UNIT 15 MONITORING OF PUBLIC POLICY – I

Structure

15.0 LEARNING OUTCOME

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the meaning and significance of policy monitoring;
- Describe the approaches to monitoring;
- Explain the constraints in policy monitoring; and
- Discuss remedial measures for effective policy monitoring.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Units we have discussed the role of various agencies and problems in the policy implementation process. Effective monitoring can ensure the proper execution of policy with expected resnlts. Monitoring is an activity which occurs in *the* course of **implementing** a programme or a policy. The objective of policy monitoring is to ensure, through the policy implementation process, that resource inputs are used as efficiently as possible to yield intended results. The standards that are used for both efficiency of resource utilisation, and effectiveness of policy implementation are inherent in the policy-making process. The monitor has to be able to appraise resource use, technical activities, and policy implementation results with an amount of detail that permits him to make changes or corrections when necessary, As proper monitoring is necessary for expected results in the process of policy implementation, we will therefore, concentrate in this Unit on the important issues in policy monitoring. The issues help to identify constraints and remedial measures for effective policy monitoring.

15.2 MONITORING OF PUBLIC POLICY: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

In simple words monitoring' is the process of observing. It is not controlling. Policy monitoring has come to mean the process of observing the progress of policy implementation and resource utilisation, and anticipating deviations from policy expectations. Its implications are that management takes steps to ensure that all activities related to policy implementation are completed within the given time and budget. Monitoring can be defined as "the process of inducing action for adherence to schedule".

If monitoring shows that a particular policy activity is deviating from planned parameters then the management may take required measures to replan that particular activity. But if there is a significant variation from planned parameters, it is important to analyse the source of deviation before deciding upon the remedial measures.

Policy monitoring in brief is based on the following five assumptions:

i) Policy/programme is measurable in terms of certain indicators or desired objectives.

ii) Personnel responsibility for the programme performance exists at all levels in the organisation.

iii) Adequacy of time for monitoring is ensured.

iv) There are proper tools for identifying deviations from programme performance.

v) Provision exists for adjustments, which correct the deviations from planned expectations1 outcomes.

The significance of the monitoring of public policy lies in seeing that intended results are achieved through the efficient use of resources. Monitoring helps in designing and implementing systems for the processes, which provide just the right amount of detail for adequate control of policy execution. Experience has shown that effective monitoring can ensure the proper execution of policy with desired results in the shortest amount of time.

An effective monitoring of public policies aids in cost reduction, time saving, and effective resource utilisation. The key issue in monitoring is to create an information system that gives policy makers and policy implementers the information they need to make timely decisions and policies that will keep policy programme performance as close as possible to the objectives of the policy. Therefore, it is important that monitoring and control processes should be given due importance and be designed properly.

15.3 APPROACHES TO POLICY MONITORING

Various policy monitoring models and approaches have been advanced for the purpose of securing effective monitoring of policy implementation. These models may perform differently according to the evaluation criteria employed. Model evaluation then becomes the task of listing the pros and cons of different approaches. A few approaches in relation to monitoring of public policies are discussed here.

15.3.1 Managerial Approaches

Managerial approaches to monitoring have come to form the dominant operational paradigm in the implementation of public policies. The management of the public sector has now adopted more or less business-like style, the techniques of which were once thought of as private-sector methods.

i) **CPM and PERT**

In this context, two approaches, namely, i) Critical Path Method (CPM), and ii) Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) have gained wide recognition not only in the private sector but also in the public sector.

Both CPM and PERT approaches employ the idea of managing large-scale policy programmes. As a means of addressing the issues of material and resource use in the most efficient manner, the concepts of CPM and PERT have proved quite useful. These refer to the planning of a particular programme, allocating people and other resources, and monitoring progress. The aim of CPM and PERT is to control the execution of a policy programme by controlling the network of activities and events which compose the stages of policy implementation. The CPM is a technique, which aims to identify those activities that are critical to the successful implementation of a policy programme on time. A network is drawn to show the starting period of the policy programme, and the estimated time period involved in moving from one critical activity to another.

