



POLICY EVALUATION: PROCESS AND PROBLEMS

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Public evaluation plays an important role in the policy process. The evaluation consists of an assessment of the effectiveness of a policy in terms of stated goals of results. The objective of the evaluation is to measure the impact of policy on society. Policy evaluation occurs throughout the policy process. The Evaluation may resume the policy process in order to continue, modify or terminate existing policies. In democratic system policy formation and evaluation are very complex processes. The main objective of policy evaluation to provides reliable information about policy performance and also provides knowledge about policy problems. Evaluation helps in developing new information about policy effectiveness. It is a major political and administrative process. This paper attempts to understand the policy evaluation process and highlight the types of evaluation, criteria, the role of various agencies involved in the process. It also focuses on various problems of policy evaluation.

Keywords: Policy Evaluation, Modify, Termination and Effectiveness.

Introduction

Policy evaluation is an integral part of the policymaking process. Public policy evaluation is a tool for measuring the performance and efficiency of any policy. The policy process starts with the identification of the problem and moves through policy formation, policy adoption, policy implementation, policy evaluation, and the last stage is policy improvement or termination. Evaluation is concerned with what happens once a policy has been put into action. The evaluation of public policy is an attempt to assess the content and effects of policy on those for whom it is intended. The major aim of policy evaluation is to determine the impact of the policies and provide necessary feedback to the policymakers and implementers for ushering improvements in the policy already made or in its executing mechanism. According to Joseph.S.Wholesy, "Policy evaluation is the assessment of the overall effectiveness of a national program in meeting its objectives, or assessment of the relative effectiveness of two or more programs to meet common goals." Indicates the level of achievement of the target and helps to understand to what extent policy issues are resolved. It may also contribute to the emergence of new objectives and possible solutions. The purpose of this article is to examine the concept of policy evaluation, various agents involved in this process and problems associated with public policy evaluation.

Research methodology

This paper is descriptive and analytical in nature. The data used in it have collected from secondary sources. Necessary secondary data is collected from journals, Reference Books.

Policy evaluation process

Process of policy evaluation is very complex. It requires a framework. Five steps for conducting evaluation are:

- a. Identifying Purpose of Evaluation:
The first step of evaluation is to recognize the purpose of evaluation. The policy planners should clear about why they want to evaluate this policy. The evaluators should identify the management concerns and issues.
- b. Identifying Areas of Evaluation:
For policy evaluation it is very important to identify areas of evaluation. This will provide helpful information for evaluators.



c. Choosing Evaluation Methodologies:

Data should be collected from different sources. Various techniques are used to collect data and process data. The whole procedure of data collection and tabulation has to be planned for timing, sample selecting, and sorting the data.

d. Analyzing the Result:

Data collection is an important step in data analysis. Systematic data collection helps in evaluation process. After tabulation data is ready for report writing. Systematic collection of data helps to make rational judgements.

e. Writing an evaluation report:

Evaluation report should be written carefully. It should cover all aspect of policy evaluation .Report should be comprehensive.

Criteria for Evaluation:

The criteria enable the analyst to produce information about the performance of a policy. **Frohock** provides four criteria for policy evaluation-Equity, Efficiency, Pareto Optimality, and Public Interest. **Suchman** proposes a five-dimensional scheme for policy evaluation-effort, performance, adequacy, efficiency, process. According to **Smith**, there are three criteria of policy evaluation: policy design, policy process, and policy achievement.

Dunn provides six evaluation criteria for evaluation: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, appropriateness.

○ Efficiency:

Efficiency means the amount of effort required to produce a result. Efficiency is equated with economic rationality. Efficiency in monetary terms means the number of outputs created and their quality in relation to the resources invested. This criterion tells how much time and cost are required in providing services. Efficiency is measured by calculating the cost per unit of a product or service. A policy which achieves the greatest efficiency at less cost and time is considered as efficient policy.

