Chapter V

Monitoring and Evaluation of Programmes and Activities: ICSSR and North-Western Regional Centre

Strategic Planning and Quality Control

Strategic planning and quality control are two processes which empower managers by providing vehicle for relatively monitoring and modifying performance in order to achieve a desired level of performance. Strategic planning and quality control are interrelated and complementary processes. Strategic planning is an effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, and what it does? This is accomplished by setting or changing organizational objectives, identifying and obtaining the resources required to meet these objectives, and determining the strategies, programs, and policies needed to accomplish the objectives. Quality control can be defined as a set of activities or devices that help to attain the excellence of something. It is a process of establishing standards of comparison against which to check the results of a process. The control of quality is accomplished by the establishment of measurable standards of comparison against measures of quality characteristics.

While strategic planning establishes the requisite policies and resources, quality control monitors the progress made in the pursuit of these goals and provides the information needed to make any necessary adjustments. In this regard, strategic planning is a prospective process, one that requires to look forward and compare where are now. Conversely, quality control is a retrospective process, one that requires us to look back and compare where we have been relative to where we are now, to determine if we are satisfied with the current product. As such, strategic planning and quality control have a cyclical relationship whereby strategic planning sets the course and quality control tell us how well we stuck to our course and whether we arrived at our intended destination. Consequently, the utility of any strategic planning effort is contingent upon the quality (accuracy and comprehensiveness), and quantity (volume) of information available in the process. The greater the reliance on quality control processes in formulating a strategic plan, the more efficient and effective our planning effort becomes.
The use of strategic planning and quality control cycles provide the managers with quick access to organizational measures over spans of time. The ability to monitor an organization’s operations can provide the management with a better understanding of whether there is compliance with existing strategic goals (and the plans and policies designed to achieve them), whether policies are having their intended impact, whether policies are in need of modification, or whether new policies or plans are needed. The strategic system allows the management to make decisions based on information that is selected for its relevance rather than by the constraints of what is available and can be accumulated and assembled within the time allotted before some action is required.

**Monitoring**

Monitoring is the systematic collection and analysis of information, aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of an organisation. It is based on targets set and activities planned during the planning phases of work. It helps to keep the work on track, and enabled the management to know when things went wrong. If done properly, it is an invaluable tool for good management, and also provides a useful base for evaluation. It enables management to determine whether the resources available are sufficient and are being well used, whether the capacity is sufficient and appropriate, and whether the organization is doing what is planned to do. Monitoring not only signify surveillance but also a better understanding of all the procedures which provides opportunities for creating more control over a process, resulting in a reduction in unwanted process variance and consequently an improvement in the process and the product it produces. The main purpose of monitoring in government is:

- Monitoring in the government-wide and milestone tracing techniques, all of which measure some aspect of government performance including the measurement of the current status and change over time (trend analysis) in any of the initiatives.

- Monitoring tracks changes in services provided (outputs) and the desired results (outcomes), providing the basis for accountability in the utilization of resources.

Monitoring can be put into place as a management tool that may be sustained over time. It can be used to improve initiatives by identifying aspects that are working
according to plan and yielding positive results, while on the other hand it can identify those initiatives that need mid-course corrections.

**Monitoring involves**
- Establishing indicators of efficiency, effectiveness and impact;
- Setting up systems to collect information relating to these indicators;
- Collecting and recording the information;
- Analyzing the information;
- Using the information to inform day-to-day management.

Monitoring is an internal function in any project or organisation.

**Evaluation**

To evaluate is to assess or appraise. Evaluation is the process of examining a subject and rating, it based on its important features. Evaluation is a continuous process of inquiry concerned with the study, appraisal, and improvement of all aspects of the programme. The most ideal process for this is to be carried out cooperatively by all concerned with the growth and development of the organization. In general terms evaluation is used in society at large to establish achievements with some accuracy. All major development agencies involved in international development assistance undertake formal evaluations of part of their development activities each year.

OECD Development Assistance Committee’s (DAC) defined; *An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfillment of objectives, developmental efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.*

The main purposes of evaluation are:
- To improve future aid policy, programmes and projects through feedback of lessons learned;
- To provide a basis for accountability, including the provision of information to the public

**Evaluation involves**
- Looking at what the project or organisation intended to achieve – what difference did it want to make? What impact did it want to make?
- Assessing its progress towards what it wanted to achieve, its impact targets.
- Looking at the strategy of the project or organisation. Did it have a strategy? Was it effective in following its strategy? Did the strategy work? If not, why not?
- Looking at how it worked. Was there an efficient use of resources? What were the opportunity costs of the way it chose to work? How sustainable is the way in which the project or organisation works? What are the implications for the various stakeholders in the way the organisation works?

