1st Annual Progress Seminar Report

Participatory M&E Framework as Feedback Mechanism for Local Governance: Approach

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Abstract

This first Annual Progress Seminar report presents the understanding of monitoring and evaluation, in context of development and local governance. It is proposed that a feedback loop which provides information back to local implementing agencies/ local government and allows for citizen participation will be effective in solving implantation related problems on field and lead to effective development. Monitoring and evaluation are seen as crucial components in this process. Definitions of evaluation, monitoring, five evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability are documented and a historical purview of evaluation in India is done from independence till date. Work done in the first year, covering the various classroom and online courses undertaken and creation of a new course for CTARA M.Tech. program is briefly discussed in the introduction, while research objectives of historical description of evaluation systems in India, evaluation of evaluation culture and evaluation outputs in India, prescriptive framework for participatory monitoring and evaluation, and capacity development methods and the research questions and tasks flowing from these are covered in methodology chapter.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

"Measurement is the first step that leads to control and eventually to improvement. If you can't measure something, you can't understand it. If you can't understand it, you can't control it. If you can't control it, you can't improve it."

- H. James Harington (performance and quality improvement guru)

In this first Annual Progress Seminar Report of my PhD, the work done in the first year of PhD is being presented and a direction for the research is proposed. This report gives proposed research questions, methodology, and tangible goals. This can be thought of as a draft monitoring plan for the research on development monitoring and evaluation. The entire PhD work is in the development sector, assuming project-based delivery as the common strategy for development. In this introduction chapter, motivation for working on this topic and work done in the first year is documented.

1.1 Motivation

Based on the field experience during Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellowship and later working as project manager in Technology and Development Solutions Cell at CTARA, the importance of regular monitoring and course corrections required during implementation of any developmental activity to reflect the changes on ground was understood. While reading literature on planning, monitoring and evaluation, it was realised that a strong feedback mechanism on the ground, which directly updates the implementing agency and the immediate hierarchy above them is crucial. Today, most evaluation studies are planned and executed at the central or state government level. Even in development aid world, studies are demanded by the funding agency and tend to be multi-site. These also come towards the end of the implementation and the primary purpose is to see if things worked and whether to continue a program or not. The same is true with the monitoring data collected. Beyond many limitations in quality of this data, the information hidden in it, or in the evaluation reports, doesn't easily

reach back to field where meaningful action can be taken and this reduces the effectivity of development efforts.

Conversely, a regular local feedback mechanism which provides first-hand information from the field about best practices, success stories, problems, failures at the district level or at the level of the implementing agency may be successful in achieving improvements in delivery of projects. This belief is the primary motivation behind this thesis work. To understand the status of such local M&E machinery which feeds back to the implementing agencies, and to work towards increasing their capacity are the primary objectives of this research work.

1.2 Work Done in First Year

At the beginning of the PhD research, it was realised that the understanding of the monitoring and evaluation field is limited. The understanding of the sector was limited, from a historical and theoretical perspective as well as expertise on methods and tools of evaluation. To fill these gaps, on one hand, extensive reading and following journals/blogs in evaluation field was started to understand what is evaluation and on the other hand, few courses were completed to learn how to evaluate. This section lists the main activities done in past one year.

1.2.1 Coursework

As a part of the degree requirements and to develop an understanding of basics of research and evaluation, following credit courses in IIT Bombay were taken:

a) US 603 – Research methods in Urban Science
b) HS 633 – Econometrics of Program Evaluation
c) TD 694 – Seminar on "History and Status of Development Evaluation: Indian Context"

The first course taught planning a research from initiation to final reporting. The second course taught the non-experimental methods of program impact assessment, which are based on statistical matching and regression analysis. In the seminar, the basics of monitoring and evaluation and the development of this field internationally in the last century was explored.

Apart from these courses, following online courses were done to learn tools and procedures of evaluation:

d) MITx - JPAL101x – Evaluating Social Programs
e) WitsX - ToCx – Theory of Change for Development
f) WitsX - RBME101x – Results-Based Project Management – Monitoring and Evaluation
g) MITx - JPAL102x – Designing and Running Randomized Evaluations

This first course in the list was done while applying for the PhD, this course developed interest in the subject and gave a confidence that i can work in this sector. The two courses by 'Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results' at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg sharpened the crucial tools of evaluation research, viz, theory of change and defining indicators. The last course was also the first step towards securing Abdul Jameer Poverty Action Lab South Asia (JPAL SA) internship "*Research for Impact*" which would allow to work with JPAL for a couple of months on field for evaluation data collection. Such a field experience is important to understand how evaluation is executed. For this, another approach is being tried, which is to take up evaluation assignments.

1.2.2 Evaluation Projects

To implement the tools learnt and try out different methods of evaluation, it is important to work on real-life case studies. To get such case studies, evaluation projects need to be taken up, including some for government agencies. In Maharashtra, Directorate of Economics and Statistics under the Planning Department of Government of Maharashtra is the state nodal agency for evaluations. A Government Resolution dated 16 July 2016 empanels various institutes including IIT Bombay, for conducting evaluation studies, sample surveys and providing expert services in statistical & economic activities (Planning Department, GoM, 2016).

Since this GR came out, team at CTARA has undertaken 2 evaluation studies (Hilly Area Development Program and PradhanMantri GramSadak Yojana). While my contribution to these was in latter phases, primarily in data analysis and report preparation, a need was felt to take up a complete evaluation to apply concepts being learnt. In the past one year, we filed limited tenders for various evaluation projects and one, evaluation of Thakkar Bappa Adivasi Vasti Vikas Yojana is awarded to IIT Bombay and work is expected to start this year. My work

was to understand the given ToR, the scheme and proposing the evaluation design using the concepts learnt during literature review. This also helped in understanding what is expected in an evaluation study by DES.

Since getting government projects, through competitive bidding is difficult, for hands-on experience and capacity development, a couple of other evaluation projects for CSR wings and charitable trusts are also taken up. These allow defining evaluation questions and conducting qualitative evaluations in paucity of data. This experience will help in planning a monitoring system based on evaluation theory.

1.2.3 Creation of development evaluation course

Based on discussion with Prof. Satish Agnihotri during 'TD 694: Seminar' presentation, it was realised that capacity to plan and execute an evaluation is low, primarily due to lack of training. While exploring capacity development through training, analysis of existing courses was done and a basic course content for development practitioners was collated. It was felt that this course will be relevant for any development professional. This led to floating a course for CTARA M.Tech. students, as an extension of 'TD 608: Project and Programs: Management and Analysis' course. The course is being offered in the fourth semester from this year as 'TD 625: Development Monitoring and Evaluation'.

1.2.4 Books read

Apart from these, a few books were also read. To begin the journey towards PhD, a quick read of 'Philosophy of Science – A very short introduction' (Okasha, 2002) was done. To understand the bureaucracy, arbitrariness of care, structural violence and the plural, muti-level and multi-agenda structure of the state, 'Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India' (Gupta, 2012) was read. To understand the efforts towards decentralisation in India, with respect to planning, 'Development Planning at the Grassroots' (Sundaram, 2012) was read. To understand the how development projects should be approached, Deniss Rondinelli's 'Development Projects as Policy Experiments: An Adaptive Approach to Development Administration' (Rondinelli, 1993) was also read. For improving understanding of

research methodology, relevant sections of a prescribed textbook, 'Social Research Methods' (Bryman, 2012) was read.