○ Effectiveness:

Effectiveness is the level of objective attainment. It refers to whether a given course of action results in the accomplishment of an objective. It is calculated in terms of a unit of services or their costs. Measuring the effectiveness of a policy is a complex process.

○ Adequacy:

Adequacy refers to whether a certain level of effective results in the satisfaction of needs or values. According to Theodore, while the policy effectiveness criterion deals with the relationship between the objectives of policy and what is achieved, the adequacy of a policy refers to the relationship between the policy and the problem that is addressed. [7] There is a clear difference between adequacy and effectiveness in the sense that a policy can successfully affect the achievement of the objectives listed, but it has little impact on the problem addressed by the policy. Policy may meet the criterion, of cost-effectiveness, but the resultant outcome in terms of people's satisfaction level turns out to be very poor. Measuring adequacy is not a simple task; rather it implies more subjectivity.

○ Equity:

Equity refers to the distribution of effects and effort of policy among different groups in society. Equity is a branch of law that provides a remedy where common law does not apply. Policies designed to redistribute income; social



benefits and employment opportunities in public services are often recommended and evaluated according to the criteria of equity.

○ Appropriateness:

This is used to evaluate policies. Appropriateness refers to the significance of the objectives of a program. To judge the success and failure of a policy by its appropriateness is to see where conflicts are likely to be more intense. Public policies that are based upon values and ideologies that are unacceptable from the public's point of view are considered failures. Some policies are considered unpopular decisions.

○ Responsiveness:

Responsiveness means a policy satisfies the needs of a particular group. Consensus and consultation become the centre concerns since the determination of objectives is entangled with the search for adequate means and alternatives to achieve those goals. Active participation leads to better acceptability and implementation becomes less prone to conflict. According to Nakamura and Smallwood, "constituency satisfaction and clientele responsiveness are important determinants in policy evaluation". This criterion helps the analyst to critically assess whether the competitive criteria of evaluation and adequacy specify the needs and values of particular groups.

○ Public Interest:

Public interest is an important criterion of policy evaluation. The government should frame policies according to the public interest. After implementation policy evaluators should focus on policy objectives. The public is interested in the final outcome of a policy. The public is interested in a workable rule, which will define and predict human behaviour so that they can make their adjustments. The public can often show a great interest in the process of circulation of policies. The public may also be interested sometimes in the problem due to one reason or another and may not be interested in them. It is difficult to articulate the concept of public interest in a well-formulated definition.

Types of Evaluation:

According to Wayne parsons there are three techniques of policy evaluation.

- I. Measurement of relation of cost to benefit
- II. Measurement of performance
- III. Evaluation of policy and programmes.

There are many types of evaluation. Some of them are given below:

a. Policy impact evaluation:

It is an evaluation of overall programme impact and effectiveness, the stress is on determining the extent to which programmes are successful in achieving basic objectives. The conditions existing before the implementation of the policy and after are reviewed in order to bring to the forefront the impact of policy. Impact evaluation requires a design, which allows the researcher to display that the changes that occur are a function of the particular programme involvement and treatment.

b. Policy Strategy evaluation:

It examines the organisational methods including rules and operating procedures which are used to deliver the programme. The emphasis is on determining which strategies, methods are most effective.

c. Policy Project Appraisal:

The performance appraisal used to provide information relating to policy evaluation and evaluation of implementers. Policy implementers focus on technology, time and cost of a policy.



d. Effort Evaluation:

It attempts to evaluate the amount of effort which governments put into accomplishing their goals.

e. Efficiency Evaluation:

It attempts to calculate the cost of the program and judge if the same amount of output could be achieved at a lower cost. Losses and benefits could be calculated in economic terms.

Evaluating Agencies:

Within government, policy evaluation is carried on in a variety of ways and by a variety of actors. Some agencies of policy evaluation are given below:

○ Legislative Bodies:

In democratic countries, one of major functions of the legislature is an evaluation of public policies. There are many techniques to review the policies which include discussions, committee hearing, investigations, and budgetary processes. In India, the task of policy evaluation is done by different Parliamentary committees like public account committee, estimate committee etc.