Evaluation of ongoing development activities is a primary purpose to generate information to improve the quality of the intervention typically focuses on implementation issues and operational activities, but may also take a wider perspective and consider effects. As they are performed usually about midway in the cycle of the intervention, these evaluations may also be referred to as mid-term evaluations by other organisations. Other evaluations are undertaken after completion of the aid intervention to understand the factors that affected performance, to assess the sustainability of results and impacts, and to draw lessons that may inform other interventions. The terms 'formative' or 'summative' evaluations are also utilized to distinguish the evaluation types.

Evaluation is the comparison of actual project impacts against the agreed strategic plans. It looks at what is set out to do and what have accomplished, and how it has been accomplished. It can be formative (taking place during the life of a project or organisation, with the intention of improving the strategy or way of functioning of the project or organisation). It can also be summative (drawing/learning from a completed project or an organisation that is no longer functioning).

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

The term “monitoring and evaluation” are two distinct sets of organisational activities, related but not identical. What monitoring and evaluation have in common is that they are geared towards learning from what you are doing and how you are doing it, by focusing on:

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Impact

**Efficiency** tells that if the input is appropriate in terms of the output. This could be input in terms of money, time, staff, equipment and so on.
Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which a development program or project achieves the specific objectives it set.

Impact tells you whether or not what you did made a difference to the problem situation you were trying to address. In other words, was your strategy useful? Before you decide to get bigger, or to replicate the project elsewhere, you need to be sure that what you are doing to make sense in terms of the impact you want to achieve.

Monitoring and evaluation have been conducted to enable one to check the “bottom line” of development work. Through monitoring and evaluation, we can:

- Review progress;
- Identify problems in planning and/or implementation;
- Make adjustments so that more likely to “make a difference”.

In an evaluation, we look at efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Monitoring the efficiency with which the different components of the project are being implemented and suggest improvements. Evaluate the extent to which the organization is able to achieve its general objectives, provide guidelines for the planning of future projects, improve project design, show need for the meet cause correction.

In many organisations, “monitoring and evaluation” is something that is seen as a requirement rather than a management tool. Organisations are certainly entitled to know whether their money is being properly spent, and whether it is being well spent. The primary (most important) use of monitoring and evaluation should be for the organisation or project itself to see how it is doing against objectives, whether it is having an impact, whether it is working efficiently, and to learn how to do it better. Plans are essential but they are not set in concrete (totally fixed). If they are not working, or if the circumstances change, then plans need to change too. Monitoring and evaluation are both tools which help a project or organisation know when plans are not working, and when circumstances have changed. They give management the information it needs to make decisions about the project or organisation, about changes that are necessary in strategy or plans. Through this, the constants remain the pillars of the strategic framework: the problem analysis, the vision, and the values of the project or organisation. Everything else is negotiable. Getting something wrong is not a crime but failing to learn from past mistakes because of not monitoring and evaluation is crime. The effect of monitoring and evaluation as valuable tools can:
Help one to identify problems and their causes;
Suggest possible solutions to problems;
Raise questions about assumptions and strategy;
Push one to reflect on where he/she is going and how he/she is getting there;
Provide one with information and insight;
Encourage one to act on the information and insight;
Increase the likelihood that one will make a positive development difference.

Thus the monitoring and evaluation system provides the constant feedback to the organization to which extent the organizations have achieved the goal and identify the potential problems at an early stage and propose possible solution.

**Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation**

In Latin, the term ‘evaluate’ means ‘to ascertain the value or worth of’. Knowing what difference programmes are making and what motivates workers and their supporters to renewed effort. Although evaluations may be retrospective, they are essentially forward looking with regard to their purpose. Evaluation applies the lessons of experience to decisions about current and future programmes. Good evaluation presents alternatives for decision-makers to consider.

Evaluations can be an excellent learning tool as well as a means to improve programme performance and demonstrate accountability.

Too often evaluation is perceived as threatening; it should be constructive. For example, an evaluation can be tapped for developing human resources and improving management and planning capabilities. Evaluation results can be used in advocacy and fundraising efforts to obtain greater support from governments, private organizations, and the general public.

