

VikasPatra


Volume 2 | April 2022

Weaving the Gender Dimension into Monitoring and Evaluation



Spotlight: Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF)

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MESSAGE FROM CEO



The present decade has been termed as the “Decade of Action” by the United Nations. In the next few years, gender neutralism is envisaged to be the renewed essence of growth to eventually build a sustainable world. Gender equality is not just a moral but also an escalating economic issue. Evidence suggests that India can add 18% to its GDP, if it can bridge the gender equality gap by improving female workforce participation in the country. Therefore, actions to achieve our goal of becoming a global superpower have to be anchored around gender equality practices that foster inclusive growth.

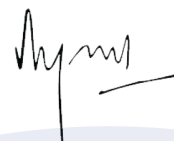
More recently, the pandemic proved to be a litmus test for community resilience. Addressing the issues which women face in outbreaks highlights a broad landscape of inequalities, which can be tackled if public policy better targets and supports all those at the margins. During these years, numerous stories of resilient women have emerged, who stepped out of their homes to help communities with immense strength and courage. Going forward, addressing gender

inequality by employing more effective monitoring methods and evaluation techniques must be at the heart of the wider programme to 'build back better'.

In the above context, gender has been chosen as the theme for this issue of VikasPatra, which includes a special interview with Co-leaders of Evaluation Community of India (ECOI) on gender-focused evaluation approaches, spotlight article on the Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF), highlights of latest developments in Monitoring and Evaluation approaches, happenings at DMEO across GIRG, DGQI, partnerships, capacity building, among others. This newsletter is being released at an opportune time as this year marks 70 years since establishment of India's Programme Evaluation Organisation and four years since OOMF was formally included as part of the annual budget and laid in Parliament.

This newsletter has been crafted to share ideas, thoughts and throw some light on the critical work being undertaken at DMEO. Given that DMEO's commitment is to strengthen the overall monitoring and evaluation ecosystem in the country, I hope that this newsletter will connect all the stakeholders at the national level and state level in due course, unlock knowledge which exists in silos and build synergies across public and private sector. I hope that this newsletter becomes a tool for cross-collaboration between DMEO and its partners in the monitoring and evaluation space.

I take this opportunity to appreciate and thank the newsletter team comprising Ms. Anmol Narain (M&E Lead), Ms. Kanchan Puri (Senior Research Officer), Ms. Urvashi Prasad (Director) and Ms. Veenu Singh (Research Officer) for bringing out this version within the constraints of limited resources and notwithstanding heavy work pressure from other equally pressing engagements.



Amitabh Kant
(CEO, NITI Aayog)



THE OUTPUT-OUTCOME MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Disha Bhattacharjee

(Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist)

Background

The Estimates Committee of Second Lok Sabha, in its twentieth report recommended a performance-cum-programme system of budgeting to enable a proper appreciation of budget outlays and 8 years later, in 1968, the first performance budget was introduced in four central ministries. It depicted the functions, programmes and activities of the Ministries/Departments in relation to budget allocations expressed in terms of physical and financial targets and achievements. About 32 departments in the Central Government had introduced performance budgeting in their selected units by 1977-78.

While this was an important step towards visualizing public expenditure in the form of physical activities of the government, it was limited to the outputs of programmes in terms of their physical performance against targets of previous years and next year's and not their outcomes i.e. what those programmes intended to achieve/ results of those programmes.

In 2005, the then Finance Minister Shri P Chidambaram laid before the Parliament the first "Outcome Budget", a compilation of desired outcomes identified by 44 ministries and 61 departments to be achieved from the allocations made in the Budget for 2005-06. It covered only Plan Outlays and non-Plan schemes were added in the next year. Performance Budget evaluating and indicating the performance against Outcome Budget 2005-06 was also presented along with Outcome Budget 2006-07. Finally, in 2007-08, Performance Budget and Outcome Budget were combined into a single document.

However, the focus on measuring outcomes through quantifiable indicators still remained lacking. There were no concurrent mechanisms to assess if programmes were meeting their stated objectives. Impact assessments could not fill this gap as they were generally conducted over a medium-term horizon. Thus, there was a need to build a mechanism for ongoing course corrections in scheme implementation. Meanwhile, from 2009-10, the Results Framework Document (RFD) was being prepared by central ministries, containing the objectives,

policies, programmes and projects, along with success indicators and targets. It began under the supervision of the Cabinet Secretariat and fully-fledged evaluation through RFD started in 2010-11. But these too were prepared at the ministry/department level without delving deeper into how its various developmental schemes were linked to the broader ministries' functioning.

The Outcome Budget

The Outcome Budget presents (a) the financial outlay for the financial year along with (b) clearly defined outputs and outcomes (c) measurable output and outcome indicators and (d) specific output and outcome targets for that year. Specifically, Outlay is the amount that is provided for a given scheme or project in the Budget; while Output refers to the direct and measurable product of program activities, often expressed in physical terms or units. Outcomes are the collective results or qualitative improvements brought about in the delivery of these services. An outcome is what performance improvement/s we expect from the target group/s as a result of the scheme/intervention. And the first step in ensuring a scheme will meet its intended objectives is to actually define what those outcomes will be and assign them measurable indicators. The next is to monitor these indicators periodically such that any laggards can be identified and adequate measures can be taken to rationalise such interventions/schemes/programmes. The eventual intention of these steps is to develop a stronger portfolio of schemes so that every rupee is accounted for to achieve developmental objectives.