1.3 Organisation of the Report

Having covered motivation for this research and work done in the past year in the introduction chapter, the report continues with literature review covering basics of evaluation, the status of evaluation in India and basic understanding of evaluation capacity and courses. Based on the gaps coming out of literature, research questions are proposed with a plan for the next year in Chapter 3. Proposed work for the next year and concluding remarks are given in Chapter 4.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

This literature review chapter discusses development paradigms, basics of evaluation, and criteria of evaluation initially. Then it continues with historical and current scenario of evaluations in India with an introduction to evaluation capacities. One way to develop evaluation capacity is through teaching evaluation and this is covered in the last section of the chapter.

2.1 Understanding Development

Development is a complex subject and can be approached in the capabilities approach proposed by Amartya Sen. A useful definition is given by Owen Barder, Vice President at Center for Global Development, in his Kapuscinski Development Lecture in May 2012:

"Development as emergence of a system of economic, financial, legal, social, and political institutions, firms, products, and technologies, which together provide the citizens with choices, capabilities and freedoms to live happy, healthy lives with access to knowledge, a decent standard of living and allow them to participate in the life of their community."

(Barder, 2012)

There are multiple ways to bring about development, historically though, alleviation of poverty has been the main approach. Classically, poverty was understood to be influenced by the individual and a culture that fosters poverty through attitude and beliefs of the individual and the community. The neo-classical paradigm focuses on socio-economic structural issues, policies and factors beyond the individual's control. (Das, 2018) The conventional economic models of development evolved gradually to focus upon each of labour, capital infusion, technical change, policy changes and institutional changes over the century to explain development deficits between similar groups (Barder, 2012), and development programs have evolved parallelly over the years, to provide the missing link as per the incumbent paradigm. Before 1970,

the focus was on infrastructural development, increasing industries and improving economic policies to address poverty, with very little attention to the human aspects (Das, 2018).

Today, development sector uses multiple strategies to address multidimensional poverty, the common six being projects, praxis, individuals as agents of change, social marketing and campaigns, service delivery and social movements (Das, 2018). While many agencies, especially governments, use multi-pronged approach combining more than one strategy, the most common over-arching strategy used is projects. As projects became larger and complex, concepts and tools from engineering projects were adapted making it task oriented. This shift is a merger of the pre-1970 development approaches and the later human development approaches.

Robert Chambers, from Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, proposes that a deeper and pervasive shift took place in development thinking from a mostly professional paradigm centred on things to one centred on people (Chambers, 2010). He notes that a binomial combination of the two approaches, and a deeper understanding of multidimensional poverty are necessary in the development discourse. While he is sceptical of the current move towards use of log-frames and related 'things' paradigm tools being used in the 'people' paradigm, he stresses on the emergence of a complex paradigm mixing the two binaries with contextual understanding of the realities of the poor and role of technology. He notes that

"*in the 1980s, agriculture was a fertile field for innovation. In the 1990s poverty and the community level were conspicuous. And in the 2000s, applications in governance became more prominent. The latter 2000s were marked by the explosion of innovation through Web 2.0*."

(Chambers, 2010).

It is interesting to note that in the 2000s, when governance was a focus, procedures were imposed on processes and people. Linear logic, assumptions of predictability, objectively verifiable indicators, impact assessments, log-frames and results-based management became mainstream, which are incapable of capturing the intangible personal and inter-personal unmeasurables (commitment, honesty, trust, energy, etc.) (Chambers, 2010), leading to a move away from the people paradigm. If these approaches can be demystified and handed over to the community whose development is to be ushered in, better outcomes can be expected, or this is the naïve trust that i hold to. This trust gives rise to my research topic of participatory monitoring and evaluation framework for local governance led development.

2.1.1 Local governance

While local government refers to the specific institutions created by constitutions, legislations or executive orders, to deliver specified services in a small geographical area, local governance is a broader concept defined as formulation and execution of collective action at the local level, including direct-indirect roles of formal institutions of local government and its hierarchies, and also the informal norms, networks, civil-society organisations, and neighbourhood associations for collective action by defining the framework for citizen-citizen and citizen-state interactions, collective decision making, and delivery of local public services (Shah & Shah, 2006). The paradigm of citizen-centred local governance flows from the decentralisation theorem advanced by renowned public economist Wallace Oates in his first book 'Fiscal Federalism'. He writes it as follows:

"each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographic area that would internalize benefits and costs of such provision,"

This is justified as follows (Shah & Shah, 2006):

- local governments understand concerns of the residents
- local decision making is responsive to the people for whom the services are intended, thus encouraging fiscal responsibility and efficiency, especially if financing is decentralised
- unnecessary layers of jurisdiction are eliminated
- interjurisdictional competition and innovation are enhanced.

A good decentralised system has a level and combination of public services aligned to voters' preferences with incentives for efficient provision of the same. Some central control and support may be necessary to provide services, considering the spatial externalities, economies of scale, and administrative and compliance costs (Shah & Shah, 2006). Anwar Shah and Sana Shas discuss various other perspectives of local governance in their book chapter in 'Local Governance in Developing Countries' by The World Bank Group, which are not covered here.

The popularity of decentralised local governance makes people assume that it automatically leads to development, but decentralisation is not a panacea for all government ills and development problems (Sutiyo & Maharjan, 2017). The following figure captures the other ingredients are necessary to go from decentralisation towards goal of rural development.

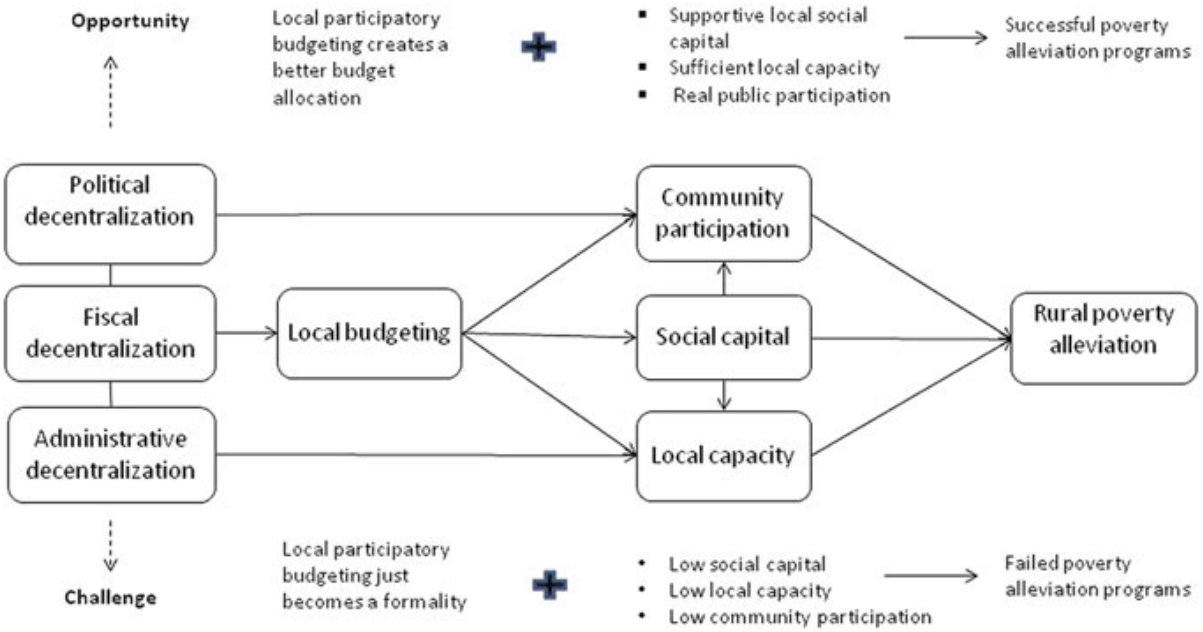

Figure 2.1:Conceptual framework between decentralization and rural development
Source: (Sutiyo & Maharjan, 2017)

