

**Reidar Dale.** *Evaluation of Frameworks for Development Programmes and Projects.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998. Hardback. Indian Rs 275.00. 150 pages.

A pre-requisite for growth is the identification, appraisal, implementation, and evaluation of sound programmes and projects in the economy. This whole process has become very technical in nature, with each stage mentioned above having to undergo a rigorous examination. The focus of this book, however, is limited to that of the evaluation stage, what development practitioners call the last stage in the project cycle. More specifically, the question of evaluation is not only limited to projects but also to programmes and examines the main topics of evaluations such as context, perspectives, methods, and management. This arranges the subject matter of the book in a systematic and cohesive manner.

The book is divided into four chapters, each dealing with a different aspect of evaluation. Chapter One looks at the concept of evaluation in the context of development work. The importance of planning is stressed—strategic as well as operational planning. The former deals with the following issues: problem analysis; stakeholder analysis; analysis of objectives; analysis of inputs; analysis of external factors; and, finally, the analysis of organisational capabilities. The latter deals with the hows of implementing a development project. What are the specific objectives, target areas, and beneficiaries of the development schemes, budgets, time schedules for implementation, and the like? The sustainability of the project would also be evaluated when operational planning is being considered. This chapter also highlights the major aim of this book which is to examine, in a broader perspective, the evaluation of projects and programmes. By definition, projects are narrower, being limited to the achievement of one or more objectives within a specified time-frame.

A programme is less clearly bounded when compared with a project. A programme, by definition, is for a longer term and encompasses greater diversity, as well as being more flexible. Thus, keeping in view this distinction, programme evaluation would be different from that of project evaluation. In particular, programme evaluation would involve a broader range of topics than would project evaluation. Priorities, issues of co-ordination etc., would receive more attention when evaluating programmes. On the other hand, specific issues, technical design for example, may not receive much attention at the programme level, but definitely would at the project level.

Chapter two develops a basic evaluation model, which is then used to evaluate development institutions and community development work. The issue of improvement evaluation, which is basically self-evaluation or internal evaluation, is also discussed in this chapter. Chapter Three examines the issue of managing evaluations. In brief, the chapter reviews the processes of evaluation; the organisation of evaluation, the preparation of evaluation reports, and using evaluations. The latter can be used as a management tool in a programme with process planning. The final chapter discusses the

various methods of evaluation. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are focused on. Quantitative methods of evaluation are based on numerical data, whereas qualitative methods are word-based. The latter evaluation is carried out usually when one has to explore issues in depth and need not rely on narrow quantitative methodologies.

The book is aimed at development practitioners to help them in the design and implementation of evaluation frameworks. A positive feature of the book is its broad perspective, which includes the evaluation of programmes rather than projects only. The book also brings out the linkages between the evaluation of development schemes with the planning, implementation, and monitoring of schemes. The text is also supplemented by diagrams (and boxed items) that highlight and focus on the processes of evaluation. Overall, the book is easy to read and, what is more important, quite accessible to the lay man, who can identify himself with the issues raised by the author. However, its weakness lies in the simplicity which can be a distraction for the specialist reader.

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