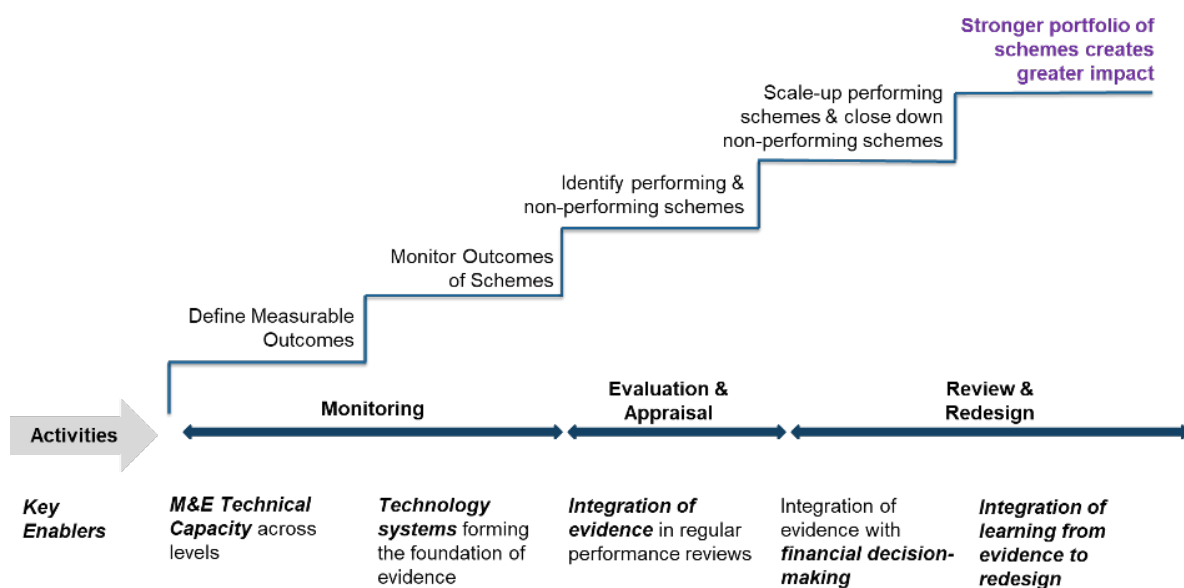


Figure 1: Key enablers for stronger policy making

The Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework represents an important reform towards outcome-based monitoring. This is a paradigm shift from measuring simply physical and financial progress, to a governance model based on outcomes. The Framework endeavours to provide measurable indicators for achievement of scheme objectives, or the 'Outcomes'. Actively tracking progress against defined targets provides two key benefits for governance: improving (i) the development impact and (ii) the public accountability of every rupee spent by the Government of India.

The OOMF Exercise at DMEO

Since 2017-18, in addition to the financial outlays of schemes of the Ministries being indicated in the Budget document, the expected outputs and outcomes of the schemes are also being presented in a consolidated Outcome Budget document- in measurable terms, bringing-in greater accountability for the agencies involved in the execution of government schemes and projects. The 2018-19 OOMF exercise covered 9.44 lakh crore worth of CS/CSS expenditure under 74 Ministries/Departments out of the total central government budget of 21.46 lakh crore.

The Output-Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF) has been prepared annually since then and laid before the Parliament along with the Union Budget for the last four financial years i.e. 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. For this year the OOMF has been prepared for 67 Ministries/ Departments involving more than 500 Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) covering approximately Rs. 14 Lakh Crores in close consultation with concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India.



Figure 2: OOMF Document for FY 2022-23

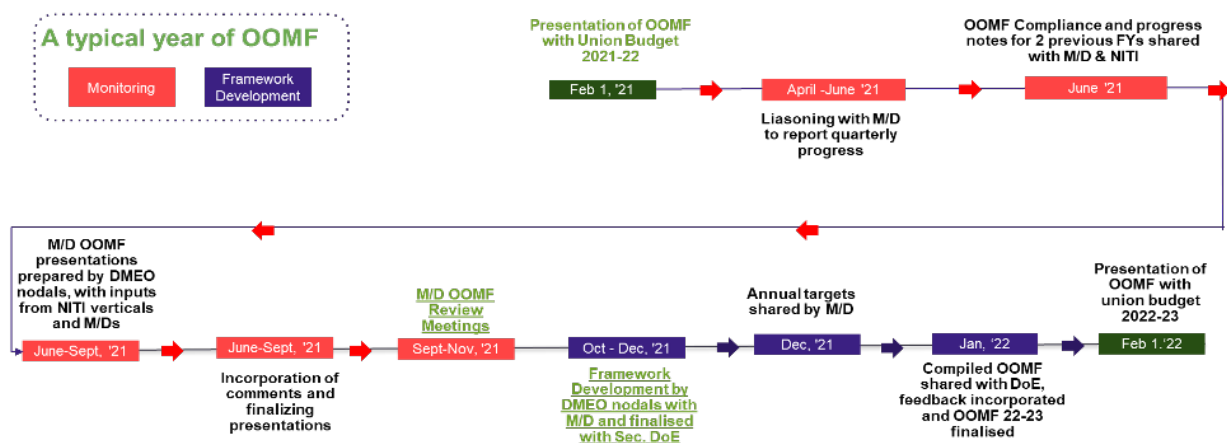


Figure 3: The OOMF cycle

The OOMF exercise runs all year round. Post presentation of the OOMF along with the union budget, DMEO ministry nodals work with their Ministries/Departments to track and update quarterly progress. These are shared with the respective Ministries/Departments and NITI verticals and reviewed via annual meetings conducted at NITI under chair of Hon'ble VC/ member level. Towards October-November, the nodals begin working with their Ministries/Departments to undertake a review of these indicators and rationalise them as a course correction to achieving scheme intended outcomes/outputs. These are further refined once the final budgetary outlays are shared by the Department of Expenditure and ultimately tabled along with the union budget in the parliament.