2.1.2 Evaluation and good governance

As seen in above figure, local capacity of society and local institutions is important along with community participation. But accountability and transparency of local government is important to strengthen these local governance mechanisms. Good governance is a complex concept including multiple dimensions such as rule of law, government efficiency, democracy, transparency, accountability, absence of corruption, absence of clientelism, citizen well-being and social equality (Dahler-Larsen & Boodhoo, 2019). Thus, good governance is important for effective development. Good governance can be achieved, amongst other measures, through institutionalisation of evaluations (Dahler-Larsen & Boodhoo, 2019). Evaluation culture, which relates to evaluative mindsets, position of evaluation in local beliefs and traditions, and more quantifiably, the degree of institutionalisation of evaluations, links to improved governance (Dahler-Larsen & Boodhoo, 2019). Thus, it is important to explore evaluation culture in India to understand whether it contributes to good governance and what improvements are needed to leverage evaluations for making local governance lead to social development.

This section explored basics of development, decentralised or local governance and established a primary link to evaluations, which needs further elaboration. The next section gives the basics of evaluations.

2.2 Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are integral part of project cycle as depicted below:

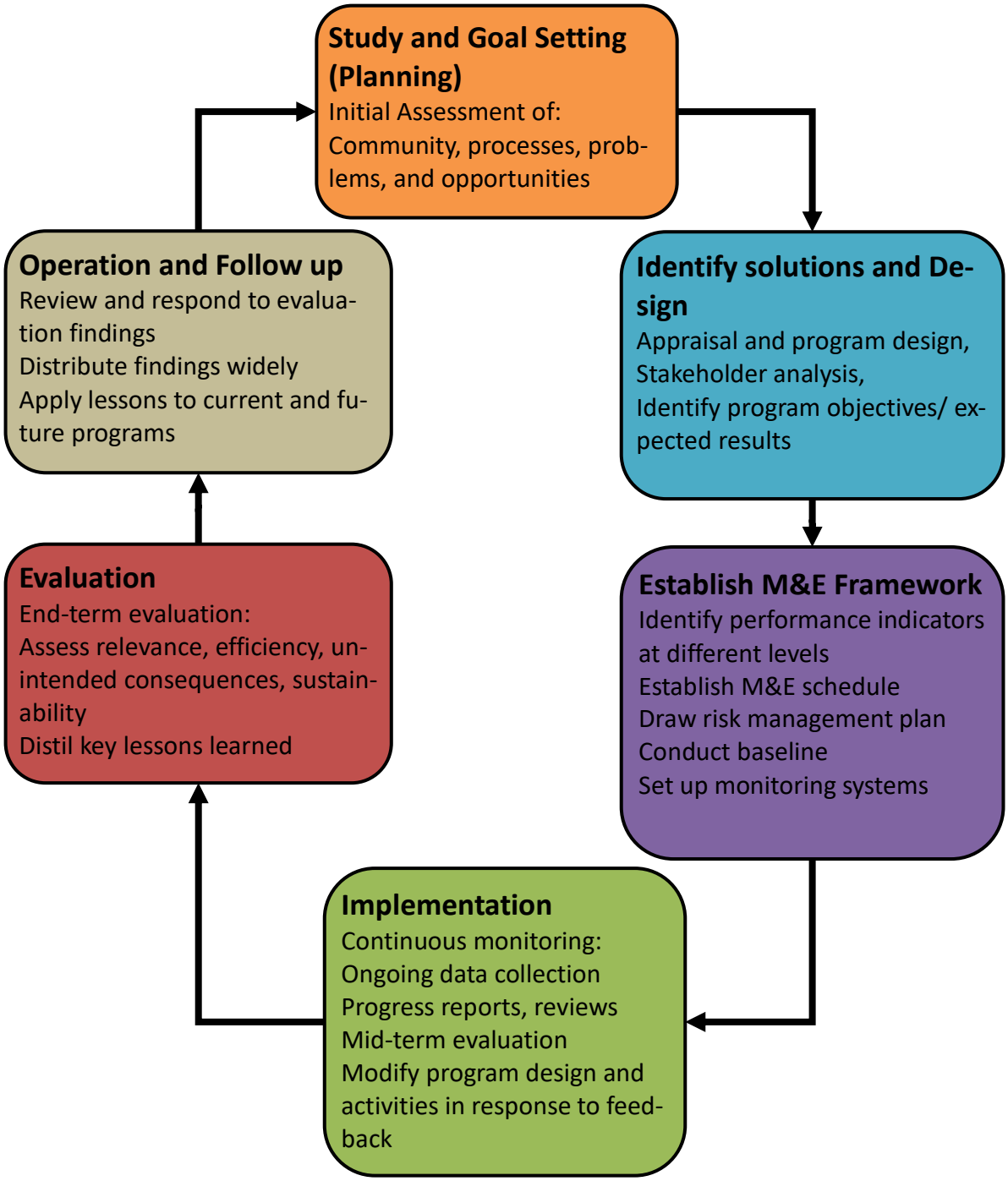

Figure 2.2: Monitoring and Evaluation in a Program Cycle

Adapted from Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls, Security - M&E plans (UN Women, 2012)

2.2.1 Defining evaluation

United Nations Evaluation Group, which influences how many countries think of evaluation, defines evaluation in its Norms and Standards of Evaluation handbook as

"An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors, and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations, and lessons into the decision-making processes of organizations and stakeholders."

(UNEG, 2016)

This defines what is evaluation, what is evaluated, its criteria and its use. Other definitions are variations of this, generally limiting to one aspect or the other, hence not discussed.

Logic of Evaluation

Since evaluation is about determining values, data obtained has to be connected to value judgements through certain *logical sequence of concepts*. These can be written as four steps (Shadish, 1998):

1. selecting criteria of merit, on which evaluand (thing being evaluated) will be judged,
2. setting performance standards of these criteria, comparative or absolute
3. gathering data of evaluand's performance on the criteria relative to the standards,
4. integrating the results into a final value judgment.

Classifying Evaluations

The Figure 2.3 shows multiple ways in which evaluations can be classified, according to the field, purpose or timing. Many of these are overlapping types.

