



# PROTOCOL: Development evaluations in India 2000–2018: A country impact evaluation map

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## 1 | BACKGROUND

### 1.1 | The problem, condition, or issue

Development evaluation refers to evaluation of development programs, which are defined as any social or economic programs aimed at community development. These are generally funded by the government, aid agencies, nongovernmental organizations, foundations, or firms under corporate social responsibility. Invariably, most of them require that their programs be evaluated to understand if the intervention succeeded or failed (Bamberger, 2000).

Public development programs have been an important component of the development policy of the Government of India. The first 5 year plan deemed that systematic evaluation should become a normal administrative practice in all spheres of public activity and for this the Planning Commission (PC) began developing the evaluation techniques by establishing Program Evaluation Organisation for independent evaluations of community projects and other intensive area development programs (Chandrasekar, 2015). PC of India which was later dissolved and new organization named National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) was created on January 1st, 2015. The NITI Aayog is responsible for preparing the policy framework, designing the public programs and also monitors and evaluates the outcomes achieved by different programs (NITI Aayog, 2018).

There has been an increasing trend of impact evaluations in low and middle income countries over the years. The largest share (34.4%) of studies is conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa followed by Latin America and Caribbean with 24.7% of the total studies, while South Asia ranks third at 17%. Nearly half of South Asian studies are conducted in India (Sabet & Brown, 2018). Though the numbers of

impact evaluations is growing there is no central repository for easy access or to identify sectors with evident gaps.

Also, in a diverse country like India implementation and flawless evaluation of all the public development programs is a great challenge. Timely evaluations of such programs are often pushed by the policy makers and the program implementers to increase the accountability and for improvement of the program (Malhotra, 2014).

Despite, effective measures taken by the union and state governments there are evident gaps present in evaluation of these public development programs. Identification of these gaps will help in making the programs more effective and will eventually support in improving the development indicators of the country.

Evaluations of public programs also contribute toward cost cutting and cost-effectiveness as it gives information about what works and what does not. This is essential because of the rise in public expenditure and economy of India. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation of a program helps to identify the challenges in implementation of a particular program and provides an evidence base for decisions pertaining to public resource allocation; leading to more effective public policy development (Malhotra, 2014).

Over the past decades demand for program evaluations have increased greatly as emanating from civil society, enforced by the Supreme Court and Comptroller and Auditor General and government ministries, especially at the level of central government. Also donors, who although having a relatively small role in India, also support evaluations. Multilateral agencies (the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations system agencies) and five bilateral donors present in India (the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Japan) support evaluation of programs to which they make a financial contribution.