DMEO has also developed and is maintaining a user friendly online OOMF dashboard which helps in monitoring of the budgetary outlays, targets & progress against them for output/outcome indicators, etc. In this way, OOMF plays a key role as an enabler of performance-based budgeting and lays the foundation of the journey towards a stronger portfolio of Government of India's development schemes and programmes

The Way Forward for OOMF

Although the OOMF exercise began in a relatively ad-hoc manner, focused solely on the improvement of the previous year's document, it has grown and evolved as a project, with increasing systematization towards the goal of institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation in public policy. There has also been increasing interest from line ministries as well as state planning departments to institutionalize OOMF and build the capacity of their officials in outcome-based budgeting.

However, it has also faced significant challenges such as its size, unwieldiness and preponderance of indicators without a synergistic top-level view, as well as technological challenges exacerbating issues with data reporting compliance.

The future of the exercise will depend on successful and clear-eyed review of past strategic and operational choices, and integrating the learning into the approach going forward. Extensive stakeholder consultations, an iterative approach, targeted institutionalization efforts, technological progress, and integration of international best practices will all be required to achieve the larger goal of generating useful evidence and insights for decision-making at all levels.

In this direction, the OOMF team has been taking multiple initiatives such as preparation of toolkits and knowledge material, conducting capacity building sessions on outcome-based budgeting for internal and external stakeholders including state level functionaries and administrative staff training institutes, developing an index on OOMF to analyze the adaptation of outcome-based budgeting at the central level and mapping the OOMF indicators to the Sustainable Development Goals.

DMEO NEWS

1. Output Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF)

DMEO is organizing annual OOMF Review Meetings of Ministries/ Departments under the chairpersonship of the Vice-Chairman and Members, NITI Aayog alongside the Secretaries of respective Ministries/ Departments. These meetings fundamentally survey the advancement of Central Sector (CS)/Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), particularly towards accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the actions taken after the OOMF Review Meetings led in 2020. In this context, 53 such meetings have been conducted successfully till March, 2022.

DMEO develops the Output Outcome Monitoring Framework of Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 67 Central Government Ministries and Departments in consultation with the Department of Expenditure. Since 2019-20, the OOMF document has been one of the important components of the budget document and is placed in the Parliament along with the budget.

2. Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) 2.0

Based on the intensive exercise conducted for undertaking an in-depth self-assessment on the data preparedness of various schematic and non-schematic interventions of the Government of India, the final DGQI report cards were shared with all the 74 participating Ministries/Departments highlighting their overall, pillar-wise, and theme-wise scores along with potential areas of improvement going forward. Also, the DGQI dashboard for ongoing tracking of DGQI scores and M/D wise action plans is also ready for use by Ministries/Departments.



3. Global Indices to Drive Reforms and Growth (GIRG)

DMEO, NITI Aayog continued to support the Cabinet Secretariat in the initiative for adoption of 30 select Global Indices to drive Reforms and Growth at the national and sub-national level through an India Index developed on the lines of the Global Index to rank States and UTs on significant parameters mapped to each Nodal and Line Ministry/ Department. DMEO prepared a status report for the Cabinet Secretary highlighting the relative readiness of the selected indices for further implementation of the project with ranking of the states through the GIRG Dashboard developed by DMEO in partnership with NIC and NICS. 22 of the selected indices have been identified for a fast track implementation of the initiative and the Cabinet Secretariat is reviewing these indices with the concerned Ministries/ Departments in a series of meetings, the first of which was held on 13 January 2022 to discuss the way forward with Global Hunger Index, Global Gender Gap Index, Gender Inequality Index under the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Human Capital Index under the Department of School Education and Literacy. More such meetings are planned in the coming weeks. In the meanwhile, state ranking under the Multidimensional Poverty Index was published by the NITI Aayog making a beginning towards deeper and wider engagement with the States to reform and improve the weak areas identified. This process would be continued for other indices identified for a positive impact on the quality of life of people in all parts of the country through coordinated and well identified reform actions as per the national development agenda and common aspirations of the people.

4. Engagement with States/UTs

OOMF Development and Capacity building training session in J&K

The Output Outcome Monitoring Framework was developed for 9 key priority departments of the State Government of Jammu & Kashmir. Also, a two-day training

session was conducted by the DMEO team on 22nd-23rd December, 2021 for capacity building of the officials of the Planning Department and other line Ministries/ Departments of Jammu & Kashmir regarding the OOMF for 83 schemes and projects under the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP).



Engagement with the Government of Andhra Pradesh

DMEO has signed a Statement of Intent (Sol) with the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Various opportunities have been identified for engagement as part of the Sol under high-level strategic engagement, short-term tactical engagement and knowledge sharing.

