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# UNIT 14 POLICY MONITORING AND ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES\*

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## Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Meaning and Objectives of Policy Monitoring
- 14.3 Techniques for Policy Monitoring and Analysis
  - 14.3.1 Monitoring Technical Performance
  - 14.3.2 Monitoring Time Performance
  - 14.3.3 Monitoring Cost Performance
  - 14.3.4 Monitoring all Factors Together
- 14.4 Constraints in Policy Monitoring
- 14.5 Remedial Measures for Effective Monitoring
- 14.6 Conclusion
- 14.7 Glossary
- 14.8 References
- 14.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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## 14.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the concept of public policy evaluation;
- Elucidate the purpose and objectives of policy evaluation;
- Explain the nature of policy evaluation tools;
- Discuss the techniques of policy monitoring; and
- Examine the constraints in policy performance.

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## 14.1 INTRODUCTION

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Implementation of a public policy programme (including delivery of goods and services to the target subjects) carries no meaning or serves no purpose for which it is intended, unless it is adequately monitored. Policy monitoring is of critical importance to the government, as well as to the public in general in terms of achievement of intended results or goals of the public policy. It must be realised that a policy, if it is to achieve its intended goals, and better its performance, must be monitored and controlled.

Monitoring is essentially a subject of the implementation process. It is an activity which occurs in the course of implementing a programme or policy. It is in the

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process of monitoring that the implementor actually gets to begin seeing the results of policy. The significance of monitoring of public policy lies in seeing that intended results are achieved in time and through an efficient use of resources. This Unit will explain the concept of policy monitoring and explain its different techniques. It will also examine the constraints in policy monitoring process.

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## 14.2 MEANING AND OBJECTIVES OF POLICY MONITORING

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‘Monitoring’ is the process of observing what goes on. It is “the process of inducing action for adherence to schedule” (Choudhary, 1986). Policy monitoring has come to mean the process of observing policy implementation progress, utilising resource 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 time and budget.

For Mantel (*et al.*, 2009), “monitoring is the collection, recording and reporting of project information that is of importance to the project manager and other relevant stakeholders...Control uses the monitored data and information to bring actual performance into agreement with the plan”.

But monitoring is not controlling, as controlling is the process of making adjustments, which tend to correct the deviations from planned progress. The purpose of control is: (i) the stewardship of organisational assets, and (ii) the regulation of results through the alteration of activities (*Ibid.*). For example, if the factory management fails to install pollution-control devices to prevent air pollution, we may simply decide to proceed against the factory management under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981. On the other hand, if monitoring shows that a particular activity is deviating from planned parameters then the management takes required measures to replan that particular activity. But if there is a significant variance from planned parameters, it is important to analyse the source of deviation before deciding what measures are needed (Sunny and Baker, 1998).

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 which are used for both efficiency of resource utilisation and effectiveness of policy implementation are inherent in the policymaking process (Anderson, 2000). The monitor has to be able to appraise resource use, technical activities and policy implementation results, with an amount of detail, which permits the monitor to make changes or corrections when necessary.

On the contrary, if the monitor flies too high, as it were, then the details will be lost and the opportunity for effective policy control will be over. The monitor often becomes buried in the details of policy programme and loses sight of overall policy performance standards and objectives. Policy monitoring helps in designing and implementing systems for the processes, which provide just the right amount of detail for effective control of policy execution. Experience has shown that effective monitoring can ensure the proper execution of policy with good results in the shortest period of time.

An effective monitoring of public policies aids in cost reduction, time management 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's performance as close as possible to the objectives of the policy. Therefore, it is important that monitoring and control processes are given due importance and are designed properly. Further, monitoring also helps in communicating the need for coordination among those working on the tasks and subtasks of the policy activity (Mantel *et al., op.cit.*).

