

Research Article

'Monitoring and Evaluation'. 'M and E'.- A Tool in Health Development

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Abstract

An integral component of progress is to act upon feedback related to work. The feedback process is elicited through the application of tools such as Monitoring Evaluation (M and E). The current article touches upon the circle of M and E especially in the health sector of the nation.

The base of the article is the Health Survey Development Committee or the Bhore committee report that the country got just before independence. Through the progress from 1946 to present day in the health sector, the article chooses some critical indicators to bring home the point. As the component of M and E is a cross cutting element, the article aspires that a regular process of feedback where both quantitative approaches go hand in hand to aid to the process of development. The basic trajectory of development is also projected in the article through the health sector lens.

Keywords: Monitoring, Evaluation, Development, Bhore committee

1. Introduction

Monitoring is an ongoing process while evaluation is a periodical progress. M and E is an integral part of any project. Basically, a project is initiated with a baseline survey, followed up with a mid-term evaluation there after a final evaluation. While the project is operational, Monthly Progress Reports MPR Quarterly Progress Reports QPR are taken from the stakeholders to basically see the monitoring of the progress every month while evaluating the same after 3 months. So, the point is that there can be larger scale monitoring larger scale evaluations accompanied by smaller scale monitoring evaluations [1-3].

Technically, M and E is a systematic process to collect, analyze and use data to measure track progress and to evaluate the effectiveness performance of development projects or initiatives. The data includes quantitative aspects such as descriptive analytical statistics that includes indicators. Indicators indicate change. Similarly, the qualitative data includes aspects such as feedback, observations related information that is used to inform decision-making and improve project outcomes. The logical frame work is used as a tool to do this process [3]. Monitoring and evaluation are two related words but has distinct activities. Basically, the tool is used in the field of project management, development and policy implementation [1-3].

Concept of M and E

Monitoring is systematic, continuous data collection, analysis to track the progress and performance of projects, programs policies. Monitoring provides ongoing feedback to decision-makers, managers and implementers. It is to ensure that the project or program is on track and meeting its aims, goals or objectives. It also involves collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The process of data collection analysis is done through tracking outputs, outcomes impacts. It also involves assessment of the quality of implementation and the use of resources through qualitative analysis.

Evaluation is also systematic measurement objective assessment of the results, effectiveness and efficiency, impacts of projects, programs policies. Evaluation is done to provide information about the relevance, coherence, and sustainability of the interventions. Evaluation is also done to identify ways means to improve the design, implementation and outcomes of programs policies. Usually, evaluation is done by the end of project's or program's cycle. However, evaluation is also conducted at different stages of programs policies to inform improve decision-making process and course corrections procedures [1-3].

Basically, we can comprehend that monitoring is an ongoing process of collecting and analyzing data to track progress and performance. Evaluation is a systematic assessment of the effectiveness and impact of a project or program. Both the tools are essential to ensure accountability, improve learning, continuous improvement in project roll out, management thus contributing to development of the nation [3].

Historical Journey of M and E

M and E has been used in some form as a tool for centuries. In the 1960s-1970s, it became a formalized established component of project management. During this decade, the Logical Framework (LF) approach was used for the first time thus providing a system to plan, monitor, and evaluate projects, programs. policies. The LF approach prioritized the importance to identify clear objectives, outcomes thus making the tool as the base to plan projects, to do planning and evaluation on large scales [1].

After two decades, during 1990s-2000s, M and E as a tool continued to evolve progress with the addition of Results-Based Management (RBM). The RBM tool reiterated the issue of setting clear targets while measuring the progress towards the intended targets. There was a focus to achieve time bound, contextual specific results, outputs, outcomes impacts. As a tool, RBM also taught the stakeholders about the importance to use data to inform improve the process of decision-making while adjusting project related strategies as when needed [3].

M and E has continued to evolve with the introduction of new tools and approaches. These include the use of software technology to collect, clean and analyze data. The adoption of participatory approaches involving stakeholders in the M and E process while the use of data visualization to commu-

nicate results to a wider audience are other peripheries related to M and E.