**Objectives of Monitoring and Evaluation of Council and Regional Centre**

The objectives of monitoring and evaluation of various programmes of the Council and Regional Centres were as under:-

a) To improve management of programmes, projects and supporting activities and to ensure optimum use of funds and other resources;
b) To learn from experience so as to improve the relevance, methods and outcomes of programmes;
c) To strengthen the capacity of social science institutions, non-government organizations (NGOs) and regional communities;
d) To meet the requirements of social scientists whether the resources were being used effectively, efficiently and for agreed upon objectives;
e) To provide information to enhance advocacy for policies, programmes and resources, to improve the condition of social science research in India.

To achieve the first purpose—management improvement required better monitoring and evaluation throughout the programming cycle and prompt supply of information to decision makers. The second purpose—learning from experience developed and refined intervention policies. The third purpose—strengthening capacity—required working with responsible social scientists and programme staff, and often involved supporting institutional strengthening. Meeting social scientists requirements, the fourth purpose related to fund raising and often depended on occasional external evaluation carried out by team of specialists. Finally, advocacy for improved policies and programmes and mobilization of greater personal commitment and financial support required credible information about progress, problem and potential right from the monitoring and evaluation.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Committees of ICSSR**

Both government and ICSSR were responsible for monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects supported by the Council. Strengthening government policy to conduct research programmes, including the ability to monitor and evaluate them was one of the objectives of the ICSSR. The ICSSR played more active role in monitoring and evaluation activities as compared with that of their government counterparts. Monitoring progress and evaluating results were key management functions to improve the performance of ICSSR and its personnel who were responsible for implementing the programmes. The ICSSR monitored and evaluated the various programmes and schemes through the various committees of the Council. These various committees were part of the effective system of checks and balances within the organization. Let us examine the needs of these committees.

Committee can be defined as a body of persons entrusted with accomplishing specific functions of a group in a corporate capacity. In the words of Brech, a Committee is “a meeting which has a formal constitution and normal formal proceedings and which will meet on a regular or periodic basis”. Koontz and Donnel define committee as a group of persons to whom, as a group, some matter is committed. The committees are known by different names such as Executive Council, Administrative Committee, and Research Project Committee.
there were a number of Committees to monitor and evaluate the various schemes. Besides these committees, the ICSSR has a Council of members. The composition and nature of job of these committees were as under:

**Governing Council**

The governing Council was the highest decision making body of the ICSSR. It consisted of 26 members including the Chairman and the Member-Secretary. The Chairman alongwith 18 social scientists were nominated by the Government of India. In addition, there were six representatives of the Government of India including one each from the Department of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare and Ministry of Finance. The term of the Chairman, Member-Secretary was normally of three years. Similarly, the term of office of all other nominees was also three years. As per the Memorandum of Association and Rules 16 (page 9), the annual general meeting of the Council was held at such time, date and place as was determined by the Chairman or he could convene an ordinary general meeting of the Council when-ever he deemed fit. However, the Council held at least two ordinary general meeting every year. Ten members of the Council present in person was the quorum at every meeting of the Council. The Member-Secretary kept a record of the proceedings of the meetings of the Council and a copy thereof was sent to the Government of India. The Council with the previous approval of the Government of India had the power to frame and amend Regulations, not inconsistent with the Memorandum of Association and Rules for the administration and management of its affairs. The Council members decided the terms and conditions of scholarships, fellowships, grant-in-aid, research schemes and projects, and establishment of data library and Documentation Service Centres and such other matters as was necessary for furtherance of the objectives and proper administration of the affairs of the Council. The annual general meeting of the Council approved the Annual Report and Accounts of the preceding year sanctioned the programme and budget estimates of the subsequent year and constituted the Administrative Committee and Research Projects Committee. The Administrative Committee was now designated as Policy, Planning and Administration Committee and similarly Research Projects Committee was designated as Research Committee. The power and composition of these committees were as under:
**Administrative Committee (Policy, Planning and Administration Committee)**

This Committee looked after the policies, plans, administrative and financial affairs of the Council. The composition and power of this committee defined in the Memorandum of Understanding and Rules were as under:

a. Chairman

b. Not less than five or more than nine members appointed by the Council at the annual general meeting; and

c. Member-Secretary

The term of the office of the Policy, Planning and Administration Committee was one year from the date of Annual General Meeting in which it was constituted. However, this Committee once constituted continued in office until another Policy, Planning and Administration Committee was constituted. The Member-Secretary was the Secretary of this Committee. Every meeting of this Committee was presided over by the Chairman and in his absence by a member chosen by the members present at a meeting presided the meeting. Minimum of five members constituted a quorum for the meetings. The Policy, Planning and Administration Committee would hold at least three meetings in a year at such times as the Chairman decided.