○ Administrative Agencies:

Policy evaluation is done by administrative agencies. All departments prepare their internal reports which provide a chance to evaluate the working of the program and projects undertaken by the department. Each department while sending its own demand for grants to the ministry of finance evaluates its annual plans programs.

○ Judicial Agencies:

Judicial evaluation is concerned with the legal issues relating to the manner in which government programs are implemented. The constitution of India provides a system of judicial review. The courts can review governmental actions when a case is filed against a government department or agency. These assessments relate to possible conflicts between governmental functions and constitutional arrangements or to the established standards of conduct and individual rights.

○ Evaluation by the Comptroller and Auditor General:

An audit focuses on financial performance in the policy process. In India the auditor's office has board statutory authority to audit the financial activities of governmental agencies. The Comptroller and Auditor General present his annual reports to parliament in which the financial and cost evaluation of the policies of the government takes place. Evaluation may be taken up by the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General on the basis of directives in legislature or at request of financial committees' etc.

○ Evaluation by Commissions:

Commissions like the planning commission, administrative reform commission etc are appointed by the government of India play an important role in policy evaluation by presenting their detailed reports on the impacts of a particular policy.

○ Political Evaluation:

This type of evaluation is done by the political parties, interest groups, the media, or a non-governmental organization, which has an interest in politics. These evaluations may be biased. These may be intended either to change a policy or to support.



Problems of Policy Evaluation:

Evaluation of a policy is a difficult task. It must be objective and systematic. But there are many barriers that create problems in the evaluation process. Some of problems in policy evaluation are given below:

a. Uncertain Policy Goals:

When goals of policy are not clear, policy evaluation become difficult task. Legislators and administrators may define goals differently and act accordingly. The specification of goals may also lead to the division of responsibility among implementers. Even when the goals are clearly expressed, they may not be practical.

b. Difficulties in Data Acquisition:

The data required to evaluate a policy may not be available which hinder the work of policy evaluator. Data collection is not a simple task; it requires a lot of time, skill, and resources, which the evaluation agencies must-have. It is difficult to find out accurate information, particularly when it is of qualitative nature. Official resistance to provide all types of relevant data may also prove to be a hindrance

c. Problem of Methodology:

Public organizations lack the specialized knowledge and technical skills that are required in policy evaluation. There is the problem of selecting the best source of information to accomplish the purposes of evaluation. In this regard, the capability of policy analysts or agencies involved in evaluation is very important. However, in the evaluation work, there is always a doubt in regard to the methodology employed and the accuracy of results.

d. Problem of Measurement:

There is the difficulty in measuring the level to which these goals have been achieved. Evaluators themselves may not be neutral individuals to take an objective view of a policy issue. The same situation can be interpreted differently by different evaluators. [17] There may be a number of parameters and new social problems may arise from time to time. Another problem in measurement, in government, is the problem of time span over which the benefits of many public programs are delivered. Lastly, the temptation to cook-up data tends to defeat the very purpose of objective measurement.

e. Problem of Resources:

In developing countries, there is a lack of human, financial and infrastructural resources. While the scope of the evaluation is increasing there is not sufficient investment in the resource base that is evaluated by any government in India.

Conclusion

Policy evaluation is of immense significance in the total policy process. Policy evaluation should enable an objective assessment of the performance of a programme, and identify the need for a new policy to be framed in the best manner. The main objective of policy evaluation is to reduce the problem in the face of policy delivery. Through the policy evaluation process, the policymakers get feedback for better policy formation. This paper dealt with methods, the role of various agencies involved in this process such as legislature, committees, the Comptroller and Auditor General, Commissions. In addition, criteria such as efficiency, effectiveness, adequacy etc, and problems in evaluation have been explained.

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