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### 14.3 TECHNIQUES FOR POLICY MONITORING AND ANALYSIS

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For the promotion of successful implementation of public policies, monitoring is the best technique. And to this effect, research scholars have promoted a variety of approaches and techniques. Some of the approaches in regard to monitoring of public policies are:

- (i) **Formative Approach:** Increasingly, this monitoring of the process of implementation provides policymakers and managers with techniques for evaluating the way in which a programme is being managed or delivered, so that this information is utilised to correct or improve the policy delivery process more effectively. This takes the form of Management Information System (MIS) including the use of computers to provide a centralised information system.
- (ii) **Performance Measurement Approach:** 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 deviations from desired results or performance.
- (iii) **Managerial Approach:** Managerial approach to monitoring has more or less a business-like style in order to generate the best policy outcomes. In this context, three approaches, namely (i) Critical Path Method (CPM), (ii) Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) and (iii) Planning-Programming-Budgeting System (PPBS) have gained wide recognition not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector.
- (iv) **Systems Approach:** Carter (*et al., 1984*) suggest that a successful implementation system involves *four* types of control: (i) coordination over time; (ii) coordination at particular times; (iii) detailed logistics and scheduling; and (iv) defending and maintaining structural boundaries. It may be emphasised that systems approach lays stress on attaining good levels of cooperation and coordination within the policy programmes by focusing on the importance of teamwork for effective monitoring.
- (v) **Power and Compliance Approaches:** Implementation, monitoring and control compliance of policy delivery in the form of goods and services finally fulfil the intentions of policymakers. In this context, Boulding (1990) distinguishes between *three* kinds of power: *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.

Besides these approaches to policy monitoring, there are a variety of techniques of policy monitoring. Now, we will discuss the main techniques. Monitoring like other activities in the policy cycle requires a significant level of effort, including investment. Monitoring has a role in several aspects of public policy delivery.

From policy performance perspective, there are *three* areas in which policy monitoring has to play its role: 1. Technical performance; 2. Time performance; and 3. Cost performance. Monitoring of these *three* areas involve several techniques, which are applied in the policy delivery. Let us focus on these now:

### 14.3.1 Monitoring Technical Performance

A number of technical activities, which are involved in the policy delivery are required to be monitored and controlled through the application of certain techniques to achieve the desired targets. Some important techniques are briefed here:

**Activity Team as Monitor:** In the first place the activity team, which is most directly responsible for conducting the work that leads to the deliverable should be assigned the task of monitoring. To be effective, monitoring team must be delegated to the operational levels of policy delivery.

**Activity Bar Chart:** For monitoring technical performance of the policy, an Activity Bar Chart is a fundamental instrument. The Chart can provide information relating to: (i) list of objectives to be achieved; (ii) calendar for the policy delivery; (iii) list of programmes / activities to be performed with starting and ending dates; and (iv) list of people (personnel) with allocated functions and responsibilities. The Activity Bar Chart plans each technical activity by time and deliverables. This is one place, where deliverables become important instruments for policy management. They are tangible (can be seen and ascertained) results, which indicate performance. Sometimes they are only written reports of tasks completed and results of those tasks. At other times, a planning document can be developed for showing Staff Allocation Matrix, which can be used to decide how we should assign available programme personnel.

**Proportion – Completed Measures:** Some monitoring specialists think of other types of policy management in which a proportion-completed measures could be used to monitor technical performance. For example, the National Health Policy, 2017 (replacing the NHP, 2002) lays down certain targets to be achieved over time. The NHP has come up with a comprehensive roadmap to a healthier India by ensuring better access to healthcare by the poor. Another example of this Proportion-Completed Measure would be construction of a road. The new BJP government (w.e.f., 26 May, 2014) announced policy measures in the 2014 budget to achieve 25 km/day of road construction in Financial Year 2015—a big jump from 8 km/day in Financial Year 2014.

How then is technical performance monitoring done. As with all monitoring, it starts in the planning phase. At that time, the activity team predicts its rate of achievement on scale. It is, then, possible for the activity team to measure the actual proportion of road constructed at the end of say one month of this policy project. Tied to the policy deliverables approach, it becomes a very reliable tool for the government activity teams.

**Peer Review:** The term ‘peer’ simply refers to a group of technically qualified people, for instance, judges, doctors, engineers etc. Peers are used when more objective measures of technical performance are not available. The technique of measuring technical performance of policy delivery depends on the ability of the group (peer review) to estimate the degree of technical completion at any point in time. The fact that they are peers suggests that they are colleagues with the programme implementing staff. It is useful especially to evaluate the quality of work done. The technical peers review the purpose and relevance of the policy programme, the technical problems faced and the path to completion of policy programme. The peer review depends on the knowledge, capacity and attitude of the peers for its effectiveness.