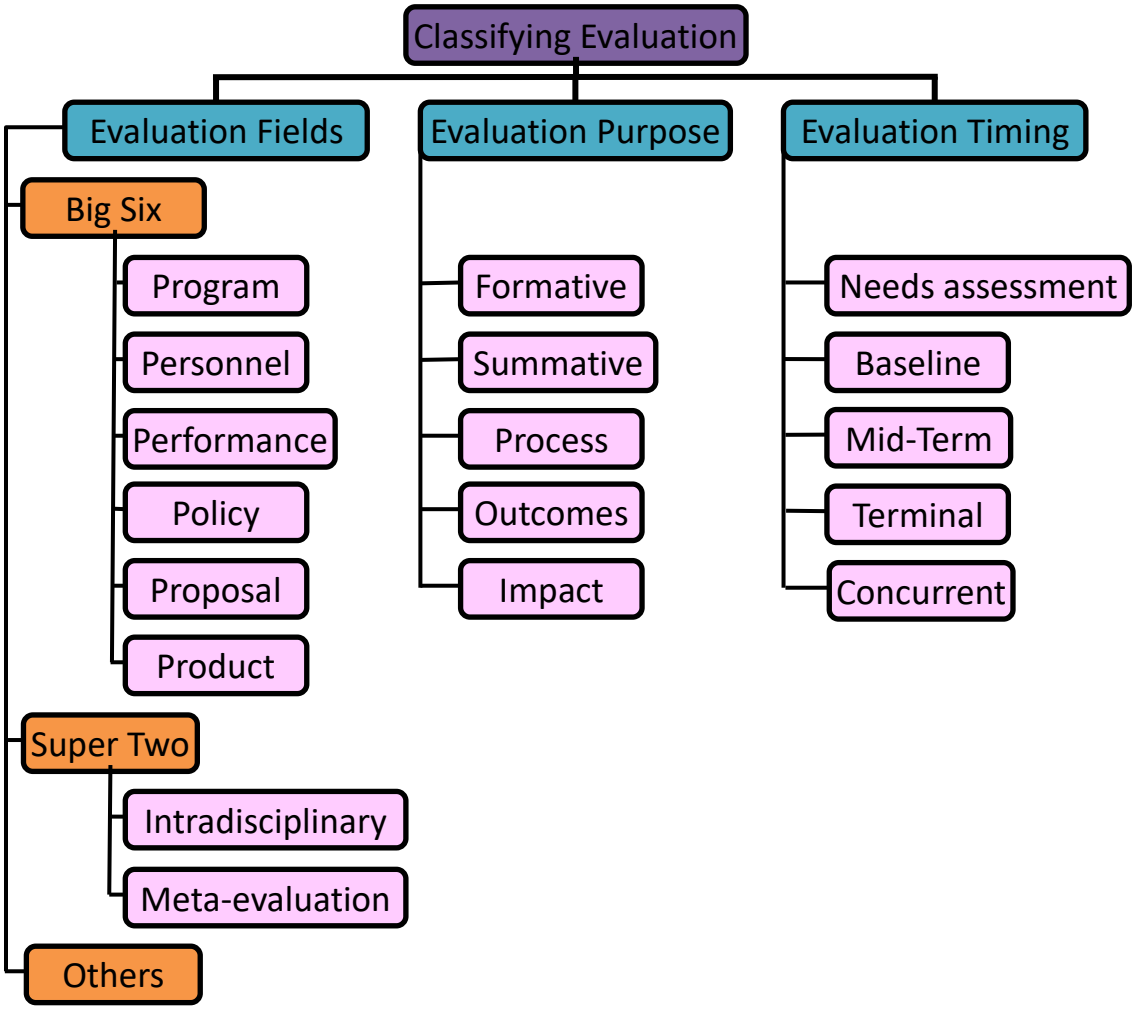

Figure 2.3: Various ways of classifying evaluations

In all these types of evaluation, program evaluation is of prime importance for development sector and impact evaluation occupies a central place in the discourse. The evaluation field has developed around impact evaluations, as everyone is interested in knowing what works, what doesn't and why. A gold standard of impact evaluations is the randomised controlled trials (RCTs), which set up a social experiment, with comparable treatment and control groups, to measure the impact of a given development project. Apart from this, the development evaluation discourse, in the last three decades, has centred around the DAC evaluation criteria.

2.2.2 Evaluation criteria

In 1991, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) established evaluation standards for development aid for past three decades, this has been the most influential work in the field. These were published

as a part of the development assistance manual in 1992 (Chianca, 2008). These criteria, as documented on OECD/DAC website (OECD-DAC, 2018) are:

Relevance

"The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor." In evaluating relevance, following questions are considered:

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?
- Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Effectiveness

"A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives." In evaluating effectiveness, following questions are considered:

- To what extent were the objectives achieved/ are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement/ non-achievement of objectives?

Efficiency

"Efficiency measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted." In evaluating efficiency, following questions are considered:

- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the programme or project implemented in most efficient way compared to alternatives?

Impact

"The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions." In evaluating impact, following questions are considered:

- What has happened as a result of the programme or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

Sustainability

"Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable." In evaluating sustainability, following questions are considered:

- To what extent did the benefits of a programme or project continue after funding ceased?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?

These criteria and their relationship to the Theory of change or Log-frame are shown in Figure 2.4.

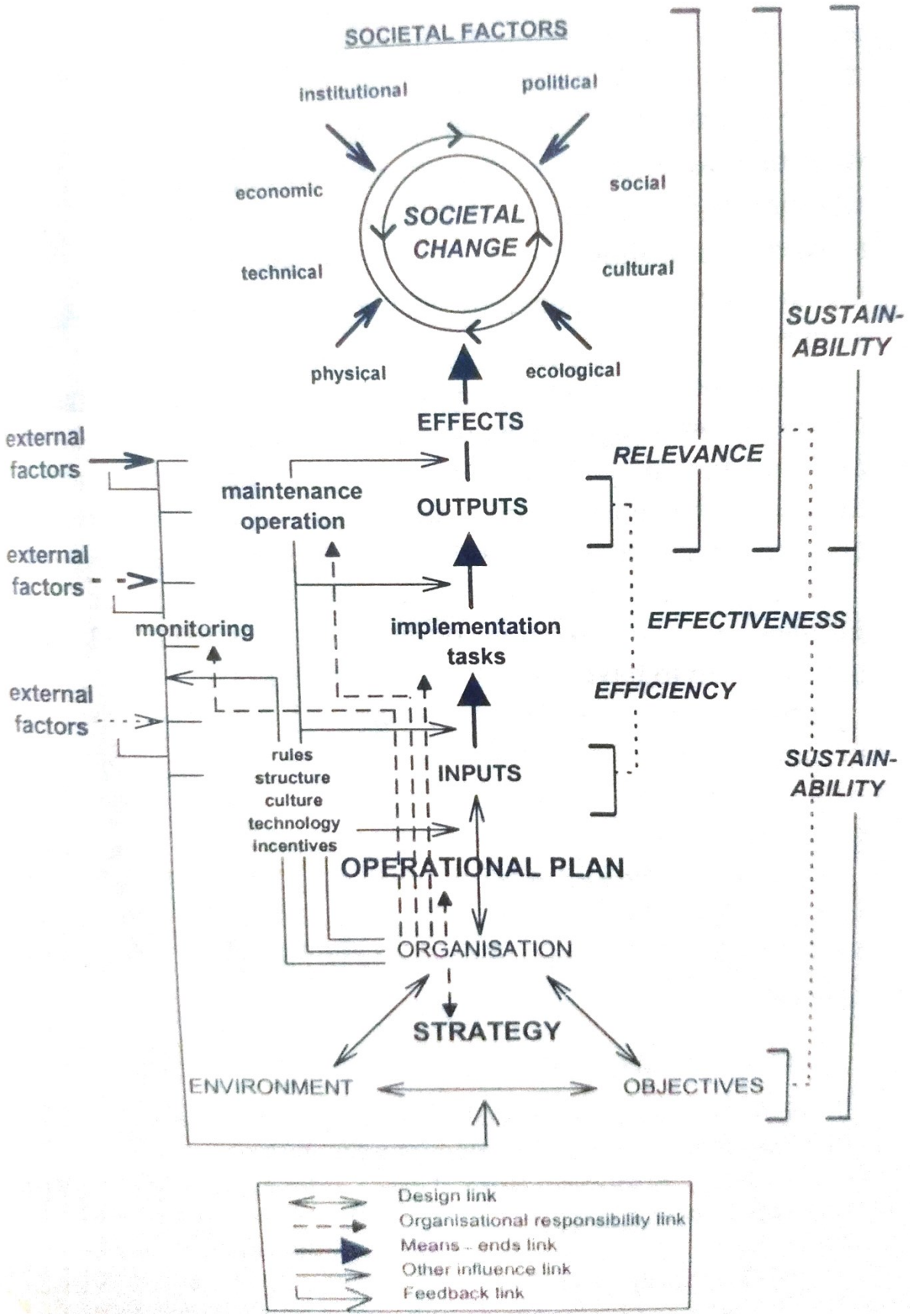

Figure 2.4: Evaluation criteria and theory of change

Source: (Dale, 1998)