Engagement with the Government of Madhya Pradesh

DMEO conducted training sessions in the two-week-long Chief Minister's Young Professional Development Programme (CMYPDP) organized by Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Institute of Good Governance and Policy Analysis, Government of Madhya Pradesh on January 8th, 2022. Three sessions were conducted for the trainees to develop their technical and operational understanding of monitoring and evaluation. Over 52 Young Professionals participated in the training programme.

5. Webinars with States

Sharing of insights on the education sector from evaluation studies

DMEO, in collaboration with KPMG and Ministry of Education, completed the education sector evaluation study in 2020. An online seminar was held on 27th October, 2021 to sensitize the State officials on the important sector findings from the report and some of the best practices in implementing key initiatives in the education space. The seminar was attended by over 140 participants from the State Education and Planning Departments. Panel members of the session included: Secretary, School Education, Government of Chhattisgarh and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Govt of India.



Insights on the jobs and skills sector from the evaluation study of schemes of Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)

DMEO, in collaboration with KPMG, MoLE and MSDE, completed the evaluation of the jobs and skills sector in 2020. An online seminar was held on 2nd December 2021 to sensitize the State officials on the important sector findings from the report and some of the best practices in implementing key labor and skilling initiatives.

Procurement

DMEO organized a webinar on “Procurement of Technical Consultancy: Scaling Capacity within Central & State Governments” on 22nd February, 2022, to create awareness among officials from Central Ministries/Departments and State Governments on the fundamentals and good practices with respect to procurement of technical

consultancy services. The seminar was attended by over 340 participants from the Central Ministries/Departments and State Finance and Planning Departments.



The banner features the NITI Aayog and DMEO logos at the top. The title 'Procurement of Technical Consultancy: Scaling Capacity within the State Governments' is prominently displayed in white text on a dark blue background. Below the title, the date '22nd February 2022', time '3.00 pm to 4.30 pm IST', and 'Virtual Meeting' are listed. At the bottom, five speakers are shown with their names and titles: Dr. Sekhar Bonu (Director General, DMEO), Mr. N Gulzar (Finance Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh), Dr. Basavaraju (Executive Director, GRAAM), Ms. Nidhi Arora (Legal Consultant, NITI Aayog), and Mr. Paresh Dhokad (M&E Specialist, DMEO).

**Procurement of Technical Consultancy:
Scaling Capacity within the State Governments**

22nd February 2022 | 3.00 pm to 4.30 pm IST | Virtual Meeting

Dr. Sekhar Bonu
Director General,
DMEO

Mr. N Gulzar
Finance Secretary,
Government of Andhra Pradesh

Dr. Basavaraju
Executive Director,
GRAAM

Ms. Nidhi Arora
Legal Consultant,
NITI Aayog

Mr. Paresh Dhokad
M&E Specialist,
DMEO

CAPI and Technology Usage

DMEO organized an online webinar on 15th February, 2022, on “Introduction to the Computer Assisted Computer Interviewing (CAPI)” to share with the State/UT officials of Planning and Statistics Departments, information about the use of handheld devices like smartphones and tablets in data collection. The webinar was attended by over 225 participants from the Planning and Statistics Departments across States/UTs.

Sharing of insights on the social inclusion sector from the evaluation study of schemes of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Minority Affairs and Department of Social Justice

DMEO in collaboration KPMG Advisory Services has completed the social evaluation study in July 2021. A webinar was held on 03rd March 2022 to sensitize the state officials on the important sector findings from the report and some of best practices in implementing key initiatives. The webinar was attended by over 200 participants from the state tribal affairs, minority affairs, social justice, finance and planning departments. Panel members of the session included:

1. Dr. Muniraju S.B, Deputy Adviser, NITI Aayog
2. Ms. Nigar Fatima Husain, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs
3. Dr. Navaljit Kapoor, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Sharing of insights on the law and order and justice delivery sector from the evaluation study of schemes of Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Law and Justice

DMEO in collaboration KPMG Advisory Services has completed the social evaluation study in July 2021. A webinar was held on 10th March 2022 to sensitize the state officials on the important sector findings from the report and some of best practices in implementing key initiatives. The webinar was attended by over 200 participants from the state home affairs, law and justice and planning departments. Panel members of the session included:

1. Shri. G.R. Raghavender, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice
2. Dr. Meeran Chadha Borwankar, IPS (Retd.)

DGQI webinar

A training webinar for Ministries/Departments on Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) 2.0 dashboard was held by DMEO, NITI Aayog on 15th March, 2022. The webinar was attended by over 350 participants from 74 Ministries/Departments. During the webinar, a short video was played for Ministries/Departments on the importance of DGQI exercise followed by a detailed demonstration of DGQI dashboard. The active participation of Ministry/Department officials during the open Q&A session was encouraging for everyone.

Brown Bag Session with Prof. Amit Basole, Azim Premji University

The Capacity and Partnerships matrix at DMEO organizes a number of Capacity Building Sessions to ensure that the DMEO and NITI Aayog as a whole is aware of the latest advancements in anything and everything M&E.

A Brown Bag session with Prof. Amit Basole was held on the 11th of March 2022. The topic of the session was “Estimating Employment Effects of Public Policy: Conceptual Issues and Measurement Challenges”. The policy world is gripped by questions on employment, skills, the female labor force participation rate and the future of work. Employment is a major public policy challenge in India and many government schemes or programmes have explicit employment-related goals. At the same time, policies that are not directly related to employment generation (such as infrastructure development) can have an impact on jobs via multiplier effects or by stimulating private sector growth via productivity increases. Researchers and policy-makers thus include employment effects as an indicator on monitoring and evaluation of most policies. The issues that arise when trying to define and measure employment in the Indian context was discussed during this session.

