

Event Report

**CPPR-APPE WEBINAR
ON**

DOES MONITORING AND EVALUATION MATTER IN PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY?

 **24 February 2024**

 **04:00 PM to 05:00 PM IST**

 **Zoom**

About the Event

Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR), in collaboration with the Association for Public Policy Education (APPE), organised a webinar on “Does Monitoring and Evaluation Matter in Public Service Delivery?” With the growing complexity of policy issues in India, it becomes important to effectively analyse public policy throughout the policy cycle. One of the major reasons why policy implementation in India is sub-par is due to a lack of relevant and timely policy analysis. The webinar sought to underscore the critical role of monitoring and evaluation strategies in effectively creating, implementing, and delivering policy solutions to a large population. It aimed to highlight how these strategies can optimise resource utilisation in a developing country like India by ensuring government accountability and transparency in their operations.

About the Organisers

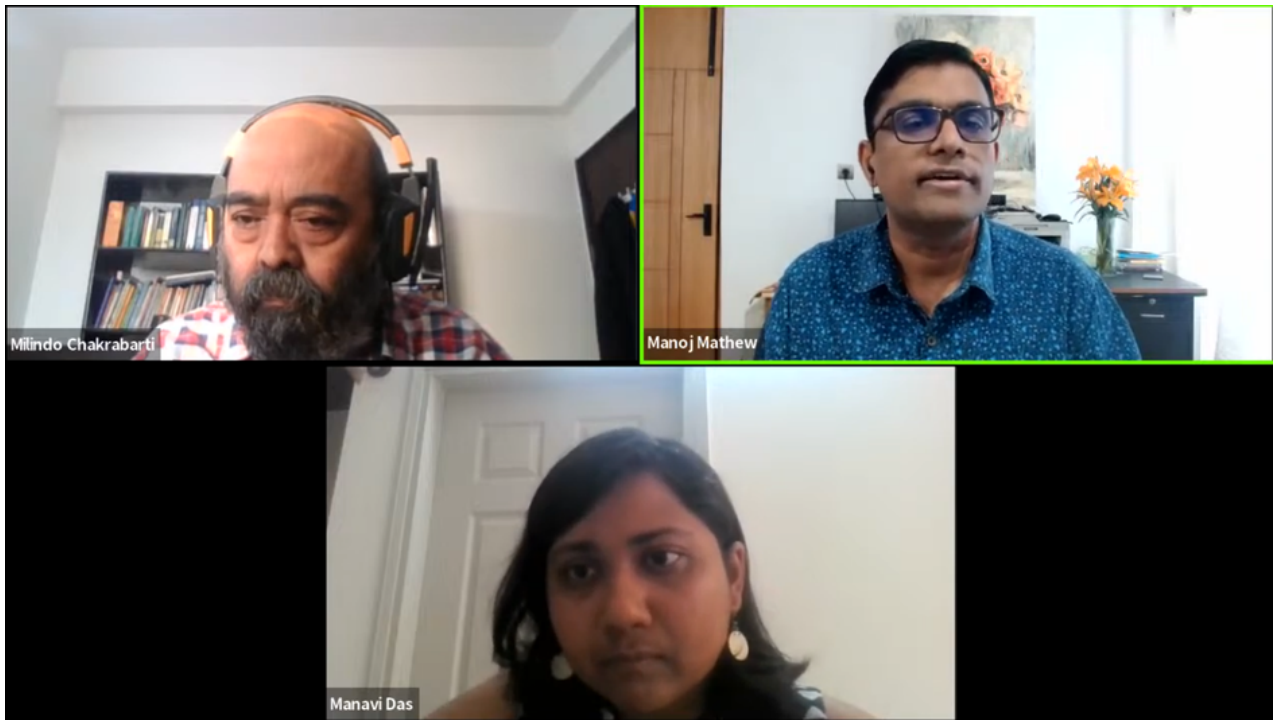
Association for Public Policy Education (APPE)

Association for Public Policy Education is meant for promoting public policy education in India. Association aims for the development of the public policy discipline and practice by encouraging collaboration and partnerships between public policy scholars, and practitioners including the institutions involved in teaching, training, and research in public policy. The objective is to advance and strengthen the discipline and practice of public policy in India. Please find more details about the people, work, and impact of CPPR at www.appe.org.in.

Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR)

Centre for Public Policy Research is an independent, not-for-profit, public policy think-tank dedicated to in-depth research and scientific analysis with the objective of delivering actionable ideas that could transform society. Based out of Kochi, in Kerala, our engagement in public policy that began in 2004 has initiated open dialogue, policy changes, and institutional transformation in the areas of Urban Reforms, Development Studies, Economy, Ease of Doing Business, Governance & Law, and International Relations & Foreign Policy. Over the years, CPPR has worked with different Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, Different State Governments in India, City Corporations, Universities, Academia, and Civil Society Organisations on various projects and themes. We have also worked with Embassies and High Commissions of different nations in India, international foundations, and multi-lateral organizations. Please find more details about the people, work, and impact of CPPR at www.cppr.in.

Panelists



Moderator - Manoj Mathew

Secretary, Association for Public Policy Education
Affiliate Advisor & Strategist, Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty

Manoj Mathew is the Secretary of the Association for Public Policy Education (APPE) and Affiliate Advisor and Strategist at the Acton Institute, a think tank based in the US. He has served in various senior roles at Indian and international non-profit organisations. He also volunteers for several local and global initiatives for institution building and communication strategy. He is the former Chief Operating Officer of the Centre for Public Policy Research (CPPR) and the former Director of the Centre for Civil Society (CCS); two of India's prominent think tanks.

Panelists

Manavi Das

Head of Impact, MindSphere Consulting Private Limited

Manavi Das is an expert in monitoring and evaluation strategies, working currently at MindSphere Consulting Pvt Ltd, where she is the Head of Impact. She has previously held positions in this space, having been Senior Associate - Monitoring and Evaluation at Antarang Foundation. She has also worked extensively on the Right to Education and is passionate about children's rights, economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, etc.

Prof. (Dr.) Milindo Chakrabarti

Faculty, Jindal School of Government and Public Policy
(JSGP), O.P. Jindal Global University

Prof. (Dr.) Milindo Chakrabarti has distinguished experience of over 27 years as a Professor of Microeconomics, International Trade & Business, Environmental Economics, Indian Economics, and Development Economics, nationally and internationally. Along with his long-standing career in teaching, Dr. Chakrabarti holds Research Experience of 27 years and has written and published numerous research papers, articles, and books from India and abroad. He has also delivered lectures at Indiana University, Bloomington, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Entrepreneurship Development Institute, Gandhi Nagar. Dr. Chakrabarti has extensive experience in policy development and practice, and wide knowledge and experience working in different sectors such as natural resources, social sectors, rural development, key cross-cutting issues, environment, governance, and institutional development. Dr. Chakrabarti regularly travels throughout India on various academic and research assignments and has travelled across many countries on academic assignments, for instance, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, China, Kenya, USA, Canada, UK, France, Italy, Portugal Egypt, and Turkey. He has also been a consultant to different ministries of Govt. of India, the Planning Commission, the World Bank UNDP, IFAD, and the British Council. In his list of professional affiliations, he has also been a Member of the Western Economic Association International, USA, Executive Director of the Development Evaluation Society of India (DESI), and a Member of the Network of Network on Impact Evaluation (NONIE).

Summary of the Discussion

- Manoj Mathew initiated the discussion by highlighting the challenges in measuring policy success due to the inherent gap between policy-maker expectations and actual outcomes. With the growing complexity of policy issues in public delivery in India, it is important to effectively analyse public policy through the policy cycle. He emphasised the significance of monitoring and evaluation in this process, citing experts who suggest that evaluating performance and policy results can provide insights into why some policies succeed while others fail, and can therefore enhance decision-making quality by offering tailored advice to improve policy formulation and implementation.
- Manoj underscored the need for speakers to address the current ecosystem regarding the quality, transparency, and accountability of evaluations in policy-making across government and civil society in the development sector. He raised the question of whether the government and civil society have institutionalised evaluation frameworks and feedback loops to optimise evaluation policy performance and sustain its influence in policy making.
- Manavi Das articulated the role of social impact initiatives in addressing socioeconomic disparities and the intricate interplay of formal and informal institutions within communities. These initiatives, which are part of the public service delivery mechanism, will consider an approach that will enhance, strengthen and complement existing services through simple and/or innovative approaches while retaining their distinct identity and internal governance structures.
- Das highlighted the pivotal role of monitoring and evaluation in gauging program effectiveness and ensuring accountability and transparency. She characterised monitoring and evaluation as essential tools for truth-seeking and program refinement, particularly in assessing the attainment of intended impacts.
- Acknowledging challenges such as fluctuating support and technological barriers, Das noted the evolving landscape marked by increasing professionalisation and technological integration within the social sector. She argued that the current monitoring, evaluation frameworks, and knowledge basis are still largely defined by the expectations of the more resourced actors and underscored the need to bring in accountability from the communities as well.
- Das called for a paradigm shift towards trust-based funding models and emphasised the imperative of establishing public accountability alongside service delivery channels. She advocated for greater exploration and innovation within the sector, leveraging technology to address existing gaps and enhance service efficiency.