**Third Party Technical Review:** In the case of third party technical review, the monitoring is done by a third party. The third party technical review works like a peer review, but people in it are largely unknown by those most intimately involved in the policy programme. Sometimes, programme sponsors, funders or Steering Committee members want to get technical performance monitored by parties, which have no interest or stake in the policy programme. Sometimes this approach is adopted for phases of crisis in the programme. But in large and complex policy programmes (forestry, health and education), they can be planned to occur at periods, which help ensure adequate policy control. The main advantage is the objectivity and expertise, which a third party can bring to the programme. It is especially effective if it is planned as part of the ongoing project management process. Further, it is added here that these five techniques to monitoring technical performance are more powerful, when applied in combination.

### 14.3.2 Monitoring Time Performance

The purpose of monitoring time is to ensure timely policy delivery. Time, in the context of a policy delivery, is planned in the form of schedules. If one indicates on the Activity Bar Chart regarding when programmes are expected to be completed or actually delivered, one has a useful method of monitoring time in relation to technical performance of a given policy. For monitoring time performance, two techniques are found to be useful. These are Resource Bar Chart and Schedule of Expenditure.

**Resource Bar Chart:** Mantel (*et al.*, 2009) and his associates argue that “the amount of resources that can be allocated, of course, depends on the timing of the allocation as well as on the total supply of resources available for allocation.” Resource Bar Chart helps us to consider what the impact of schedule delays will be on all activities of the policy programme. For example, of the 500 cities to be rejuvenated over five years under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT, launched on 25 June 2015) programme, 476 cities have been selected.

With the help of the Resource Bar Chart, any kind of resources can be arrayed against time in the chart and then one can find, for example, whether there has been some delay in mobilising the consultants for policy manpower and management. Hence, this monitoring device helps us predict when logistics people have to make arrangement for consultants etc. Matters relating to delay in the arrival of the specialists can be recorded in the Resource Bar Chart.

**Schedule of Expenditure:** Policy activities need to be carried out on schedule. It is also possible to array costs against the time dimension. Much as with technical

performance of the policy programme, it is possible to plan the schedule of expenditure for the programme. For instance, once the budgeting of individual activities is over, the budgets can be aggregated by output. Then the division heads can calculate the monthly expenditures expected throughout the programme. Thus, on the basis of activity-level monitoring data, the format permits the policy management team to monitor the rate of expenditure for the policy delivery (Peart, 1971). The chart can be developed for the purpose of knowing the rate of expenditure across all activities of the policy programme.

### 14.3.3 Monitoring Cost Performance

Budget generally reflects the policies the government pursues. Since the 1980s, with the advance of computer-aided technology and better standardisation, budgeting has made significant advances both in terms of techniques and methodology (PPBS, ZBB, POB, etc. are popular) (Schick, 1995).

**Budget as a Tool for Monitoring:** The overall policy programme budget can be a tool for monitoring, if it is compared to actual costs, as they are incurred. Its primary shortcoming, however, is that notice of a financial deviation may come too late to do anything about it. This is because the programme budget is comprised of aggregated cost category totals. But if we have cost category budgets at that level, then we can begin to find financial deviations earlier in the process. For this purpose, the financial expert can help the activity team set up a simple monthly statement, which compares actual to planned expenditures per category. This periodic statement reflects financial activity during the current period for the entire programme up to this point in time, how much is committed, what is expected to be spent and an anticipated variance (Mantel, *op.cit.*).

**Performance to Budget as a Tool for Monitoring:** Performance to Budget statement with time component has also been developed as a tool to monitor cost performance. Before it computes a sub-total of actual expenditures to completion of the policy programme, which is calculated on the basis of an average expenditure per unit of time. It is based on an assumption that the programme will continue spending, on an average, at the same rate it has over the first, say six months. As long as that assumption is more or less correct, this appears to be a good way to monitor cost performance.

**Cash Flow Projection:** Cash flow is another useful tool for monitoring policy programme finances (Robbins and Coulter, 1998). Cash flow projection combines the parameters of cash (budget) and time. It is useful in situations in which the authorities wish to monitor expenditures in comparison to income from donors (Peart, *op.cit.*) (Such as World Bank for funding Primary School education in select districts in Haryana). It may be stated that the Cash Flow Projection is often used because programmes generally are funded on a schedule of payments, which is designed to match the plan of expenditures. This helps in estimating the costs and actual incomes of the policy programme. The Cash Flow Projection, in a way, permits the monitoring staff not only to assess the costs and incomes but also anticipate cash shortages regarding the whole programme.