6. Ongoing Evaluation Studies

DMEO is currently in the process of evaluating large subsidy schemes, nine central sector schemes of four ministries at the request of the Department of Expenditure, and schemes pertaining to health and education sectors in accordance with the overall plan for evaluation of all CS schemes to be conducted during 2021-24.

7. Social Audit Applying Survey Sampling

NITI Aayog has nominated Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata to conduct a study on “Social Audit Applying Survey Sampling”. The objective is to undertake a pilot research project on Social Audit in respect of two Government of India’s schemes i.e., Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and Ayushman Bharat Yojana to understand the social audit process at the grassroots level and suggest measures for promoting transparency, accountability with respect to implementation of the programme. DMEO has supported the ISI team with carrying out a household survey in two sample villages of selected districts in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka and Gujarat.

8. Preparedness of Rice Fortification Ecosystem in India

NITI Aayog has been requested by the Department of Food and Public Distribution to undertake an audit of the preparedness of the rice fortification ecosystem in India as a part of the preparation of national level scale-up of rice fortification. DMEO, in collaboration with the Women & Child Development Vertical, NITI Aayog has been entrusted to conduct the audit.

9. Evaluation Diagnostic Tool

In order to assist State Governments with building stronger evaluation institutional arrangements, DMEO has developed a diagnostic tool for assessment of the evaluation systems in States and UTs. Thus far, 26 States/UTs have provided inputs on the tool. Further, the DMEO team has conducted interviews with the evaluation officials of 23 States/UTs.

10. APEA Conference and EvalFest 2022



The poster for the 3rd APEA Conference & EvalFest 2022 features a background map of India. At the top, logos for APEA, Evaluation of India, DMEO (Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office), UNFPA, and IEC (Independent Evaluation Office, Global Environment Facility) are displayed. The main title is "3rd APEA CONFERENCE & EVALFEST 2022" with the panel theme "Panel: Towards SDGs: Equity Focused and Gender Responsive Evaluation". The event is scheduled for "25th February 2022" from "11:00 am - 12:30 pm IST".

CHAIR
JAHNAVI ANDHARIA

PANELISTS

- SABRINA EVANGELISTA**
- AKIKO YUGE**
- YAMINI ATMAYILAS**
- SATISH AGNIHOTRI**
- URVASHI PRASAD**

OUR PARTNERS

Logos for partner organizations include: Division of Evaluation for Asia, ISSI, EvalYouth Asia Chapter, EvalYouth India, IRPE, IRMA, LEAD KREA UNIVERSITY, APC HUB, ARTHAN, and J-PAL SOUTH ASIA AT DME.

DMEO partnered with the Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) and Evaluation Community of India (ECOI) to organize the 3rd APEA Conference and EvalFest 2022 during 21st-25th February, 2022. The theme of the conference was “Towards a Vibrant Evaluation Ecosystem: Creativity, Collaboration and Convergence”, focusing on the need for the evaluation ecosystem to be dynamic and responsive to the emerging and evolving evaluation domain.

11. Development Partners Meet

The fourth Development Partners Meet was organized by DMEO on 24th November, 2021 with participation from several UN agencies, civil society organizations and academic institutions including WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, BMGF, J-PAL, Institute for Competitiveness, National Council of Applied Economic Research, Evaluation Community of India, Asia Pacific Evaluation Association, IIM Ahmedabad, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and ISB Mohali, among others. The purpose of the meeting was to apprise the development partners on the progress made by DMEO on its various initiatives, and seek their views on additional steps that should be taken for strengthening of the M&E ecosystem in the country.

12. Sol for Undertaking Evaluation Studies and Capacity Building

DMEO signed an Sol with Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM) and Azim Premji University (APU) and Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK). These institutional partnerships will focus on strategic and technical collaboration to strengthen India’s overall monitoring and evaluation environment, with a special focus on building a data monitoring and evaluation stack.

13. Second National Conference on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (NCMEL 2022)

DMEO organized the Second National Conference on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (NCMEL 2022) from 16th to 17th March 2022 in virtual mode. With the objective to build institutional capacities and empower critical governance systems at the Centre and State level, the event discussed the emerging issues and challenges at the national and sub-national level. The central theme of the conference was ‘Monitoring & Evaluation for Sustainable Development through Cooperative Federalism’ and the sessions spanning over two days were attended by over 3000 participants. The Target audience included Planning officials from Central Ministries, State Governments and Union Territory administrations of India; M&E practitioners; National and international policymakers; and International organizations.



