UNIT 17 REVIEW, FEEDBACK AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Structure

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17.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Block so far you have learnt about the sources of gender-sensitive policy planning, policy formulation and development, policy implementation and monitoring, policy analysis, and optimum utilization of resources for best policy outcomes. In the final Unit of this Block you will study about review, feedback and future directions of gender-sensitive policies and programmes. Review and feedback are very essential to reframe or modify the policy according to the changing environment. Review and feedback will, indeed, serve as an input for framing new policies as well. In this context, this Unit discusses David Easton’s input-output analysis and its importance in review and policy feedback. Also you will study about how the review and feedback of certain policies and programmes of Government of India, especially for women, have changed the entire approach to women’s empowerment and development.

17.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe the importance of review and feedback of policies;
- explain the review and feedback mechanism in the context of Government of India programmes; and
- examine the participatory tool of social audit.

17.3 DAVID EASTON’S INPUT-OUTPUT ANALYSIS

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<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Demands</th>
<th>A Political System</th>
<th>Policies</th>
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Feedback
Policies and programmes are always considered as an output from the political system which aim to create certain kinds of changes in society. But the outcome of those policies cannot be considered successful as it might not have created the expected change. At this juncture it is essential to have feedback on those policies and programmes which may further serve as an input to the political system to create a new kind of or modified policy output. David Easton in his Systems theory has clearly explained this process. In a welfare state, planning is the activity done mainly by the political system. The planning process is the outcome of political actions. These actions are done through inputs and outputs. Inputs are the demands from people and civil society. In the words of David Easton, these inputs give a political system its dynamic character. They furnish it with information that the system is called upon to process and with the energy to keep it going. The environment also plays an important role in raising the demand and shaping its course of discussion. People of every society act within the framework of an ongoing culture that shapes their general goals, specific objectives and the procedure to make their demands into policy or planning. But David Easton has also said that not all demands originate or have their major locus in the environment. Important types stem from situations occurring within a political system itself. Other than demand, support is also required to keep a political system operating. Demands are only the raw material out of which finished products called decisions are manufactured as said by David Easton. Without support for particular planning, and policy action, demands cannot be made into reality. In the case of gender planning support is very much required to formulate a plan and implement the plan. Through this the output can be analyzed. An output of a political system is a political decision or policy. Since the specific outputs of a system are policy decisions most of the system analysts like David Easton have said that it is upon the government that the final responsibility falls for matching or balancing outputs of decisions against input of demands. This output is not considered as the final outcome and the policy or decisions which come out as outcomes have to be analyzed and the feedback on the policy has to be taken. This feedback will further serve as an input for further action. It describes a situation in which one element influences itself. It also explores the extent to which public attitudes reflect learning from past government initiatives.

Feedback will generally look into the following:

- Relevance of policy;
- Impact created by the policy;
- Lacunae in the policy; and
- Policy outcome.

To understand the importance of feedback, the following illustration will be more helpful for you. This quotation was taken from the 1990 World Development Report as cited in the book Monitoring and Evaluating Social Programs in Developing Countries: A Handbook for Policy Makers, Managers, and Researchers written by Joseph Valadez and Michael Bamberger published by the World Bank in the year 1994.

**Box 17.1: Feedback Study on Green Revolution**

Modern seed varieties, irrigation and the increased commercialization of crops have commonly been accompanied by the greater use of hired labour, mostly from landless households. The new technologies have also had important implications for the division of household labour. Wage labour has replaced unpaid labour, and in some cases male labour has replaced female labour. This has raised concerns that technological change has harmed women.
Modern varieties, in general, raised demand for hired female labour. They usually require more labour per acre—particularly in tasks typically done by women, such as weeding, harvesting, and post-harvest work. A study on three Indian states concluded that the use of hired female labour was greater on farms that had adopted modern varieties than on those that had not. In some cases mechanization has led to lower female employment. The outcome has often depended on the tasks mechanized. When predominantly female tasks were given over to machinery, women were displaced. When women were displaced, the effect on their incomes and on household welfare depended on whether they found more productive jobs elsewhere. Overall non-farm employment did increase, but data classified by gender are scanty.