### 14.3.4 Monitoring all Factors Together

It is essential to remain sensitive to deviations in all the three elements, that is technical, time and cost performance. Policy results can be best realised, when monitoring of all the performance criteria is done simultaneously. As already

emphasised in the preceding sections of this Unit that it is not sufficient to monitor cost or time performance alone. It is possible, for example, for a programme to be on schedule and within cost and still in problem. The graph, properly developed, can show what has been achieved and what remains to be achieved. The plan can call for about 15 per cent of the technical work to be completed by the end of March; 30 per cent by 30 September; 45 per cent by 31 December; and so on. The chart is a very useful tool for monitoring a policy programme. It should present *three* dimensions – technical, time and cost performance. The difficulty in maintaining such a chart is in determining the percentage completed in a valid manner. The graph can be used to assist considerations of when a noted deviation is requiring correction or change and when it is not. The policy monitoring and control system, through its reports and meetings assist in deciding what corrective action is feasible and effective.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.  
ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. What do you understand by the term Policy Monitoring?

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2. Briefly describe the techniques of Policy Monitoring and Analysis.

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**14.4 CONSTRAINTS IN POLICY MONITORING**

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Policy programmes or activities have to be properly monitored in order to produce the greatest efficiency in resource utilisation. But quite often, monitoring is constrained by many factors and forces operating at the internal and external levels.

In the **first** place, problem relates to *poor design* of the policy monitoring and control system. Poorly designed monitoring framework affects the efficiency in resource utilisation, while ensuring the probability of quality policy results. **Second**, *time is a constraint* for policy monitoring. Too often the implementing staff feel so hard-pressed to achieve results that they take shortcuts and avoid management steps like monitoring and control. Experience has shown that monitoring and control, when adequately designed and executed, are processes which can generate the highest quality results in the shortest amount of time. **Third**, a common constraint for the policy implementation manager is the *shortage of*

*corrective actions*, which could be applied when the programme is shown to be deviating in some respect from projected performance. For example, cost overruns owing to fluctuations in financial markets often leave managers with the feeling that their implementation task is becoming difficult. **Fourth**, a pervasive obstacle to policy monitoring is *ignorance about its role and methods*. It is often observed that the monitoring staff and key personnel associated with implementing policies are not well-prepared to monitor and control policy programme performance. **Fifth**, there is no *in-built mechanism* introduced in the policy programme for making an analysis of the monitored information. It has been observed that projects suffer, as developers are given projects without due clearances.

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## 14.5 REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR EFFECTIVE MONITORING

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As already mentioned in the beginning of this Unit, monitoring is an activity, which occurs in the process of implementing a policy programme. To generate the highest quality policy output, monitoring requires a significant level of effort. Investing in monitoring is a direct investment in policy management. Following are some ways and means of enhancing the capacity of policy monitoring:

### *Designing the Monitoring System*

One of the most important roles of the policy management director in monitoring is to design and implement systems for the process, which can provide good control of the policy delivery programme. In this connection, Mantel (*et al., op.cit.*) observe that “the key to setting up a monitoring system is to identify the special characteristics of performance, cost, and time that need to be controlled in order to achieve the projects’ goals as stated in the action plan.” It is important to remain sensitive to deviations in all *three* factors – technical, time and cost performance. It is possible for a policy delivery to be on schedule and within budget and still in deep trouble. Activity Bar Chart, Resource Bar Chart, Cash Flow Projection tools can be properly designed and developed for monitoring policy performance. These charts and tools can be used to assist considerations of when a noted deviation is worthy of correction and when it is not.

### *Communicating about Performance*

A good monitoring and control system requires monitoring of communication system, which works efficiently from the activity level of the programme to planning/policy market level. Monitoring system ought to be constructed with the use of electronic mechanism so that it addresses every level of policy management. Policy progression, deviations from planned progress, corrections and plans to completion are key components of policy communication. Every person involved in the policy programme requires ongoing communication at various levels of detail. The objective of communication is to keep people informed, on track and involved in the policy. Further, regular meetings to review policy progression must be held at all levels in the organisation.

### *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. In a report tabled in Parliament on 18 July 2014, the CAG said: "Railways needs to strengthen its mechanism for effective monitoring of all projects". It asked the national transporter to adopt a uniform approach to all Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) projects and frame a 'model concession agreement' for execution of projects within the stipulated time-frame.