**Research Committee (Research Projects Committee)**

The Research Committee of the Council scrutinized and sanctioned grant-in-aid to Research Projects and other research proposals for financial assistance submitted to the Council or sponsored by the Council itself subject to Rules and Regulations and orders of the Council. The composition and power of this committee defined in the Memorandum of Understanding and Rules were as under:

a. Chairman

b. Not less than five or more than twelve members appointed by the Council at the Annual General meeting (not more than three of these members may be persons who were not members of the Council; and

c. Member-Secretary.

The term of Research Committee was for one year from the date of AGM on which it was constituted. However, a Research Committee once constituted shall continue in office until another Research Committee was constituted. The Committee supposed to meet at least three times a year. A minimum of five members constituted the quorum of the meetings.
Research Institute Committee

Research Institute Committee was constituted for the administration of Research Institutes and Regional Centres. Research Institute Committee consisted of 13 members including the Chairman, Member-Secretary and one each member from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare now changed as Social Justice & Empowerment. This Committee had all the powers necessary to administer the Rules and also determine the quantum of grants to be given to Research Institute and Regional Centre at its disposal. The Committee supposes to meet at least twice in a year.

Committee on International Collaboration

The International Collaboration Committee reviewed the programmes and considered proposals under the Exchange of Scholars, joint seminars, seminar proposals and policy related issues. This Committee, besides the Chairman and Member-Secretary of the ICSSR had social scientists from different disciplines.

Expert Committees

Besides the above mentioned Committees, the ICSSR also constituted the Expert Committees. The Chairman or the Member-Secretary was the member of each of these Committees and also chaired them. The concerned Directors of the ICSSR were the Member-Secretary of these Committees along with some members of the Council was on these Committees but majority of the members were the experts in the field.

Review Committees

The ICSSR appointed Review Committees after every five years at its own initiative to evaluate its performance and plans. These Review Committees consisted of five to seven members. These Review Committees associated the distinguished social scientists of India and examined the entire social science scene in India and tried to locate the ICSSR in this broad context both retrospectively and prospectively.

The Council had set up four Review Committees in 1973, 1978, 1986, 2007 to improve the functioning of the Council. The Government of India constituted a Committee in 2010 to review the functioning of the ICSSR. This was the first Committee appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, which submitted its recommendations in the year 2011. A numbers of meeting were held by various committees to monitor and evaluate the various schemes. The details of the number of meetings held by these committees have been presented in Table 5.1
The data in Table 5.1 shows the number of meetings held by various committees from 2005-06 to 2009-10. The Governing Council which was the top most decision making body of the ICSSR held three meetings each year against required two meetings every year as per the memorandum of the association of the Council. The Policy, Planning and Administration Committee was supposed to hold three meetings in a year but the data shows that this Committee met once in 2005-06, twice in 2008-09 and 2009-10, reflecting thereby that this Committee did not meet as per the norms. The Research Committee which scrutinized and sanctioned grants for the research projects and other research proposal met thrice in each year but this committee met once in 2009-10 which was less than the minimum requirement of this committee as per MOA. Research Institute Committee (RIC) met twice in a year but in 2005-06 and 2009-10 the Committee met once only which was less than the required numbers of meeting to be held in a year. The Committee on International Collaboration met maximum six times in 2005-06 and minimum once in 2009-10. It shows variation in the number of meetings held by International Collaboration Committee. It could be analysed from the Table 5.1 that ICSSR did not adhere to the minimum requirement of meetings as prescribed by the Memorandum of Association.

**Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation of Programme and Activities of the ICSSR, New Delhi and North Western Regional Centre, Chandigarh**

The Council through a number of schemes such as fellowships, research projects, conferences and seminars, participation in conferences and seminars,
provided valuable help and encouragement to scholars from every part of the country. The monitoring and evaluation of these schemes was a necessity. For this purpose, a number of committees were constituted to monitor and evaluate these schemes by laying down the procedures as designed by the council’s. The mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the various schemes were as under:

**Research Projects**

The Council provided research grants to individual scholars to conduct research in the field of their interest in social science having a theoretical, conceptual, and methodological or policy orientation. The research projects were interdisciplinary in nature or belonged to one of the social science disciplines or allied disciplines. The Council sponsored research work in certain area of national significance to promote the social science research. The Council defined the priority areas, plans and coordinated series of programmes, identified scholars and provided funds for conducting research. The proposals received in the ICSSR were classified in to five broad categories of disciplines as under:

- Category (i) Economics/Commerce/Management
- Category (ii) Sociology/Social Anthropology/General Studies
- Category (iii) Political Science/Public Administration/International Relations/Geography
- Category (iv) Psychology and Education
- Category (v) Linguistics/Law/Library Science/Journalism/others

The ICSSR invited research proposal by open advertisement in various national dailies as well as through ICSSR website. The research proposals received by due date were examined by a panel of at least three experts. This panel was free to recommend/reject the proposals or suggest modifications before the scholar was called for interaction or to make presentation before the panel of experts. After examination by the panel of experts the proposal were placed before the Research Project Committee which consisted of the experts of social sciences. After clearance by the Research Committee and panel of experts, the scholars were invited for interaction. While monitoring the progress of the schemes, the Research Committee of the ICSSR ensured that the funds are effectively utilized for maximum results. For this purpose investigators of the research schemes were required to submit to the ICSSR six monthly comprehensive reports indicating the progress of the Research Project. While the initial progress report of work are expected to be brief, subsequent report had to be sufficiently detailed so as to enable the research committee to review
the progress of work vis-à-vis the progress of work stipulated for the period. The schemes were not renewed for the next financial year unless the progress report/renewable application were received by the ICSSR for consideration by the committee; delay would lead to termination of the scheme. Progresses of the scheme were also monitored through presentation in project workshops arranged by ICSSR. Participation of principal investigator in workshop was mandatory for the continuance of the project. The sanctioned grant was released to the institute in tune to six installments in advance. The Project Director had to complete the Project within time and submit report as soon as possible and, at any rate, within three months of the date on which the Project comes to an end. However, extension of time was granted for valid reasons. At the end of the Project, the Project Director was required to submit a detailed report in accordance with the guide-lines framed on the subject. The details of the number of research proposals received, rejected and sanctioned during 2006-07 to 2010-11 are given in Table 5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Research proposals Received</th>
<th>Research proposals rejected</th>
<th>Research proposals sanctioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1974 (100.00)</td>
<td>1336 (67.68)</td>
<td>638 (32.32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Research Project Division, ICSSR New Delhi

The data in Table 5.2 shows the upward rising trend in the demand of Research Proposals. The ICSSR received total 1974 research proposals, one third proposals (32.32 per cent) of good quality were sanctioned and two-third proposals (67.68 per cent) were rejected due to the quality of the proposals and financial constraints.

The Project Director submitted the final project report to the Council. The Expert Committee evaluated the final report. One member of the evaluating expert committee was same who had evaluated the initial research proposal, but, there may be some occasional exception if that member was not available for the final evaluation of the project report. This Expert Committee gave their comments about the quality of the work and whether it was fit for publication. The Fourth Review Committee had synthesized the enormous variety of evaluating level in term of four categories – very good, good, ok, poor. The numbers of recommendations for
publishing were counted separately. Reports that were explicitly stated to be works of very good quality and given publications grant was classified as very good. Reports which were recommended for publication grant but with suggested modification were classified as good. Reports which were accepted but not explicitly granted publication funds were classified as ok. Finally, all the work which was explicitly stated to be of very poor quality was classified as very poor.

The process reflected that the screening of proposals and quality of the evaluated research projects was weak and beset with difficulty. The senior social scientists did not take interest in the screening and evaluation process of the research projects.

The Third Review Committee of ICSSR suggested that the monitoring procedure of sanctioning of research project had to be strengthened with academic inputs from the Secretariat. Interim Progress Report needed to be designed better. Research programmes in which more than one scholar was involved had to be encouraged. The choice of theme must be made after wide ranging consultants with concerned scholars who must also name a committee from among themselves to administer the programme. Fourth Review Committee suggested that the project output were to be evaluated in two ways: first, the rate of completion with the actual submission of the final report; and second, the quality of the report, as gleaned from the comments of the evaluators.³