2.2.3 Monitoring versus evaluation

Monitoring is defined as the "regular collection and analysis and distribution of information for the surveillance of progress of the project's implementation". Project monitoring is the collection of data prior to, and during, the project. These data, when analysed, pinpoint progress or constraints as early as possible, allowing project managers to adjust project activities as needed. Monitoring is a continuing process throughout project implementation and often extends beyond project completion (UNEP, 2008).

Since monitoring collects data/ information about the indicators which are also used for evaluation, and provides feedback during the activity, many times monitoring and evaluation are addressed together in literature on program management. The following table gives primary differences between the two.

Table 2.1: Comparing Monitoring and Evaluation

Characteristics	**Monitoring**	**Evaluation**
Subject	Address operational management issues	Focused on strategic aspects
Character	Continuous, regular, systematic	Incidental, flexible subject & methods
Primary client	Program management/ implementors	For implementers, also for donors and beneficiaries, broad interested public and research community, should the results be made public
Approach	Utility	Objectivity, transparency
Aim	Improve efficiency and effectiveness; ensure the transformation of activities into results/ outputs	Explore intended and unintended results; formulate recommendations for adjustments
Methodology	Rapid appraisal methods	Rigorous research methodologies, sophisticated tools
Focus	Check how planned activities are progressing, identifying operational	Assess achievement of results, relevance, effectiveness, and impact and

	difficulties; recommend actions for improved implementation efficiency and effectiveness	sustainability of activities and their contribution to results.
Objectives	To identify and resolve implementation problems, to assess progress towards objectives	To verify developmental hypothesis, to document successes and lessons learned
Time	Continuous process during the implementation of a project, programme, plan, or strategy	Either during the project, programme, plan, or strategy (mid-term evaluation) or upon completion (ex-post evaluation)
Content	Progress attained measured against the set indicators	Fulfilment (degree of and quality) of the indicators

Adapted from (Jaszczołt, Potkański, & Alwasiak, 2003) and (Hagen & Willems, 2010)

Monitoring and evaluation are both crucial in program cycle and complement each other.

2.3 Evaluation Status in India

System of evaluation was conceived in India simultaneously with planned economy. With the launch of first five-year plan in 1951, a need for systemic evaluation was felt, and the first plan deemed that systematic evaluation should become a normal administrative practice in all spheres of public activity and for this the Planning Commission (PC) began developing the evaluation techniques by establishing Program Evaluation Organisation (PEO) for independent evaluations of community projects and other intensive area development programmes (Chandrasekar, 2015). From there, India has come a long way over the past 67 years.

Dr S. Chandrasekar served as the Director of Regional Evaluation Office, at Chennai and then as Adviser at Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi. He wrote an article about history of Development Evaluation in India, published as a web special by Yojana in November 2015, around the time when a lot of changes were happening in the Indian evaluation scenario. Most of this section is based on his article and a report by World Bank on M&E system in India (Chandrasekar, 2015) and (Mehrotra, 2013).

2.3.1 Historical changes

The history of institutionalised development program evaluation can be divided into following phases, based on how the Government of India treated its evaluation organisations:

1. Planned economy phase 1952- 1973
2. Neglect phase 1973-1995
3. Resurgence phase 1995-2013
4. New institutions and paradigm phase 2013-current

Planned economy phase 1952-1973

The PEO was established in October 1952 as an independent organisation under the Planning Commission to evaluate development programs implemented in the first five-year plan and bring out their successes and failures through reports. Over the first four five-year plans, PEO activities expanded considerably and most states established their evaluation units in the sixties, for state level programs for cross-verification and learning in tandem with PEO. The scope of PEO extended to include plan schemes/ programmes in sectors of health, agriculture and cooperation, rural industries, fisheries, family welfare, rural development, rural electrification, public distribution system, tribal development, social forestry etc. Later, PEO also evaluated Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) (Chandrasekar, 2015).

PEO, a field-based organisation, had three-tiered structure – Headquarters in New Delhi at higher level, 3 Regional Evaluation Offices at middle level and 20 Project Evaluation Offices at lowest level. Beyond these were the state offices, taking the total offices to 40 and staff strength to over 500. PEO had relative autonomy as all its offices and the state evaluation offices reported to the Director, PEO. The evaluation reports were a major part of annual conference of State Development Commissioners, enabling follow up actions (Mehrotra, 2013).

Neglect phase 1973-1995

With the reduction in scope of planning commission activities in early seventies on the recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission, PEO started its phase of decline and neglect. While the extent of its work was expanded to include urban areas too, its scope of evaluations was reduced to operational, financial, and administrative aspects of schemes and programs, rather than the overall design of programs and their impacts. It was recommended

that only those studies should be taken up which could be made available quickly for use by line divisions. This was accompanied by appointment of Indian Economic Service Officers, who are generalists compared to earlier subject specialist academicians, as the head of PEO.

Internal PEO functions were merged with Planning Commission in April 1973, reducing it to a division within a department (Chandrasekar, 2015). Around the same time, based on recommendations of Staff Inspection Unit of Ministry of Finance, field offices were reduced from 40 to 27 by the end of the seventies (Mehrotra, 2013).

PEO featured briefly in latter plans and received insufficient financial layouts, limiting its ability to bring out good reports on time. Its reports were delayed, didn't cover program impact & design anymore, and were given less important by the concerned ministry thus, the reducing their use. This in turn reduced the number of studies being done (Chandrasekar, 2015).

Resurgence phase (1995-2013)

The resurgence in demand for evaluation can be traced to the late nineties, when the Planning Commission got involved in design and implementation of social safety net programs to counter the adverse effects of economic reforms initiated earlier. Unfortunately, the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act 2003 ensured that the PEO and its field offices were highly understaffed. This began the practise of outsourcing the studies to social science research institutes. The PEO involved the ministries and subject matter expert groups in ensuring some actions were taken based on its reports from the ninth plan onwards (1997-2002)

The eleventh five-year plan 2007-2012, stressed on building online MIS for all flagship programs. Development monitoring unit was setup in Prime Minister's Office in 2009, and a Performance Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES) was created at the cabinet secretariat. The functions of monitoring and evaluation were being mixed together. A scheme named Strengthening Evaluation Capacity was launched in 2006-07, to reduce the financial problems at PEO but it did little to address the administrative and staff problems (Chandrasekar, 2015).