Panel Speakers on first session of the NC MEL: Dr. Sekhar Bonu DG DMEQ, Mr Emmanuel Jimenez, Director General, Independent Evaluation, Asian Development Bank, Ms Vini Mahajan, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Government of India, Mr Adil Zainulbhai, Chairman, Capacity Building Commission and Mr V. Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Adviser, Department of Economic Affairs, Government of India



Launch of Compendium of Essays by Hon'ble Vice Chairman, Niti Aayog

14. Publications

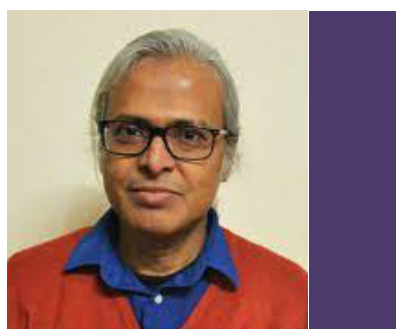
Hon'ble Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog released a Compendium of Essays titled 'M&E @70: Strengthening India's Evidence Systems For Accelerated Reforms And Inclusive Growth'. Curated by DMEO, the Compendium covers various aspects of strengthening the M&E ecosystem in India, at the national and sub-national levels. The essays cover a broad range of topics from policy formulation, to use of technology and the role of capacity building in M&E.

The compendium includes contributions from distinguished experts across various organisations such as National Council of Applied Economic Research, Karnataka Evaluation Authority, GRAAM, Evaluation Community of India, Center for Policy Research, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, World Food Programme and Population Council of India, alongside contributors from the DMEO team. Link to Compendium: <https://dmeo.gov.in/sites/default/files/2022-03/Compendium-of-Essays.pdf>

Over the last six months, the DMEO team has published over 35 articles and blog pieces across various print and digital platforms and journals.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

Weaving the Gender Dimension into Monitoring and Evaluation



Dr. Rashmi Agrawal & Dr. Rajib Nandi
(Co-leaders, Evaluation Community of India)

1. The **theme for International Women's Day** this year was, "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow". According to you, why is it important to analyze sustainable development through a gender lens and how can this be done?

Response: One of the basic principles of Agenda 2030 is 'No One Left Behind'. Assuming that to be the case, a sustainable development process can not ignore the voice of half of the global population. Sustainable development, in principle, must consider the needs of all people including those who don't typically have a voice in decision making. Here comes the importance of gender equality as a critical ingredient in achieving sustainable development. All development stakeholders need to work together and explore multiple ways to replace unsustainable practices, to develop policies to address inequality, and end disempowerment, poverty and hunger. Unfortunately, the required gender lens is still largely absent in our policies and interventions. Many times it is just tokenistic.

Unequal participation and differential outcomes in development always tends to stimulate dissatisfaction and noncooperation that might make development unsustainable in the long run. Therefore, to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda, countries must integrate a gender equality and equity perspective into implementing, following up and reviewing all the SDGs. One can foster gender equality by adopting policies and programs that boost opportunities, economic, educational, social and political, to women in such a way that the existing inequalities are redressed as quickly as possible.

2. For India, research points to regional disparities within the country, with women in the South and North-East more likely to have freedom of choice and agency with respect to education, work and other economic dimensions compared to women in the North. Can we say that **change in cultural perspectives** is equally important as aforementioned economic dimensions for empowering women?

Response: We agree. It is the cultural perspectives that determine the attitudes and mindsets of the population as far as gender equality is concerned. Quite often, traditional practices and localized gender norms emerge as major hindrances on the way to bringing transformative changes and gender equality in the society. Consequently, the issue of changing the stereotypical mindsets and behavior towards women and other genders needs to be prioritized and addressed while designing a development program along with economic dimensions. Two key areas needed to accelerate for achieving women's economic empowerment is enhancing women's agency, capabilities and participation in decision-making processes along with eliminating gender-based violence and discrimination.

3. How does **gender-focused evaluation system aid in adjusting development programmes and achieve the set targets of gender equality** qualitatively?

Response: Evaluations in general are expected to generate evidence on what works and what not, and to what extent and why. If they are gender-focused, we will not only have objective evidence on how the gender-related policies and interventions are working, but also have critical insights on the existing nature and extent of gender discrimination. Therefore, it is important to make the practice of evaluation a process of critical inquiry beyond a mere data collection exercise without asking the right questions as per the regional and cultural context. Gender-focused evaluations highlight the nuanced issues around power and cultural dimensions that help in sharpening the present and future interventions to make them more effective and efficient in bringing desired changes. An evaluation in the absence of a critical gender and intersectionality lens, will fail to capture changes in the existing gender and social relations. For example, an increase in household income by default does not reflect the changes in the decision-making processes within the household among men and women members. Similarly, without an intersectionality lens, an evaluation won't reveal if any practice of debt-bondedness is still practiced at the village-level. Additional income without freedom of choice and decision won't bring a real economic upliftment for the people. Nuanced evidence enables the planners and policymakers in reorienting and redesigning their policies and programmes in the direction of faster results to achieving gender equality.

4. Gender issues are so inextricably linked to cultural values, social attitudes and perceptions that measuring them adds a layer of complexity to the monitoring and evaluation system. How can we set clear objectives to ensure that the **monitoring system** is not only effective, but also addresses the stigma around women empowerment?

Response: It is indeed extremely difficult to bring even a small change in the cultural values and gender norms. But it is perhaps even more difficult to monitor such changes through the usual quantitative methods. To capture such nuanced changes, the entire monitoring systems need to be re-designed with strong and effective qualitative approaches and techniques to elicit valid evidence of change. We have always advocated methods like story-narration, most significant change, strength-based approach and other participatory methods in assessing the nature and kind of changes in the values and attitudes of people around the issues of stigma, discrimination and violence. Unfortunately, monitoring activities are often done as routine exercise without much innovation. There is also evidence that tells us that many organizations lack technical expertise, resources and motivations. Consequently, the learning part of monitoring exercise is often very weak and learning is not systematically fed into the future interventions. On the other hand, the monitoring and evaluation system itself may act as an empowering and change-making process if designed in a participatory manner, along with the people and other stakeholders of development. We must learn from the good practices around the world, where M&E systems were successful in bringing and measuring significant changes around stigma and empowerment.