On the other hand, PERT is a technique, which predicates that the duration of critical activities are uncertain. It involves a graphic estimation of the time and resources necessary for policy execution. This can be applied to a number of efforts, ranging from a housing project to the scheduling and deployment of personnel. The PERT systems are programmed on the basis of three types of calculation of this uncertainty: the most probable duration, the shortest forecast of duration, and the longest forecast of duration. The PERT analysis is often used in the implementation of large-scale policy programmes (such as, rural development) where there is a high level of uncertainty surrounding the completion of a policy programme. In this way policy programme is monitored and controlled through PERT and CPM approaches.

ii) **PPBS**

In addition to CPM and PERT approaches, Planning–Programming–Budgeting System (PPBS) has been regarded as an impostant technique associated with policy analysis. The PPBS approach seeks to set clear goals, outputs, and values in the budgetary process, and to create a system of analysis and review in which the costs and benefits of a policy programme could be calculated over several years. This approach is based on'the idea that an organisation's activity can be viewed as the production of defined products or outputs. Costs and benefits of each product can be determined. The PPBS aims at locating decisions about pasts of the budget in the context of the whole of the government spending strategy. The model is derived from the classical rational approach, beginning with the identification of goals, objectives, needs and problems, and culminating in monitoring, review, and feedback.

Charles Schultz, who is associated with the advancement of this model, observes that PPBS subjects programmes to competition from alternative and more effective or efficient programmes. Thus, the PPBS approach aims at establishing goals and strategies, analysing their costs and benefits, focusing on objectives to be achieved, and monitoring through an ongoing review of results.

As an approach, it also aims at exercising control on budget expenditures. However, it is argued by some that the PPBS is somewhat ill-suited for monitoring; the PPBS simply failed to live up to its promise. Although the PPBS was largely a failure, its introduction brought into policy management a more comprehensive approach to Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA).

iii) **Activity Bar Chart**

For monitoring technical performance of a policy, the Activity Bar Chart can be mapped. It is an important device for monitoring policy performance as it projects expectations for policy results. The Activity Bar Chart plans each technical activity by time and deliverables. It shows the dates by which those deliverables should be completed. For example, an Activity Bar Chart can be developed for a housing policy designed to replace urban slums with low-cost housing.

15.3.2 Systems Approach

Monitoring is an operational activity, which occurs in the process of implementing a given policy programme. The main objective of monitoring is to ensure that resource inputs are used in such ways as to generate the highest quality of policy outputs. An effective monitoring, therefore, requires proper structuring. Here, structuring in policy work can involve both the structuring of the organisation and structuring the policy programme itself, and the combining of these two structures to provide a framework for integration. The structuring looks at implementation gaps as something that should be analysed in the context of a 'system', which as a whole is involved in the delivery of policy programmes and services. The systems analyst is concerned in knowing how a total sequence of programme activities, and inputs and outputs contribute to the success or failure of a policy delivery programme.

Carter and his associates suggest that a successful implementation system involves four types of control, that is, i) coordination over time; ii) coordination at particular time; iii) detailed logistics and scheduling; and iv) defending and maintaining structural boundaries. It may be emphasised that systems approach lays stress on attaining adequate levels of cooperation and coordination within the policy programme by focusing on the importance of teamwork for effective monitoring.

Effective implementation and its subset monitoring depend on certain elements, such as, formulating a strategy for the monitoring of the policy, and analysing what has happened in terms of what should have happened according to the plan and implementing change so as to make up for the shortfalls in order to realise an objective or goal.

15.3.3 Formative Approach

According to this approach, monitoring starts with a schedule and works for the success of a policy programme when it is being implemented. It involves an analysis of the extent to which a programme is being implemented and the conditions that promote its successful implementation. The implementation stage, therefore, requires formative evaluation, which monitors the way in which a programme is being administered or managed so as to provide feedback that may help to improve the implementation process.

Monitoring of the process of implementation provides techniques for evaluating the way in which a programme is being managed or delivered, Thus, this information is utilised to correct or improve the policy delivery process more effectively. This takes the form of various kinds of centralised Management Information Systems (MIS) that can routinise the collection of information. The MIS has been greatly improved by the use of computers. It helps an ongoing accumulation and organisation of information, which can feed into the managerial decision-making process. A core technique of the MIS approach to evaluation and monitoring is that of using performance measurement as a primary source of information about the effectiveness and efficiency of policy delivery. This is a form of monitoring, which has come to a pre-eminent position since the late 1970s, when there was a growing demand for efficiency measured by inputs and outputs, due to pressures on public finances.

15.3.4 Performance Measurement Approach

Performance Measurement Approach is applied to know about the effectiveness and efficiency of policy delivery. Measurement is akin to monitoring. It means watching Performance Indicators

(PIs) on all parameters with a view to detecting the earliest available signs of any deviation: from desired results or performance. Once it is found that some aspect of the policy is deviating too far from expected parameters then it is the job of the policy implementing manager to exert some influence on that aspect or change the parameters. Generally, some adjustment can be made in resource utilisation or scheduling. Sometimes, a new technical activity may be taken in hand.