During this phase of resurgence in demand for evaluation activities, mixing up of monitoring and evaluation, ignoring plight of PEO, underutilisation of studies, and outsourcing to private institutions without clear policy, were a few grave mistakes made. As a result, in 2012, there were 6 regional and 8 project offices left (PEO, 2012).

New institutions and paradigms phase (2013-current)

A new Independent Evaluation Office was established in the 12th plan with a mandate to "conduct evaluation of plan programmes, especially the large flagship programmes to assess their effectiveness, relevance and impact. It also has the freedom to conduct independent evaluations on any programme which has access to public funding or implicit or explicit guarantee from the government." Instead of using regular organised services available to government, it proposes to get evaluation done by selected institutes and researchers identified through tender processes (Chandrasekar, 2015). Not much is known about how IEO was expected to function and how it was different from the PEO.

With change in regime and dissolution of Planning Commission in 2014, PEO and IEO were merged into Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) in September 2015. In 2017, field offices were shut down and staff was attached to DMEO at New Delhi (Indian Express, 2017). Less details are available on official websites about this office compared to PEO (and IEO). The PMES started earlier is now replaced by Pragati dashboard for direct follow-up by PMO for better implementation but this misses any opportunity for evaluations based on the Results Framework documents prepared by the ministries (The Economic Times, 2015).

Concurrent evaluations

In the resurgence phase, concurrent evaluations were regularly done by ministries themselves for their programs. For example, National Food Security Mission under Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture carried out its own concurrent evaluations in 2010 (NFSM Cell, 2010) and Ministry of Rural Development had a Concurrent Evaluation Office (CEO), set up for managing Concurrent Evaluation Network (CENET) of Ministry of Rural Development, in conjunction with IEO. The CEO was closed in July 2016 (PIB, 2016).

Concurrent evaluation is either a formative or process evaluation, which evaluates all the activities carried out to achieve program objectives, annually. Concurrent evaluations have been done in the past too, an example is the concurrent evaluation of Integrated Rural Development Program carried out by Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture in 36 districts of the country since October 1985 for at least a year. As ordinary evaluations in that era were usually ex post facto, they did not provide remedial measures and mid-term collections, a need for concurrent evaluation was felt. (Saxena, 1987)

The term concurrent evaluation isn't common outside India, where the term self-evaluations is used for internal, regular evaluations (UNEP, 2008).

2.3.2 Current Scenario

Past decade has been very eventful for the evaluation systems in India. IEO was set up and closed, PEO was closed, Results Framework Diagram based PMES was started and closed and DMEO has been started recently. This section captures the current scenario at the central and state level in India.

DMEO at NITI Aayog, New Delhi

While Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) has been established in 2015 and NITI Aayog has a very functional and updated website, very little information is available about it, in the Digital India age. The little information available is from a few newspaper articles and telephone book of NITI Aayog.

While the 2016 contacts document mentions 7 regional DME offices and 8 Project DME offices, the 2018 document mentions no regional or project offices (NITI Aayog, 2018). This change is also hinted at in news in 2017 which mentions that the 15 offices are being shut down and staff called to headquarters in Delhi (Indian Express, 2017).

In the current set up, DMEO has a Director General at helm, a Joint Secretory, two Deputy DGs, an under Secretory and staff attached to their offices. On the Technical/ specialist end, there are a few senior Research Officers, Sr. Statistical Officers, a Senior Consultant and many Economics Officers, Consultants, Research Associates and Young Professionals, a total of about 25-26 people. There is some administrative staff as well (NITI Aayog, 2018).

In 2016, DMEO called for Expression of Interest by Research Institutions, NGOs, and universities for carrying out evaluation studies. While this call for EoI is available online, the final list is not found on the NITI Aayog website. As per mandate of DMEO, it is expected to get evaluation studies done as requested by various ministries for their programs. This is similar to what PEO and IEO were doing towards the end.

Centre for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation at NIRD

The school for Public Policy and Good Governance at the National Institute for Rural Development has the Centre or Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation that focuses on use of tools and techniques of micro planning, monitoring and evaluation including developing of indicators, LFA for project formulation and management, M&E design, PRA and its tool, impact evaluation, and stakeholders' analysis.

2.3.3 Evaluation in Indian states

Evaluation was an integral component of every state's planning and implementation process while PEO was blooming. States have taken varied path in past few decades from there.

While Evaluation is reported just as an activity under the Directorate of Economics and Statistics in Planning Department in most states, Karnataka has an Evaluation authority, in Goa and Sikkim, Evaluation is in the name of the directorate. When we look at the official websites, we see that evaluation occupies important position in many states. Table 2.2 gives a brief overview of each state.

It is seen that across the states, evaluation is a function generally under the Planning Department, which has the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, responsible for all statistical data collection, analysis, and in most states, for monitoring and evaluation functions. Most of these functions started during the third plan period (1961-66) (PEO, 2006).

Outsourcing of evaluation studies to competent agencies has been going on for a couple of decades and the websites, developed in last 10 years mostly, show records of processes carried out by various states since 2012-13, under the 12th Five-year plan. Unlike Maharashtra though, very few states refer to the UN guidelines in their empanelment Process.

Records of how the feedback generated by these studies is used is poor. Program Evaluation Organisation had brought out one study in 2004 and another in 2006 titled Development Evaluation in PEO and Its Impact (Vol I and Vol II) which summarise the follow up actions taken based on the evaluation studies done in the preceding years (PEO, 2006). Beyond this, not much is documented.

Table 2.2: Evaluation setup in State governments

Sr	State	Name of Agency	Website	Remark
1	Andhra Pradesh	not found		
2	Arunachal Pradesh	Planning Department	http://www.arunachalplan.gov.in/html/docs/1_intro_planning.htm	evaluation fleeting mention
3	Assam	Evaluation function Transformation and Development Department	https://transdev.assam.gov.in/information-services/evaluation-and-monitoring	no studies after 2009, only monitoring of ongoing projects
4	Bihar	Directorate of Evaluation Bihar, Planning and Development Dept.	http://planning.bih.nic.in/	No details on the website
5	Chhattisgarh	nil		
6	Goa	Evaluation Division of Directorate of Planning, Statistics and Evaluation	http://www.goadpse.gov.in/	No details on the website
7	Gujarat	Directorate of Evaluation, General Administration Dept. (Planning)	https://gujecostat.gujarat.gov.in/director-of-evaluation1	Evaluation committees, guidelines
8	Haryana	Evaluation function Planning wing, Dept. of Economics and Statistical Analysis	http://esaharyana.gov.in/en-us/Plan-Evaluation	No details on the website
9	Himachal Pradesh	Planning Department	http://hpplanning.nic.in/Reports.htm	few evaluation reports
10	Jammu & Kashmir	Evaluation Division, Directorate of Economics & Statistics	http://ecostatjk.nic.in/divisions/divisions.htm	No details on the website
11	Jharkhand	nil		
12	Karnataka	Karnataka Evaluation Authority	http://kea.karnataka.gov.in/	State evaluation policy, empanelled institutes, studies
13	Kerala	Department of Economics and Statistics	http://www.ecostat.kerala.gov.in/	No details on the website
14	Madhya Pradesh	nil		
15	Maharashtra	Evaluation Division, Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Planning Dept.	https://mahades.maharashtra.gov.in	Empanelment of institutes for evaluation studies
16	Manipur	not found		