The above example has shown the impact created by the Green Revolution in the lives of women. Any gender sensitized government should consider this event as feedback and has to create policy accordingly to solve the issues emerging out of it. Policy measures must be taken to convert unpaid activity of women to paid activity; adequate measures should be taken to avoid displacement of women. Even if women like to move from their place of origin, proper facilities should be made available in the displaced location. Hence, feedback should be considered often as an opportunity to review policy.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use this space given below to answer the question.

ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) What are the aspects which feedback can help to examine?

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17.4 REVIEW OF POLICY

Policy review is explained through the Government of India’s Rural Development Programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). A large number of poverty alleviation programmes are being implemented in the country to tackle different dimensions of poverty like food security, housing and employment. A huge amount of resources are also invested in these programmes. In the year 2005-2006, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India allocated Rs. 4000 crore to Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana programme. In the year 2011-12 Government of India allocated ₹40,000 crores of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme. So every year government is allocating a huge amount for poverty alleviation schemes. In this section we analyze two programmes. We start with IRDP and we will find out the reasons for its failure and how IRDP programme has been modified and implemented as Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). Success of the rural development programmes depends upon many factors. Government should take careful measures and viable methods from formulation of a programme till implementation. Also, there should be an effective monitoring mechanism to ensure proper implementation in the field. It is now fairly well understood that there are many problems in the implementation of these programmes rendering them largely ineffective in terms of their targeting and impact. Hence, the recognition of the problems plaguing these programmes and the need to improve their performance assumes importance in tackling the problem
of persisting poverty. Before we get into the functioning and performance of a major poverty alleviation programme called Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) being implemented since 1999, we will analyze the Integrated Rural Development Programme. SGSY was particularly analyzed, because SGSY is the extension of IRDP and other programmes. SGSY is not only a poverty alleviation programme, it increased the participation of women and the marginalized in the poverty alleviation schemes. It brought women together and made them work as teams. It also integrated effectively community, government and financial institutions. The earlier mentioned points will help us to examine how SGSY proposes to address some of the problems identified with regard to the earlier poverty alleviation programmes, especially the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and whether it can really bring about poverty alleviation. Through this discussion we will help you gain an understanding that IRDP has been modified and improved and reformulated as SGSY. We will look into the design aspects of SGSY and analyze the evidence regarding how SGSY is being implemented through a review of the Integrated Rural Development Programme through reliable empirical studies. It would be worthwhile here to first look at the experience of IRDP, which was one of the major direct attack programmes on poverty and cull out some of the lessons learnt from its implementation. As we know, poverty alleviation in India has been sought to be addressed mainly by pursuing a strategy of attaining growth with equity. The realization that the growth oriented strategy of the initial decades of planning was not able to make much of a dent in reducing poverty led the state to subsequently adopt policies aimed at attacking poverty more directly (Rao 1990). As a result, it is observed, ‘Progressive reduction and ultimate eradication of poverty became one of the major goals of India’s economic policy since the beginning of the Fifth Five Year Plan. The basic strategy of combining the minimum needs programme with programmes of employment and income generation took concrete shape towards the end of the fifth plan when IRDP was launched’ (Singh 1999:224). The genesis of IRDP can be traced to the realization by the policy makers that the special area development programmes like Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) and target group programmes like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) meant for small and marginal farmers had failed to make any significant change in the poverty situation (Rath 1990). Moreover, it was observed that the ‘constraints from which these programmes have suffered have not been financial but organizational inadequacies and lack of clear cut plans for development of an area to which coordinated efforts of all the concerned agencies could be directed’ (ibid:334). To overcome this constraint, IRDP was introduced which replaced multiple programmes by a single integrated programme. IRDP, thus, was the first programme to attempt an integrated approach to poverty alleviation. IRDP was the only programme meant for self-employment in the beginning. But, with the experience gained through implementation of IRDP, a number of other allied programmes were introduced to supplement IRDP efforts in poverty alleviation. These programmes were as follows: (i) Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) started in 1979 intended to take care of the training requirement of the people who were selected under IRDP; (ii) Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) started in 1982 to focus particularly on the rural poor women; (iii) Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA) started in 1992 to look after the modernization and improving the efficiency and productivity of the poor rural artisans; and, (iv) The Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) introduced during 1996-97 in order to focus on the land-based activities, particularly the irrigation requirement of the small and marginal farmers (GOI 2001).