In this approach, Performance Indicators (PIs) can be developed and used. Peter Jackson argues that measures of performance can provide an effective substitute for profits so as to improve the management of schools, hospitals, local government, and other services. Jackson identifies a number of roles PIs can play in making for better implementation, such as, increasing accountability; providing a basis for policy planning and control; supplying important information to monitor organisational activities; and identifying the basis of a staff appraisal system.

Jackson believes that well designed and implemented measures can enhance the value for money (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness) and have a part to play in the delivery of public goods and services.

The case for PIs would maintain that they have a number of advantages: they determine progress in moving towards goals; identify problem areas; and contribute to improving personnel management overall. Thus, on the whole, PIs help to improve the capacity of the bureaucracy to control organisations and people.

15.3.5 Monitoring and Control Compliance

The delivery of public policy is unlikely and uncertain without monitoring compliance. A good policy, if it is to be carried out, therefore, must have effective means of enforcement. Kenneth Boulding distinguishes between three kinds of power, that is, *threat, exchange,* and *love*. Enforcement through threats can have productive and integrative consequences (exercise of power by income tax authorities). The use of exchange power may involve bargaining to settle terms of trade. The power of love may involve an appeal to a moral sense or a sense of citizenship. It calls for compliance on the basis of social and personal responsibility. As a model for a delivery strategy, Bouldings' classification points towards the mix of enforcements: threat, exchange and love.

For proper implementation and effective functioning, Hood examines and identifies four modes of administrative enforcement and their effectiveness.

- Set aside/modify rules (government may choose either to set the rules aside or to modify the rules),
- Spread the word (government may choose to use publicity and persuasion),
- Pursue and punish rule violators (government may choose to use legal and police action),
- Make it difficult and impossible to break rules (in this case the enforcement method involves making the grass physically difficult or inconvenient to get at in the first place).

According to Etzioni, there are three kinds of power that provide a link between the enforcement of public policy and the problems of compliance within the organisations responsible for implementing it. He believes that there are three basic reasons, which compel people in the organisations to comply with rules, orders, discipline or policies. *Firstly,* people do so out of a sense of agreement, love or morality. *Secondly*, they do so because of fear. *Thirdly,* they may do so because it is in their monetary or remunerative interest. Enforcement may, therefore, be the consequence of i) normative (moral), ii) coercive (alienative), or iii) remunerative (calculative) power. A policy may rely on coercision or monetary rewards/sanctions or it may ask people to exercise a moral choice. Keeping the western context in view, Etzioni argues that effective organisations are those, which achieve a balanced mix between low levels of fear (coersion and alienation); and high levels of money (remuneration and calculation), and love (nonnative and moral) involvements. In seeking to make sure that a policy is carried out effectively, implementation will require a mix of different enforcement modes.

iv) Individual Responsibility

With the rise of mass coinmunications and the use of campaigns based on technology information in areas of social (health and education, women's empowerment, and development) and environmental policies, an increasing emphasis is placed on individual responsibility for problems. For example, campaigns on forest conservation urge that we take individual responsibility for forest conservation.

15.4 CONSTRAINTS IN POLICY MONITORING

Effective policy implementation requires adequate monitoring. Policy programmes or activities have to be properly monitored in order to produce the maximum efficiency in resource utilisation. But quite often monitoring is constrained by many factors and forces operating at the internal and external levels. **First** of all, problems in monitoring relates to poor design of the implementing system with regard to provision of all details to enable good monitoring. *Second*, time is a constraint for policy monitoring. Too often the implementing staff feel so pressed to achieve results that they take shortcuts and try to avoid monitoring and control. Experience has shown that monitoring and control when adequately designed and executed can generate the highest quality results in the shortest possible time.

Thircl, a common constraint for the policy implementation authority is the availability of limited corrective actions for application whenever a programme is found to be deviating in some respect from projected performance. For example, cost overruns owing to fluctuations in financial markets often leave the implementing authority with the feeling that their implementation task is becoming difficult.

Fourth, a pervasive obstacle to policy monitoring is ignorance on the part of the monitoring officials about its role and methods. It is often observed that the monitoring staff and key personnel associated with implementation of policies lack the requisite knowledge and skills to monitor and control policy programme performance.