17	Meghalaya	Program Implementation & Evaluation Dept.	http://megpied.gov.in/	Reports since '70s, tender for EOI
18	Mizoram	Research & Analysis Division, Planning & Programme Implementation Dept.	https://planning.mizoram.gov.in/page/research-analysis	No details on the website
19	Nagaland	Directorate of Evaluation, Planning and Coordination department	http://evaluation.nagaland.gov.in/	reports from 1973 to 2013
20	Odisha	State Evaluation Unit, Planning Branch, Department of Planning and Convergence	http://pc.odisha.gov.in/DepartmentActivities.asp?lnk=2&Pl=2	Kalahandi, Balangir, Koraput evaluation reports
21	Punjab	Directorate General Monitoring & Evaluation, Planning & Development Dept.	http://dgmepunjab.gov.pk/	Guidelines, reports, meta-assessment, third party validation
22	Rajasthan	Directorate of Evaluation Organisation Rajasthan	http://www.plan.rajasthan.gov.in/evaluation/	over 500 evaluation studies
23	Sikkim	Department of Economics, Statistics, Monitoring & Evaluation	http://www.desme.in/	No details on the website
24	Tamil Nadu	Directorate of Evaluation & Applied Research TN	http://www.tn.gov.in/dear/	No details on the website
25	Telangana	Evaluation Authority of State of Telangana (EAST)	www.telangana.gov.in/departments/planning	Evaluation of state focus programs
26	Tripura	not found		
27	Uttarakhand	not found		
28	Uttar Pradesh	Planning Department	http://planning.up.nic.in/	No details on the website
29	West Bengal	Evaluation, Monitoring & Manpower Branch, Dept. of Planning	http://wbplan.gov.in/	No details on the website

Note: Union territories are not included. Delhi Government is planning to create some setup for evaluation, as details are not available beyond a news article, it is also not included. The states with 'not found' in Name of Agency column may have some evaluation office, but its details are not available online. Following up on status, activities, capacities, etc. of each of these agencies is a potential research topic.

2.4 Evaluation Courses

To develop evaluation capacity in a country, it is important to have various agencies and academic institutes developing and offering courses on evaluation, covering the basic concepts and advances in the field.

A training program in Monitoring and Evaluation is conducted by National Institute of Labour Economics Research and Development (NILERD, formerly known as Institute of Applied Manpower Research), an Autonomous Institute under NITI Aayog, Government of India (NILERD, 2018). The other evaluation related courses in the country are short certificate courses of 2-3 days long, conducted by some private agencies, though irregularly.

At the international level, CLEAR (Centers for learning on Evaluation and Results), supported by various multilateral aid agencies and development banks, carries out regular evaluation capacity building courses across its 6 centres (CLEAR, 2018). Internationally, some universities offer structured programmes in M&E, including masters and doctoral programs, but in leading Indian institutes, including the IIMs and IITs, no programs or courses focusing on monitoring and evaluation are offered. The few courses offered in evaluation focus on the econometric methods for impact evaluation (HSS, IIT Bombay, 2017), (IIM Ahmedabad, 2018).

Thus, instead of looking at available courses to understand what the contents of a good monitoring and evaluation course should be, literature on evaluation skills was studied.

2.4.1 Essential competencies for program evaluators

The first taxonomy of essential evaluator competencies was proposed by King et al. in 2001 and further refined in 2005 by the same authors and published in 2005 (Stevahn, King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005). These competencies include:

1. Professional practice
2. Systematic inquiry
3. Situation analysis
4. Project management

5. Reflective practice
6. Interpersonal competence

Of these, the competencies of systematic inquiry and situation analysis involve mastery of tools and techniques employed during an evaluation study. An ideal, all round evaluation course should transfer all these six competencies to the learner. In most post-graduate degree programs, professional practice and interpersonal competence are taught as part of basic course-work while some courses also teach project management and reflective practice. The M.Tech. program in CTARA is one such example where all these competencies are taught, barring some evaluation specific tools and techniques. This exposed an easy opportunity to create a new course which would cater to this limited gap – of transferring knowledge of evaluation tools and techniques to development professionals.

Further literature on evaluation courses and necessary skills must be explored to correctly identify the ideal contents for a useful introductory evaluation course.

2.4.2 Bloom's taxonomy for learning objectives

While creating a new course, it is important to first decide upon learning objectives and important methods that the learner should acquire by the ned of the course. For this purpose, revised Anderson-Bloom's taxonomy is regularly used. The following figure summarises the matrix of knowledge-cognitive processes and identifies 24 kinds of learning objectives. A good course is expected to meet 5-6 of these, balanced across the entire matrix. It is also assumed that the higher-level objectives require some competency at the lower levels and thus, it is important to identify in advance the average learner profile and pitch a course at the right level.

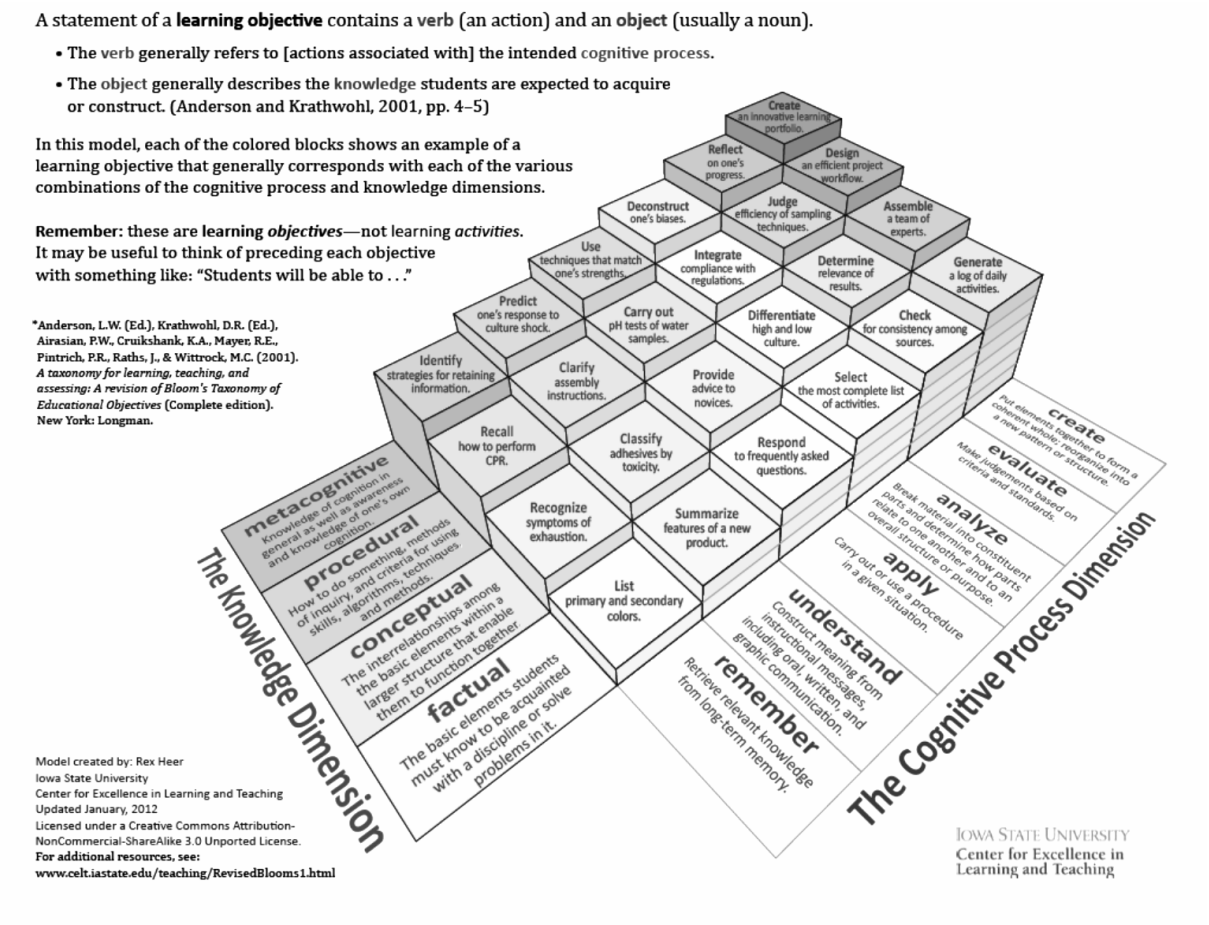

Figure 2.5:Revised Bloom's Taxonomy
Source: www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/RevisedBlooms1.html