Thus, we can see that M and E has evolved significantly over time from its early days as a rudimentary tool for project management to its current state as a sophisticated framework. Currently implementations of development projects are increasingly complex. Hence the importance need of M and E as a tool continues to grow periodically. Updating with the latest methods, proven effective practices in M and E as a tool, organizations or institutions can be enabled to ensure that they optimize the use of this tool towards obtaining their goals while creating positive change in the nation world. All these modalities will help towards development [4].

Development in Health Sector Using M and E

Like a project, the country also goes through the same process to track its development progress. Let us take the example of tracking of the Sustainable Development Goals of the country regarding the health sector. To illustrate the point, the country has to reach the target of 70 Maternal Mortality Ratio by 2030. Currently, we are at 97 per 100,000 live births. We have to reduce it by 27 points in the next 6 years. That is to say almost 4 to 5 points per year. The SDGs were formulated in 2015 in between we lost two years because of the pandemic. So, we have to accelerate our health system in providing infrastructure related to maternal health so that the intended ratio is achieved. Hence, the tracking of the reduction in Maternal Mortality Ratio is an indicator that shows our performance of the health infrastructure. Only effective M and E have helped us to note that the nation has moved from 2200 Maternal Mortality (MM) Ratio in 1946 through the Bhole Committee report to 97 in the current stage [5-12].

Take the example of tracking poverty in the country. The National Institute for Transforming India (NITI Ayog report indicates that in the nine-year period from 2013-14 to 2022-23, 25 crores of people or 250 million individuals have exited from Multi-Dimensional Poverty. This is very encouraging M and E it shows the country's progress in overall development [6].

A tracking of Multi Dimensional Poverty (MDP) shows that child mortality or Infant Mortality Rate of the nation is a measure of poverty. Here also, we can see that we have transitioned from IMR 128 per 1000 live births to the current stage of 28 per 1000 live births. Among IMR, we do the M and E of the Neonatal Mortality Rate. The current NMR is 20 per 1000 live births. The point here is that a constant M and E on the NMR will help us to reduce IMR. The tracking has to begin early as the first year of life is most critical. Out of the first year, the first month is critical. Out of the first month, the first week is critical. Out of the first week, the first day is critical. Out of the first day, the first hour is critical. Hence, we see the active role of M and E in reducing mortality among infants neonants thereby helping in the overall development of the country [7-9].

When we see the M and E tracking of our life expectancy, we have

reversed the numbers. In 1946, we stood at 27 years. Today, we are at 70 or almost 72. The M and E tool clearly depicts the development of the nation through this critical indicator [8-10]. Similarly, the current Crude Birth Rate (CBR of the nation is 19.5 per 1000 population) the Crude Death Rate (CDR is 6.0 per one thousand populations). As we know, the Natural Growth Rate is CBR minus CDR (CBR-CDR). Hence, the NGR of the nation is 13.5 per 1000 populations or 1.5 per 100 populations. In the population growth scale, a growth rate of 1to1.5% is categorized under 'rapidly increasing'. Hence, the Population Stabilization Fund (PSF tracks this growth through M and E so that it does not move to the next higher scale. Simultaneously), the Total Fertility Rate (TFR is also tracked through the use of M and E tool so that it does not come down the replacement level of 2.1.) This is the current TFR of the nation [2-7].

Like health sector, the nation also tracks the enrolment of children in school. Out of the enrolment, through M and E, we track the drop outs. Out of the regular attendees, we track their skills through the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading and Understanding Numeracy (NIPUN) assessment. We also track the drop outs link them to education through bridge courses. The nation's development is also tracked through M and E while aligning the progress to Sustainable Development Goals related to education [11,12].

2. Conclusion

Here, the lead author tried to mention two of the basic sectors like health education. The main thrust area was health while the article just illustrated the education sector very briefly. These two sectors are basically the backbone of the

social, economic, health educational progress that are directly linked to development of any nation. Like democracy, the M and E helps us to track the development of the individuals the community through various modalities.

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