15.5 REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR EFFECTIVE MONITORING

i) Designing **the** Monitoring System

The emphasis in monitoring is on completion of the policy programme or policy activities (technical performance) on schedule (time performance), and within the sanctioned budget (cost performance). To enable this, it is necessary to define precisely the specific characteristics of technical, cost and time on the basis of which performance should be controlled. It is equally important to remain sensitive to deviations in all three elements — technical, time and cost performance. It is not enough to watch cost performance or scheduling alone. Activity Bar Chart, Resource Bar Chart, and Cash Flow Projection tools can be properly designed and developed for monitoring policy performance. These charts and tools can be used to assist considerations, when a noted deviation is worthy of correction and when it is not. It is not enough to watch cost performance or scheduling alone. It is possible for a policy delivery to be on schedule and within budget and still fumble on goal fulfilment.

ii) **Communicating about Performance**

The role of routine communications for policy performance is invaluable. Policy progression, deviations from planned progress, corrections and plans for completion are key components of policy communications. Every person involved in the policy programme requires ongoing communications at various levels of detail. Higher level management (Secretary/Director of the Departtnent concerned or Planning agencies) requires summary reports with a frequency on the status of policy implementation. Operational members of the programme also require detailed information. The objective of communications is to keep people informed so that they are on the sight track, and provide feedback to those involved in the policy. Further, regular meetings to review policy progression must be held at all levels in the organisation.

iii) **Monitoring Progress**

The objective of monitoring and control is to ensure, through the policy implementation process, that resource inputs are used as efficiently as possible to produce the high quality of policy outputs. Policy managers must compare the time, cost, and technical performance of the policy to the budget, schedule, and tasks defined in the policy programme. This should be done in a systematic manner at regular intervals and not in a haphazard way. Any significant deviations from the planned performance (technical, cost, and time) must be reported immediately, as these anomalies affect the viability and success of the whole policy programme.

Further, based on the information below, it is necessary to update the policy regularly. It must also reflect the current status of the policy and any changes that become necessary because of new information, on budgetary or time constraints or other unexpected contingencies.

iv) **Iinproving Capacity of the Monitoring Staff**

Effective monitoring largely depends upon the ability, commitment, and attitude of the monitoring staff. The process of monitoring requires some level of effort on the part of people who are particularly skilled in the process. It requires skills in planning and accounting as well as general management. The monitoring staff need to be delegated the requisite authority to monitor and control. Key functionaries should be made responsible for meaningful contributions to monitor and control decisions.

v) **Taking Corrective Actions**

Policy monitoring and control system, through its reports and meetings, should help in taking or recommending corrective actions when there are any deviations from the planned results. There are generally three types of actions, which can be initiated or taken:

- **Correction and Improvement:** When the policy programme continues to signal merit, a corrective action usually entails a reallocation of resources (staff, money or time).
- **Replanning:** Replanning of the policy programme may be undertaken to reduce or increase the size of the policy programme in terms of staff, budget or time schedule. Replanting means changing peoples' expectations about the policy results.
- **Cancellation:** Cancellation is the last resort of action. It means the cancellation of the whole policy programme. Sometimes this is advisable, particularly in instances of major crises.

15.6 CONCLUSION

The discussion in this Unit bears out that monitoring is the heart of policy management. Its objective is to ensure, through the policy programme implementation, that resource inputs (like people, money, material, and equipment) are used as efficiently as possible to generate the highest quantity and quality policy outputs. Monitoring, like all other aspects of policy management, requires a significant level of coordinated human effort. Monitoring of policy programme is, therefore, a direct investment in public policy management.

15.7 KEY CONCEPTS

Action Plan	:	A plan that describes what needs to be done, when it needs to be completed, at what level, and in which direction.
Control	:	**A** process for assuring that actual performance meets expectations. It implies that all actions / behaviours within limits be adjusted to a pre-fixed policy outline.
Cost-benefit analysis	:	An analysis, often stated as a ratio, used to evaluate a proposed course of action.
Deliverables	:	The clearly defined results, goods or services produced during policy implementation.
Efficiency	:	It is used to denote the output / input ratio of an organisational unit. It means the amount of effort required to produce a given level of effectiveness.
Management Information System	:	**A** system used to chart activities and data and to track progress and information flow in a policy programme, which is usually computerised.

15.8 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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15.9 ACTIVITIES

1) Define monitoring and explain the objectives and key factors to be monitored.
2) Discuss the constraints in policy monitoring and identify the remedial measures for effective monitoring.
3) Outline the various approaches to policy monitoring and point out the limitations of each of them.
4) It is said that implementation requires a mix of different enforcement modes. Explain and elaborate the statement.