

The role of National Governments in Impact Evaluations

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Impact evaluations



My question is: Are we making an impact?

Governments and evaluations

- ▶ *“Evaluation is an essential function of government. It can enhance oversight and accountability of federal programs, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services, assess which programs or policies are working and which are not, and provide critical information needed for making difficult decisions about them.”*
 - ▶ American Evaluation Association
- ▶ When governments **want to use evidence** from monitoring and evaluation to help make decisions - there is a definitive demand for M&E.



Role of evaluations

- ▶ Help programme and policy planning as well as monitor programme performance
- ▶ Address existing and emerging problems and provide timely feedback to decision-makers
- ▶ Reduce waste and enhance efficiency
- ▶ Increase accountability and transparency
- ▶ Identify innovative solutions and examine relevance and effectiveness of programmes over time.



Evaluations help policymaking

- ▶ **PROGRESA/Oportunidades:**
 - ▶ A CCT programme started by the Govt. of Mexico in 1997.
 - ▶ Hugely successful programme that has now been replicated in many countries across the globe.
 - ▶ Evaluation of the programme from the time of inception – which included government support to the evaluation design and data collection strategies allowed for extensive documentation of the success – and thereby to its global influence on poverty focused policies.
- ▶ **FLAWS Project:**
 - ▶ A government (AusAID funded) programme in 1992, to improve the provision, access, effective use and sustainability of water supply and sanitation facilities in Indonesia.
 - ▶ Evaluation was commissioned
 - ▶ Contributed to the new national water and sanitation sector policy.



The case of India

- ▶ There has been a significant political will from the government for evaluations
- ▶ The Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) was created in 1952 as an independent agency in the Planning Commission to evaluate programs funded by the Five-Year plans
- ▶ A new Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) to replace the PEO was created in 2013 (independent of the Planning Commission) but has now been closed.



Examples of evidence-based policymaking in India

- ▶ Evaluations showed that the midday meal scheme was successful in Andhra Pradesh. As a part of the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP) the scheme was expanded to cover pre-primary schooling, private unaided schools, particularly in the SC/ST and minority-concentrated areas.
- ▶ The findings of the evaluation on the functioning of community/primary health centres were extensively used in the midterm appraisal of the 9th FYP, formulation of the 10th FYP and formulation the National Health Policy (NHP 2002).



Evaluations under SWASTH in Bihar

- ▶ **Gram Varta:** This is a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of the Gram Varta (PLA approach) in creating a demand for health, nutrition and water and sanitation services.
- ▶ **Nodal Anganwadi Centre:** This is a quasi-experimental study that evaluates the impact of the pilot Nodal AWC as a strategy to improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery from AWCs and reduce under nutrition in children.



Evaluations under SWASTH in Bihar

- ▶ Bihar Child Support Programme: A pilot experiment that tests whether a conditional cash transfer (CCT) aimed at pregnant women and mothers of young children can help improve child nutrition outcomes. The evaluation uses a quasi-experimental design, comparing blocks receiving treatment with matched blocks not receiving treatment.
- ▶ Integrated Performance Management System: A randomised controlled trial to assess the impact of each of the four components of IPMS (AWW-Beneficiary interactions; AWW self reporting; LS & CDPO monitoring; Beneficiary engagement and monitoring) in achieving better nutrition and health outcomes; and maximising accountability within ICDS.



Salient points for governments

- ▶ Evaluations should be integral to planning, developing, managing, and implementing programmes
- ▶ Policy contexts can influence evaluation approaches and hence it is important to involve evaluation experts from the beginning
- ▶ Provision of stable, continuous funding
- ▶ Competent professionals with interdisciplinary expertise are necessary
- ▶ Evaluation plans for each government department are important which can look at include a portfolio of studies that are important for the progress of the department



Salient points for governments

- ▶ Results of all evaluations should be made available publicly and in a timely manner (accountability) with full transparency
- ▶ Promising and effective practices should be systematically and broadly disseminated
- ▶ Whilst government departments should have a role in setting up evaluation priorities, the evaluations should be done independently so that they are credible.
- ▶ Quality assuring and safeguarding independence of evaluations.
- ▶ Ownership , promotion and use of evaluations



Recommendations

- ▶ Governments could establish one or more permanent evaluation centres to promote evaluation capacity and provide stable frameworks for planning, conducting evaluations and using results.
- ▶ Joint planning/working between national and sub-national governments are important to increase benefits of any evaluation
- ▶ Government should not take evaluation as performance but a useful tool to improve the efficiency and efficacy of programs , its scaling up and above all value for money.