**Improving Capacity of 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 the 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 adequate powers to monitor and control. Key individuals should be made responsible for meaningful contributions and presenting and monitoring data.

**Control Alternatives**

Policy monitoring through its regular reports and meeting should also decide as to what corrective action to take or recommend in order to secure effective monitoring. *Three* general types of actions are suggested to be taken:

- (i) **Correction:** It means reallocation of resources, which also include time. With a corrective action, it is presumed that the policy programme will be completed in time.
- (ii) **Replanning:** This is another control mechanism. It means changing people's expectations of the results of the policy programme. Here the same technical outputs may be changed, but at greater cost and more time. However, replanning should not be undertaken without the concurrence of the Steering Committee.
- (iii) **Cancellation:** It is the most drastic action. In the worst possible case, the manager may desire to recommend to the Steering Committee cancellation of the whole policy programme, where it appears that the increase in cost, or technology, or the expected decrease in benefits no longer make the programme worthwhile. Sometimes, this is needed, particularly in situations in which the policy has been poorly conceived or when the policy is doomed to fail.

**Check Your Progress 2**

- Note:** i) Use the space given below for your answers.  
 ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the Unit.

1. Examine the constraints in policy monitoring.

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2. What are the remedial measures for effective policy monitoring?

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## 14.6 CONCLUSION

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Monitoring is at the heart of policy management. Its objective is to ensure, through the policy programme implementation, that resource inputs (like people, money) are used as efficiently as possible to generate the highest quality policy outputs. In setting up any monitoring system it is important to identify the key factors in the programme / policy action plan to be monitored and controlled. These are performance (specifications), cost (budget) and time (schedule). These, after all, encompass the fundamental objectives of any policy. There is no doubt that organisations, especially public, do not spend sufficient time and effort on monitoring policy. Monitoring should concentrate primarily on measuring various facets of policy output/outcome rather than data collection. But monitoring, like all other aspects of the policy management, requires a significant level of effort, including investment. The investment in monitoring policy programme is a direct investment in public policy management. For the policies to succeed, it is imperative that focus should shift to creating an inclusive and engaging working environment that empowers employees to contribute and help the organisation achieve the policy objectives. This Unit highlighted the characteristics, techniques, constraints and remedies of policy monitoring process.

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## 14.7 GLOSSARY

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**Critical Path Method (CPM):** It is also called Critical Path Analysis. It sets the sequence of project activities, by identifying the longest stretch of dependent activities and measuring the time required to start and finish an activity.

**Impact Assessment:** It is undertaken to estimate whether or not interventions produce their intended effects.

**Policy Design:** It is the process by which policy is designed, both through technical analysis and the political process to achieve the desired goals.

**Performance Measurement:** It is seen as an indicator to improve the functioning of outcome of the enterprise.

**Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT):** It is a strategic tool designed to analyse and represent the tasks involved in a given project.

**Planning Programming Budgeting System (PPBS):** It is an integration of a number of techniques in planning and budgeting process. It aims to identify as well as analyse and assign resources for establishing priorities and strategies in a major programme.

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## 14.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress 1

**1. Your answer should include the following points:**

- Policy monitoring is the process of inducing action for adherence to schedule.
- Monitoring is not controlling, which is the process of making adjustments that correct the deviations from planned progress.
- 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.
- An effective monitoring of public policies aids in cost reduction, time saving and effective resource utilisation.

**2. Your answer should include the following points:**

- Monitoring all three factors together.
- Techniques for monitoring cost performance.
- Techniques for monitoring time performance.
- Techniques for monitoring technical performance.

## Check Your Progress 2

### 1. Your answer should include the following points:

- Poorly designed monitoring framework affects the efficiency in resource utilisation, while ensuring the probability of quality policy results.
- Time is a constraint for policy monitoring.
- A common constraint for the policy implementation manager is the shortage of corrective actions, which could be applied when the programme is shown to be deviating in some respect from projected performance.
- A pervasive obstacle to policy monitoring is ignorance about its role and methods.
- There is no in-built mechanism introduced in the policy programme for making an analysis of the monitored information.

### 2. Your answer should include the following points:

- Designing the monitoring system.
- Communicating about performance.
- Monitoring Progress.
- Improving capacity of monitoring staff.
- Controlling alternatives.

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