IRDP and allied programmes continued as main programmes till the launch of SGSY in 1999. IRDP was in operation for almost two decades. The experience of implementing IRDP has given some important insights into poverty alleviation
efforts in India and also raised a number of concerns over the effectiveness of these efforts. It was a nationwide programme which had very high outreach of poor households. In about two decades it could cover about 54.4 million households in the country with a cumulative investment of ₹ 339.64 billion of funds made both by way of bank credit and subsidy.

However, IRDP was beset with many problems. The main problems identified were improper targeting due to wrong identification of the poor and the problem of leakage. Further, IRDP’s record of achieving the main goal of lifting the poor above the poverty line is also very low (Rath 1990). A Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) study carried out in 1985 (GoI 1985) identified many concerns in IRDP implementation. The study pointed out lack of a strong administrative set up to facilitate the implementation of the programme.

The deficiencies observed by the study were low staffing, inadequacy of infrastructure for providing assets to the selected beneficiaries, slack in the follow up of guidelines, improper identification of viable income generation activities, low infrastructure and marketing support to beneficiaries, weak monitoring, low involvement of banks in the selection of beneficiaries or preparation of project profile and an overall lack of good coordination among various implementing agencies like the district industries centre, banks and training institutions.

A last concurrent evaluation study points out that only 14.8 per cent of the beneficiaries assisted under IRDP could cross the poverty line (GoI 2001). The recovery performance of loans was also poor. Some of the other problems associated with IRDP were absence of systematic project appraisal, lack of attention to viability of the project, lack of follow up by either banks or government agencies and mis-utilization of assistance by beneficiaries. The same concurrent evaluation also pointed out that the desired linkages within IRDP programmes were missing and the essential integration of different agencies in the implementation of anti-poverty programmes was never available (ibid 2001). Similarly, it has been identified that the ‘multiplicity of programmes under IRDP came to be viewed as separate programmes resulting in lack of proper social intermediation, absence of desired linkages among these programmes and implementation concerned more with achieving the individual programme targets rather than the main issue of generating sustainable income’ (GoI Undated).

Thus, though IRDP had good intentions, it was found lacking in implementation. As a poverty alleviation programme neither could it ensure participation of the poor nor help them in crossing the poverty line through sound project formulation and implementation. Hence, despite achieving a massive outreach, the impact of IRDP was found to be of limited nature.

### 17.5 REVIEW OF SGSY

The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) has been introduced as an answer to many of the problems faced by the IRDP. The Committee constituted by the Planning Commission to review the self- employment and wage employment programmes in 1997, recommended merger of all self-employment programmes for the rural poor and a shift from the individual beneficiaries approach to a group -based approach. It emphasized the identification of activity clusters in specific areas and strong training and marketing linkages (GoI 2002b). These recommendations were accepted and SGSY was launched on 1st April 1999 by merging IRDP and allied programmes.

The main objective of the SGSY programme is to bring the assisted poor families, who are called Swarojgaris, above the poverty line by ensuring appreciable
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sustained level of income over a period of time. The objective is to be achieved by organizing the rural poor into self help groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilization, training and capacity building and provision of income generation assets (GoI 2004).

SGSY is described as a holistic programme of microenterprise development in rural areas with emphasis on organizing the rural poor into self help groups, capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure support, technology, credit and marketing linkages. The Working Group constituted by the Planning Commission on rural poverty alleviation programmes for the Tenth Five Year Plan mentions that social mobilization of the poor in rural areas is an important feature of the SGSY. Further, it states that SGSY believes in social mobilization of the poor before providing them assistance to take up economic activities. The basic departure of SGSY from the earlier programmes is the group approach for the social mobilization of the poor. The report also includes a caveat that there should not be overemphasis on quicker results, as otherwise SGSY will also meet the same fate as that of the earlier programmes. To facilitate the process of social mobilization of the poor, the working group recognizes the importance of bringing in NGOs who are better equipped to facilitate the process, as it is a known fact that government agencies are not well equipped for the task. The working group, therefore, envisages that the involvement of the NGOs would be very essential in ensuring the success of the self-employment programme during the Tenth Plan (GoI 2001).

