is based on the belief that people outside a situation need to learn about it from the people who are mostly closely involved and those people who are involved can analyse their own problems. Participation is the voluntary involvement of people in self-determined change.

It follows the principle that the exercise should be a learning rather than judgmental experiences of all concerned. The emphasis is on the people who are involved in the work.

The concept is backed up by participatory methods and participatory tools for information gathering.

1. Key elements of participatory monitoring and ongoing evaluation

1. It is directed and conducted by all actors in order to systematically record and analyse the information which they have determined to be important.
2. It is learning - not judgmental. It aims to provide an opportunity for people to investigate and analyse their own situation, work, aims and so understand what is happening and take decisions about the future.
3. Empowering - not extractive

By sharing the information which has been directed and collected by the stakeholders, it is empowering, whereas the traditional monitoring and evaluations are only extractive.

4. Forward looking - By using information to the extent possible, it helps in the future, it focuses more on the future than on fault finding.

5. It is process oriented - Development takes place in gradual and evolutionary fashion and it occurs in increasingly complex and uncertain environments. Traditional monitoring and evaluation systems fail to recognise these realities. Participatory development and institutional change for instance, do not fit easily within the current segmented project cycles. Capacity development is better suited to a process approach. This means starting from local conditions and capacities involving key actors and stakeholders.

6. It involves both ownership and commitment. Donors often incorrectly assume that where commitment has been expressed at the highest levels, ownership will automatically follow. This rarely happens because the aid sector does not explicitly link those who take the risks with those who receive the rewards - as is the case in the private sector. If ownership is indeed a higher order of involvement than commitment, it needs to be achieved rather than simply declared only participatory monitoring and evaluation helps in this.
7. Participatory monitoring and evaluation is explanatory, demonstrative, facilitating and advice, whereas the traditional monitoring and evaluation system is prescriptive, imposing, condition - setting and decision making.

In participatory monitoring and evaluation tools are needed to

- facilitate discussion between different groups
- gather and analyse information
- present conclusions and recommendations.

Facilitate discussion between groups

Several methodologies have been developed participatory assessment (PRA) is a set of principles and values with a collection of methods for carrying out participatory and qualitative research including focus group discussion, systematic observations and drawing maps and diagrams.

The logical framework analysis help structure group discussions about problems, constraints and priorities and so to develop and analyse objectives and programme plan in participatory way in a format that provides a useful basis for monitoring and evaluating the work. Other tool is strengths, weakness opportunities and constraints (SWOC) analysis.

The participatory monitoring and evaluation indicators broadly come under six groups.

1. Group Operation and Management

(A) Management Responsibilities

Style of management, sharing of responsibility (with in group) supervision of officers (by members) pool of leadership, specialised functions.

(B) Meetings and Participation

Frequency of meetings, decision making method, speed and effectiveness of decision making, members participate on women's participation. Productivity of meetings, attendance at meetings, records of meetings, progress reports, facilities for change.

(C) Operation Group

Constitutional and by laws, communication, quality of decision. inter-personal relations, discipline, assignment of tasks, problem-solving.

) Work of Group

Work plan, assistance of group promotion, group goals, group achievement, group work contributions.

2. Economic Performance

Income generation, economic diversification, expansion, emergency loans, assets, savings, group purchases.

3. Technical Operation and Management

Improved technologies, local technologies, technical information

) Financial Operation and Management

Financial affairs, Financial records, contribution of resources, Inventories

(5) Group Institutionalisation and self-reliance

(A) Potential Autonomy

Progress towards self-reliance, independence from group promotion, meetings. Without group promotion, legal status, resource mobilisation, broader benefits.

(B) Membership base

Group solidarity, knowledge, sharing, members, self-reliance, membership growth reasons for group formation, ensuring effective leadership.

(C) Knowledge base

Monitoring and evaluation, evaluation for self-management, experimental base.

(D) Broadening the base

Spreading the programme, linkages outside the programme, linkages within the programme, linkages with other local organisations, support of the programme at several levels, community support ability to resist processes, continuation of group.

6. Other Considerations

Access of assistance, reducing inequality, improvements in nutrition, literacy, health improvements, socially undesirable activities. Each indicator may be phrased as a question.

Progress Towards Self-reliance

How dependent is the group upon the group promotee (GP)

- Group can now or very soon operate essentially on its own with only minimal assistance from GP and programme.
- Group can within 6-12 months operate on its own with minimal assistance from GP and programme.
- Group can within 12-24 months operate on its own with minimal assistance from GP and programme.
- Group can not within foreseeable future operate on its own.

Karl - Deutch distinguished three kinds of evaluation which he called feedback loops. One "Course - Changing feedback" which the traditional monitoring and evaluation does - mainly assess: the extent to which the means employed accomplished the ends specified. Policy measures never lead precisely to anticipated outcomes. Inevitably, inadequately

understood factors, whether misallocated resources, or inappropriate institutions or attitudes of the implementing agents - cause unexpected results just as the compass tells mariners to steer the ship back on their present course. However, this first kind of feedback only tells to adjust their means of implementation.

For development, only the participatory evaluation provides the other two kinds of feedback. One concerns the appropriateness of the present goal because of inclement, whether, the Navigator may have to go to Visakapattanam than Mumbai. The other appropriateness of the institutions that define the goals (The ship needs a better more compass or accurate instruments).

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