5. While the government implements multiple programs aimed at holistic development of women in the country, it is critical to continually monitor and evaluate their on-ground impact. How can we **integrate a gender dimension into monitoring and evaluation** of several government policies, and why has it become imperative in developing countries like India?

Response: It is essential to build gender dimension into monitoring and evaluation of the results of every development intervention right from the planning of the intervention. This may be done by ensuring that the (i) continuous monitoring is enabled to collect gender-specific and gender-disaggregated data; (ii) women's voices are heard and valued at all stages – planning, implementation and evaluation – of the intervention; and (iii) the evaluation process addresses the power dynamics and the shifts in the gender norms and value systems. Simultaneously, women should similarly be involved in designing evaluations, in developing data collection instruments, gathering evidence and in interpreting it.

6. Over the years, there has been a push by the government towards technology-enabled learning. However, the effectiveness of these interventions in enhancing learning outcomes remains uncertain. Do you think it is time for **India to formulate an advanced evaluation and monitoring policy** before rolling out any other social empowerment scheme?

Response: We do not have any national evaluation policy, advanced or otherwise, at present. It is essential to develop, adopt and implement such a policy immediately

to move towards institutionalization of evaluation in our way of working. Such a policy would take care of evaluation of technology-enabled learning programs as well. Rolling out social empowerment schemes need not be held up, but formative and mid-term evaluations can be made integral to them. At the next level, we also like to highlight the need of developing a process within our parliamentary systems where research and evidence play a major and dominant role in policy-making and program interventions.

7. Domestic work and care duties are often cited reasons which hold women back. A Time Use Survey (TUS) published by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in 2019 revealed that 92 percent of women between 15-59 years spend an average of over 5 hours a day on unpaid domestic services whereas only 28.9 percent of men participated in unpaid domestic services, that too an average of just 1.5 hours.

Is participation in domestic work a consequence or reason for gender disparity?

Response: In India and in many other societies, the unpaid domestic work and care responsibilities are primarily managed by women. Around the world, women spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men. This highly segregated division of labour along the gender line, which is socially constructed, prevents women from accessing the paid economic activities, resources and opportunities. This unequal distribution of caring responsibilities is linked to discriminatory social institutions and stereotypes on gender roles. This tradition of unequal distribution of labour and responsibilities is preventing women from giving full expression to their abilities in other spheres of life, thereby giving rise to gender disparities and accentuating such disparities. The direct consequences of this tradition are low labour force participation, wage gap, disempowerment, lack of decision-making power, lack of choice and freedom. Moreover, COVID-19 has laid bare the negative consequences of long standing gender gaps and norms around caregiving. An OECD survey in 2020 revealed that when schools and childcare facilities are closed, mothers take on the brunt of the additional unpaid care work – and, correspondingly experience labour market penalties and stress. Therefore, we agree that the traditional norm of participating in the domestic work and care duties enhances gender disparity to a great extent. Here we see a radical shift in the mindsets of both men and women. Care and domestic responsibilities should not be considered only as a burden and this key activity for well-being should be redistributed between men and women, as well as between the family and the State.

8. In 2019, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare published the 'National Framework for A Gender-Responsive Approach to TB in India' which gave a perspective to the policy makers of the country. Can we say that the country is **approaching gender-sensitive implementation of policies and evaluation systems?**

Response: Yes, to an extent gender-sensitivity is gradually but slowly finding its place in implementation and evaluation systems. This is mainly due to the domestic advocacy on one hand and commitments to global campaigns and adoption of international practices on the other. There is also an enlightened interest among

different stakeholders within and outside the government in ensuring that gender disparities diminish and disappear as soon as possible. We must remember that only gender-sensitive and gender-responsive policies and programs won't be able to stop gender discrimination and disparity in a sustainable manner. At some point, we have to think how we can make these programs more gender transformative which will address the root cause of gender discrimination. This requires strong political will and stronger multi-stakeholder collaboration, involving not only national and local governments, but also civil society, the private sector, academia and the media.

WHAT'S NEW IN MONITORING & EVALUATION (M&E)

1. UPCOMING TOOLKITS

1.1 Participatory Community Led Development (CLD) Assessment Tool

- An upcoming buzzword in international development is CLD-Community Led Development which realigns development efforts towards improving the role of participants and communities in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and processes. Existing methodologies within M&E are rarely equipped to respond to local needs, and to validate CLD efforts.
- To respond to this gap, the **Movement for Community-Led Development (MCLD)** – a consortium of 72 international NGOs and over 1,500 local Civil Society Organizations – has launched two new tools: the **Participatory CLD Assessment Tool** and the **CLD Evaluation Tool** (also referred to as the Evaluation Quality Appraisal Tool)

1.2 List of M&E Softwares

Development projects involve data collection and reporting mechanisms harnessing M&E tools and softwares which are critical to assessing stakeholder engagement, interventions and future program decisions. Devex spoke to a number of M&E practitioners working in global development to find out what software they use and recommend. Top suggestions include:

Software	In Use By
ActivityInfo supports interagency coordination and care management in Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, Yemen, DRC, etc	UN Agencies, NGOs
CommCare helps build apps without need for coding to collect data offline, avoid duplication errors, visualise data trends, and track workforce performance in Burkina Faso and across Africa	BMGF, Johns Hopkins, Rainforest Alliance
LogAlto This software enable users to design logical frameworks, monitor indicators, and collect and upload data by project.	NGOs, governments, ministries
Mobenzi Designed to support frontline workers operating in the field, Mobenzi's features help M&E professionals create forms for mobile data collection and then share data insights through charts and maps.	World Vision, Oxfam, USAID
Open Data Kit Free and open source software for collecting, managing and using data in "resource-constrained environments."	WHO, USAID, RedCross
DevResults has interactive map features which allows a birds eyes view of the geographical context of programmes	USAID, Feed the Children

Data sourced from DevEx

2. RECENT REPORTS, STUDIES AND ARTICLES

2.1 Impact of Self Help Groups on Womens' Empowerment Under National Rural Livelihood Mission

Study by International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

Various Self Help Groups (SHGs) were formulated under the Government of India's rural development programme called Aajeevika and NRLM. A study by the International Initiative of impact evaluation was conducted in 2019-2020 to assess the impact of SHG creation on womens' empowerment. The study was qualitative in nature and relied on in-depth ethnographic analysis and key informant interviews covering 60 SHG beneficiaries. Some key findings are that

- SHGs are still restricted to middle-income women. Women from extremely poor backgrounds could not join SHGs due to financial constraints, and affluent women felt no need to join.
- One of the key goals of the NRLM is to expand knowledge of social welfare programmes. Women interviewed responded that SHGs have been instrumental in providing them with information regarding key government schemes such as the Swachh Bharat Mission and the widow pension scheme.
- Going forward, the study highlighted the need for targeted interventions and outreach to women from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds which were not being covered through mechanisms outside of traditional means, perhaps leveraging informal networks.

- d. It also highlighted the need for suitable instruction on the usage of cellphones among women from the middle-class that did possess them.

2.2 Has the Evidence on Unconditional Cash Transfers Influenced Policy Uptake?

Blog by International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

Evidence has shown us that cash transfers positively impact the reduction of poverty, improving human capital. As of December 2020, more than one third of social protection responses in 215 countries were cash transfers. However, policy makers across low and middle income countries continue to be skeptical of this as a major poverty reduction strategy. There are concerns about cash which may be wasted on alcohol and tobacco, increase dependency on the state and disrupt local economies. Authors support the argument for policy uptake highlighting evidence from the Social Cash Transfer Programme in Malawi which improved consumption amongst the ultra poor, had significant impacts on agricultural and non-agricultural assets, and improved school enrollment and attendance. Click [here](#) to read more.

2.3 Accelerating Digital Convergence for Social Protection

Blog by the Digital Convergence Foundation

How can social protection systems effectively identify and support those in need? The answer involves a complex interplay of different programmes, delivery mechanisms and information systems. As countries transition away from manual processes and paper-based records, they have never been closer to achieving this interplay than they are today. Increasing digitalisation is rapidly enabling countries and programme administrators to enhance coverage, efficiency and achieve economies of scale. Read more [here](#).

2.4 Moving Beyond the Standard Model of Intergenerational Mobility

Blog by United Nations University

The well recognised intergenerational mobility model developed in the second half of the last century along with its adaptations has helped us understand the drivers of intergenerational income mobility around the world. In addition to the widely accepted drivers established by the standard model (e.g., inherited family attributes, parental investments in children's human capital, and credit market failures) other factors may be of particular importance for social mobility in developing economies. Read more [here](#).

ESTEEM CORNER*

1. **Krishn Kant Sharma (Monitoring & Evaluation Lead) and Aishwarya Salvi (Young Professional)**

put in incredible efforts to conceptualize, drive and manage the end-to-end development of Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) dashboard in a short period of six months. They tirelessly worked in close coordination with NIC and other stakeholders as well as helped DMEO team with technical queries to get DGQI data smoothly filled from Ministries/Departments on the first phase of the portal during Aug-Sept.



2. **Vijender Kumar (Monitoring & Evaluation Lead)**

for his exceptional initiative and drive in organizing training programs on Survey CAPI. On his own initiative, he took out a significant amount of his time to train individuals in the Survey CAPI matrix and evaluation tool on field methods. The training was extraordinarily well conceptualized, with detailed notes, materials and homework assignments. He has shown a remarkable degree of dedication and focus in putting together this material which will serve as an aid to all members of DMEO, and his contribution to the team, matrix and vertical is exceptional. Hats off to him!

* Based on nominations by DMEO Senior Team

3. **Tanvi Bramhe (Economic officer)**

for her contribution to website development. She has been managing the website revamp single-handedly, which involves extensive coordination with all matrix teams/verticals, NITI-NIC and NITI verticals.



4. **Veenu Singh (Research Officer)**

is an outstanding performer who has the ability to manage with consummate ease the multiple tasks she is assigned across the vertical and matrices. She has played a key role in the publications and communications team and has also published some high-quality articles in leading national dailies herself. In addition to work assigned to her, Veenu also takes a lot of initiative and ownership and is a very pleasant colleague to work with. Well done, Veenu!

To know more about DMEO functioning and updates, please visit



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Got feedback? We'd love to hear from you!
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