Summary of the Discussion

- In conclusion, Das expressed optimism regarding the growing recognition of monitoring and evaluation processes and urged for their alignment with evolving technological landscapes. She emphasised the unique role of the social impact sector in effectively gauging public service efficiencies and underscored the need for continued growth and innovation in monitoring and evaluation practices.
- Prof. Milindo emphasised the distinction between monitoring and evaluation within the context of public service delivery, asserting that they serve distinct purposes. He outlined three primary goals of public service: providing public goods, conserving common goods, and regulating private goods, highlighting the necessity for collective efforts in their provision. The first two goals are not merely within the scope of the government's power; they can be provided by communities and other social groups outside of the government.
- He underscored the historical presence of evaluation since the implementation of India's first 5-year plan in 1951 and advocated for a shift towards outcome-focused evaluation rather than mere auditing.
- He lamented the lack of public engagement in policy-making processes and emphasised the need for dedicated budget allocations for monitoring and evaluation, recognising them as essential components within public policy that require separate functioning. He highlighted the distinct roles of evaluators and researchers, urging for their maximum involvement to identify issues and errors effectively.
- Prof. Milindo concluded by acknowledging the relevance of the webinar's topic and recognising the deficiency of expertise in evaluation and monitoring within India's public policy mechanism. He called for opportunities to educate and train the younger generation in evaluation and monitoring within the public policy sector to address this gap effectively.
- In the Q&A session, when asked about the similarity between the logical framework approach and the monitoring and evaluation framework, Manavi explained that while the logical framework approach focuses on delineating a theory of change from input to impact stages and specifying metrics for each stage, monitoring occurs on a regular basis, and evaluation is conducted more intensively and periodically.
- The second question, regarding the government's capacity for policy monitoring and evaluation, given its lack of manpower for most activities, was addressed by Prof. Milindo. He acknowledged India's lack of resources for monitoring and evaluation, attributing it to the absence of separate funds allocated for these purposes. Prof. Milindo emphasised the necessity of budgetary provisions specifically designated for monitoring and evaluation within policy design to prevent resource loss in the event of policy failure.

Key Takeaways

- Monitoring and evaluation play a crucial role in analysing public policy through the policy cycle, offering insights into policy effectiveness and informing decision-making processes.
- Monitoring and evaluation are essential tools for gauging program effectiveness, ensuring accountability, and refining program design, underscoring the significance of quality and transparency in evaluations within policy-making across government and civil society sectors.
- Social impact initiatives aim to address socioeconomic disparities through innovative approaches while retaining distinct governance structures.
- The prevailing monitoring and evaluation framework predominantly reflects the perspectives of better-resourced actors, necessitating the inclusion of accountability from communities.
- Challenges such as fluctuating support and technological barriers were acknowledged, along with the evolving landscape marked by professionalisation and technological integration within the social impact sector.
- There is a call for a paradigm shift towards trust-based funding models and the establishment of public accountability alongside service delivery channels.
- Monitoring and evaluation serve distinct purposes within public service delivery, with a need for dedicated budget allocations for their effective implementation.
- Evaluation has been present since the implementation of India's first 5-year plan, with a current emphasis on outcome-focused evaluation rather than mere auditing.
- There is a recognised deficiency of expertise in evaluation and monitoring within India's public policy mechanism, emphasising the need for opportunities to educate and train the younger generation in this field.