Chapter 3
Research Methodology

In available literature, the major gaps observed are paucity of literature about evaluation systems in India and meta-evaluations. As noted in section 2.3, India has a functional evaluation setup since 1951 under the Planning Commission. While a few articles in newspaper and magazines and two reports allow us to reconstruct what happened, it only gives a superficial understanding, leaving many questions unanswered. Today, when there is a global push for evaluations, the latest information about Indian evaluation agencies, their functions, spread, latest studies being conducted and published, etc. is not easily accessible. Thus, there is a question regarding the current evaluation capacity in our country. Equally lacking is a variety and quantity of evaluation training institutes and courses for capacity development in monitoring and evaluation. These gaps in literature and our understanding limit our capacity to start a dialogue towards improving monitoring and evaluation systems in India. The broad research objectives for this study are defined by these gaps.

3.1 Research Objectives

1. Describe, with historical information, the evaluation systems in India
2. Evaluate the evaluation culture and evaluation outputs in India
3. Prescribe a framework for participatory monitoring and evaluation, focusing on decentralised local governance
4. Propose ways to bring about this change, including capacity development

3.1.1 Research strategy

Since the research objectives are descriptive in nature but collecting data for the same will involve quantitative methods, this research will follow a mixed method strategy, which prioritises qualitative approach to research, with quantitative analysis being used to support. As the initial work is exploratory in nature, any deductions about the reality of evaluation culture,

capacity, etc. will be based on collected data and hence, this study has an inductive logic to it. This implies that the epistemological orientation is interpretivism for understanding the nature of reality. As this is continuously affected by the individuals involved and needs to be understood in context of their actions, the ontological position is constructionism, also in line with the qualitative strategy. Having said this, it is understood that the understanding of these philosophical positions is weak and at times it will be influenced by various factors, so a pragmatic position, of utilising whichever methods are best suited for the specific research question and tasks will be adopted.

3.2 Research Questions

Based on the research gaps observed and the broad research objectives, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. What is the status of development M&E systems in India and how has it changed in the past 70 years?
2. What is the quality of development M&E studies and evaluation culture of agencies in India?
3. How can development M&E systems be improved as a feedback for local governance?
4. How to functionalise decentralised participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation?

3.2.1 Sub-research questions and action plan

Each of the above research question can be broken down into sub-research questions as given below.

Table 3.1: Research questions and tasks

Sr No	Research Question	Sub-research Question	Tasks	Sub-tasks	Methods
1	**What is the status of development M&E systems in India and how has it changed in the past 70 years?**			**Historical Analysis and Cross-sectional, comparative design**	
1.a		What were the developmental challenges in front of India and how have they changed	Across the five-year plans and finance commissions, based on budgetary allocation, identify major development challenges perceived in those years	Access plan documents, 5-year budgets, identify development related heads, look at plan-on-plan allocations.	comparative
1.b		How has the importance of M&E changed over the decades	From the plans, document M&E arrangements for various programs, identify allocation to M&E of programs and through PEO/ DMEO	From plans, identify all budget allocations to M&E, any comments about M&E, DMEO, etc	
1.c		What are the various M&E mechanisms for government development projects	List agencies, committees, offices, etc. responsible for M&E. Look at departmental M&E setups (MoRD)		Literature, interviews
1.d		Which agencies of central government and international aid organisations conduct evaluations, how have their roles and structure changed over years	Identify all agencies, document hierarchy structure, document roles, responsibilities and functions		Literature, interviews
1.e		What is the role of various state level evaluation sections/ offices and how functional are these	Identify all offices, create common data format for all, collect information about their capacities, structure, functions, best practices, etc.		Structured survey
2	**What is the quality of development M&E studies and evaluation culture of agencies in India?**			**Evaluative question, Case study based**	

2.a		What are the standards for evaluation reports and evaluation culture	Identifying global standards and adopting for Indian scenario where necessary.		
2.b		What is the quality of evaluation reports published by various agencies in India	Access and shortlist evaluation reports for meta-evaluation. Compare reports for completeness of content, quality, action taken reports, etc.		Meta-review, content analysis
2.c		What is the evaluation culture and capacities present in institutions and individuals working in M&E.	List evaluation capacities relevant in Indian scenario and compare against them		comparative, cross- sectional
3	**How can development M&E systems be improved as a feedback for local governance?**			**Prescriptive question, Case-study, action research design**	
3.a		What should be the components of a good M&E system for development programs in Indian context			
3.b		What are the problems during implementation of M&E systems			
4	**How to functionalise decentralised participatory Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation?**			**Action research design**	

This table presents the initial understanding of the research questions which needs further revision, based on literature review and primary interactions with experts.

Chapter 4
Conclusion

From primary literature review and discussion with people in the sector, research gaps are identified, and some research questions are proposed. This provides a primary direction. The basics of evaluation sector and tools have been understood and research work will now be started. A brief outline of the proposed work is as below.

4.1 Plan for Next Year

The proposed plan for next year is to work towards refining the four research questions, their sub-research questions and tasks for each. Since a primary understanding for first two research questions exists, data collection for these will be started this year. As a primary output of work done in first year and as an easy, low-hanging fruit, a course titled TD 608: Development Monitoring and Evaluation has been started in CTARA from this semester, taught by Prof. Bakul Rao. Module-wise session plan preparation for the same will be undertaken during this year and the course will be further refined based on student feedback for the next cycle. The goals for next year, in forms of outputs are listed below:

1. Literature
    a. Participatory and local governance
    b. Evaluation frameworks
    c. Research methods in evaluation
2. Writing goals
    a. Status paper on evaluation culture of evaluation institutions in India.
    b. Meta evaluation to understand quality of evaluation studies
3. Course preparation
    a. Refining TD 608
    b. Preparing CEP course on development evaluation
4. Research for Impact Fellowship by JPAL SA
    a. On-field work/ internship with JPAL SA team in executing an evaluation study

b. Preparing a plan for a randomised control trial

5. Evaluation case studies
   a. Evaluation for an NGO/ foundation
   b. Evaluation for the CSR wing of a company

4.2 Remarks

While breadth of the evaluation field has been explored in the past one year, and focus has been in learning methods and opening multiple threads of enquiry, understanding at depth of various concepts and hands-on trial of learnt methods is lacking. This lacuna will be filled up in the coming year through extensive reading and on-field work. In all, it is felt that considerable work has been done in the first year and a enough work is planned for the coming year, moving towards answering the primary research questions.

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