The SGSY guidelines (GoI 2004) also emphasize that the programme should adopt a process-oriented approach and support the SHG concept as it helps the poor to build their self-confidence through community action. It is envisaged that the process would help in strengthening the socio-economic empowerment of the rural poor and also improve their collective bargaining power (GoI 2004). To overcome the deficiencies of the earlier self-employment programmes, an in-built strategy is to be adopted through integration of various agencies. For this to happen in SGSY implementation, the guidelines visualize a close coordination among the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), line departments of the state governments, banks, NGOs and Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) within a district.

To summarize, SGSY, a major programme of poverty alleviation was implemented in a holistic way by incorporating the key elements of ‘good governance’ like social mobilization with emphasis on capacity building; integrated support through credit; infrastructure, technology and marketing so as to ensure that the poor earn an appreciable, sustained level of income over a period of time, and build the self-confidence of the participants through community action. Thus, it can be seen that SGSY, in terms of its approach, has tried to deviate from IRDP by emphasizing on the issue of social mobilization of the poor and trying to bring in integration in providing various backward and forward linkages and in the functioning of various agencies involved in its implementation.

The participants of SGSY, called Swarozgaris, can be either individuals or groups. In either case SGSY subscribes to the list of Below Poverty Line (BPL) households generated by the BPL census for providing financial and other assistance. The BPL list has to be approved by the Grama Sabha in a village. The Swarozgaris are to be selected in the Gram Sabha in a transparent manner. Since the BPL households may remain absent from Gram Sabhas many a times, the BDO along with the banker and Sarpanch is expected to visit each hamlet of the village to ensure proper selection of BPL members (GoI 2004).
Formation and Promotion of Groups

SGSY lays emphasis on the group approach rather than financing individuals. This clearly appears to reflect the recognition of the need to adopt the group approach as being followed by various microfinance interventions in the country. The SGSY approach of organizing the poor stems from the conviction that there is tremendous potential within the poor to help themselves and that potential can be harnessed by organizing them. The SGSY guidelines elaborate the various stages through which this process of organizing goes through and also gives broad guidelines on how such groups should function. It is emphasized that the group formation should not be driven by any targets but lend itself to a process approach. SGSY also recognizes the importance of interventions by NGOs in group formation and development of the groups and has made specific provisions to involve NGOs, community-based organizations, and individuals to facilitate this process. The idea here was that such NGOs or agencies would stay with the group for a period of two to three years and enable the groups to mature into self-managed people’s organizations (GoI 2004).

(This case study was adopted and modified based on the paper written by H.S. Shylendra and Kishore Bhirdikar of Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) entitled “A Critical Analysis of Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)” (Published in International Journal of Rural Management, 1(2), 2005, Pp 203-21).

17.6 SOCIAL AUDIT

The method of Social Audit also can be used to analyze policies. It can be used to review the existing policies with the help of stakeholders. Social Audit is a tool to assess the performance of the organization which delivers goods and services to the society. Organization which includes the principles of democracy, justice, as well as the good governance principles (transparency, accountability, accessibility, quality, effectiveness, efficiency and equity) in their programme implementation can conduct the process of social audit to improve the delivery of services. The process of social audit will be supportive in the performance of the organization. It will also be helpful for the organizations to understand the existing nature of programme implementation and ultimately it will improve the performance on the social and ethical side. A Social Audit in a particular organization will facilitate the organization in narrowing down the gaps between vision/goal and reality and efficiency and effectiveness. It is also a technique to understand, measure, verify, report on and to improve the social performance of the organization. It is a process through which organizations can understand the implications of their activities in society or their organization itself. The process of social audit can be initiated by the organization itself by involving their stakeholders. To undertake the process of social audit, participation of stakeholders is significant. Stakeholders include clients, employees, volunteers, and the community at large. In a social audit process, the audit team conducts an investigation to find out the functioning of the organization, the needs of the community and the level of satisfaction of the community. This will be carried out with the help of simple participatory methodological tools. A social audit process will help an organization for further planning and to carry out mid-term correction. It might have an impact on the process of governance by valuing the voice of the stakeholders. The process of social audit ensures that the women and men participate equally in the process. By ensuring the stakeholders’ participation, social audit promotes transparency and accountability in governance.
Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use this space given below to answer the question.
   ii) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1) Explain the concept of Social Audit.

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17.7 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have examined the significance of the concept outcome rather than output. This was explained by using the Davis Eastern systems theory. After explaining the systems theory, the schemes of IRDP and SGSY were described. The second section was started by explaining the rationale behind the implementation of poverty alleviation schemes like IRDP and the reasons for its failure were also discussed. The scheme of SGSY was also discussed. Lastly the participatory research tool of Social Audit was studied and its relevance in policy analysis was also given in this Unit. This clearly shows that not only policy making, policy analysis and reviewing of existing policies is significant. This will help the policy makers to understand the impact of policies among the stakeholders.

Policies and programmes have always been considered as an output from the political system which aim to create certain kinds of changes in society. But the outcome of those policies which may not have created the expected change cannot be considered successful.

IRDP was a nationwide programme with a very high outreach. It covered about ₹ 54.4 million households with a cumulative investment over two decades of ₹ 339.64 billion. The main problems identified were improper targeting due to wrong identification of the poor and the problem of leakage. IRDP’s record of achieving the main goal of lifting the poor above the poverty line is also very low. Lack of a strong administrative set up to facilitate the implementation of the programme was also pointed out. Very few beneficiaries could cross the poverty line (GoI 2001) and the needed integration could not be achieved.

SGSY was launched as an extension of the IRDP and other programmes. The main objective of the SGSY programme is to bring assisted poor families above the poverty line by ensuring appreciable sustained level of income over a period of time. The objective is to be achieved by organizing the rural poor into self help groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilization, training, capacity building and provision of income generation assets. Since the programme lays emphasis on the group approach rather than financing individuals, it has focused on social mobilization of the poor. It has also tried to bring in integration of various backward and forward linkages and in functioning of various agencies involved in its implementation.

A social audit is a tool to assess the performance of the organization delivering goods and services to society. It can help the process of further planning and carrying out mid-term correction. The process of governance may be impacted by valuing the voice of stakeholders. The process of social audit can help to ensure that women and men participate equally in the process. By ensuring stakeholder participation, social audit promotes transparency and accountability.


17.8 GLOSSARY

Green Revolution: The term Green Revolution refers to the renovation of agricultural practices beginning in Mexico in the 1940s. Because of its success in producing more agricultural products there, Green Revolution technologies spread worldwide in the 1950s and 1960s, significantly increasing the amount of calories produced per acre of agriculture. The beginnings of the Green Revolution are often attributed to Norman Borlaug, an American scientist interested in agriculture. In the 1940s, he began conducting research in Mexico and developed new disease resistant high-yielding varieties of wheat. By combining Borlaug’s wheat varieties with new mechanized agricultural technologies, Mexico was able to produce more wheat than was needed by its own citizens, leading to its becoming an exporter of wheat by the 1960s. Prior to the use of these varieties, the country was importing almost half of its wheat supply. The introduction of high-yielding varieties of seeds after 1965 and the increased use of fertilizers and irrigation are known collectively as the Green Revolution, which provided the increase in production needed to make India self-sufficient in food grains, thus improving agriculture in India. Famine in India, once accepted as inevitable, has not returned since the introduction of Green Revolution crops. Of the high-yielding seeds, wheat produced the best results. All India Radio (AIR) played a vital role in creating awareness for these methods. Along with high yielding seeds and irrigation facilities, the enthusiasm of farmers mobilized the idea of the agricultural revolution and is also credited to All India Radio.

17.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) Feedback will generally look into the following:
   - Relevance of policy;
   - Impact created by the policy;
   - Lacunae in the policy; and
   - Policy outcome

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) Social Audit is a tool to assess the performance of the organization which delivers goods and services to the society. An organization which includes the principles of democracy, justice, as well as the good governance principles (transparency, accountability, accessibility, quality, effectiveness, efficiency and equity) in their programme implementation can conduct the process of social audit to improve their delivery of services. The process of social audit will be supportive in the performance of the organization. It will also be helpful for
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the organizations to understand their existing nature of programme implementation and ultimately it will improve their performance on the social and ethical side.

17.10 REFERENCES


Review, Feedback and Future Directions


17.11 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1) Examine the David Eastern System Theory with suitable examples.

2) Analyze the Government of India Rural Development schemes of SGSY and IRDP.