**Fellowships**

The Council awarded several types of Fellowships to Senior Social Scientists and Doctoral Students to engage in research on a whole time basis. The selection of the candidates for the awards of fellowships followed an elaborate process of screening and then interviewed by the Selection Committees appointed for the purpose. Scholars of repute in different social science disciplines were appointed as members of the Committee. To monitor the progress of fellowships, grants were released in three installments. First installment was released immediately after the receipt of the grant-in-aid bill. The Second installment was released after the Council received the six monthly progress report from the scholar duly forwarded by the Supervisor along with the simple statement of accounts for the previous installment and the Third installment was released only after the Council received a copy of the approved thesis and accounts. In case of salary protected Fellowship, the Fellowship
was extended into the Second year after the Council received the request from the scholar along with the progress report and financial statement. The grants were released in three installments as in the first year. For proper utilization of funds, the grants were released through the University/Research Institute/ Regional Centres. Besides the Senior and General Fellowship, in order to support the Doctoral Fellowship, the ICSSR offered contingency grants to Doctoral Students who were not recipients of fellowship from the Council or from any other source. The contingency grants were offered to cover expenses on field work, data processing and computation and cartographic work. The Fourth Review Committee observed that the administrative procedures involved and the long drawn correspondence between the Council and the grant receiving institutions, there was inevitable delay in the monthly disbursal of fellowships to the awardees. Most of the awardees did not receive the fellowship on time or regularly. Quite a few of them were awaiting the fellowship even after completing their thesis.

**International Collaboration**

The monitoring of the programme of International Collaboration was very important to ensure that the funds are efficiently utilized for maximum results. It was founded that there was no clear cut guideline to evaluate the proposals of foreign scholars who liked to work in India. The Government had to take its decision on the basis of the evaluation of the Council. Clear cut exchange agreements signed between India and another country was generally valid for one to three years. Sometimes the validity of the agreement was extended until a new agreement was signed. Such agreements were operationalised through Joint Advisory Committees/ Joint Commissioners consisted of social scientists and official of the implementing organizations between the Council in India and its counterparts in the other countries. These committees meet annually or once in two years to review the activities of the previous years and examined proposals for exchange of scholars, identified seminar topics and joint projects of the next two years. By monitoring this scheme it was found that many of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed by the countries, however, have remained on paper only with neither side initiated any follow up action.

The scholars who received the financial support to go abroad for data collection or to attend conference were required to give a Report to the Council. A perusal of the Report shows that they hardly provided any useful feed back to the
Council; Academic or Administrative, most of these reports were perfunctory and, at the most, contain some factual information about the organisation logistics of the seminar/ conference they had attended. The Council extended financial assistance to scholar/ institutions in India for organizing international seminar, conferences and workshops for the country. The proposals were reviewed by a specially constituted expert committee which made the recommendations based on the academic quality of the proposal. It was observed that the limited resources of the council were not spent judiciously.

**Research Survey and Publications**

The Council had an extensive programme of publication. Monitoring of the progress of research in social science was as important as the research itself. Having realised this basic reality, the Council undertook the task of surveying developments in the various fields of social sciences in right earnest through publishing Journals of Abstracts and Reviews in the disciplines of Economics, Geography, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology and Social Anthropology and its programme of Research Survey. There were various other activities for which the Council make grants available to social science professional organizations either to partially met their day to day maintenance and development cost or to run their journals; selling and distributing the publications of the ICSSR; providing subsidy to the publishers bringing out dissertations and other manuscripts duly approved by the ICSSR.

**Publication Subsidy**

The ICSSR provided subsidy to publishers to publish doctoral dissertations, research reports and books. The approved Ph.D. dissertations or research reports in publishable form are eligible to receive subsidy for publication. Sometimes, ICSSR bear the entire responsibility of publishing a manuscript on its own or through the cooperation of some commercial publisher. The Doctoral Thesis or Research Survey Report is sent to the expert for evaluation. The Thesis/Report after the approval from the expert sent for publication to the approved publishers by the ICSSR. The ICSSR directly sanctioned the grant-in-aid to the approved publisher.

**Research Institutes**

The Research Institute also receives the matching grant from the state govt. The Council’s policy towards research institute needed close examination. Several problems had cropped up over the years in the academic and administrative arrangement of these institutes. The Council had a special responsibility towards
them. They were important instruments for generating high quality research and promoting and extending social sciences research in their region. The Council did not leave them entirely to themselves once the financial grants are released to them. The Council played an active role in making sure that the Institutes had a well conceived programme of research and a feasible time frame to implement it and competent and effective leadership to administer it. The Council maintained that the general academic environment of these Institutes was conducive to research activities. Though Research Institute was funded by the council but they worked in isolation with each other. No formal network of research information existed between the Research Institutes. This sometimes leads to duplication of efforts. The scholars in these institutes recognised that exchange of information has a great advantage to all. It was essential that avenues are provided to exchange of such information which would create a inter institute linkages. The primary responsibility of monitoring and evaluation however falls on the corner. The current practice of receiving Annual Reports of audited accounts was not very adequate. The academic monitoring of the institutes is to be based on the work plans that they had prepared.

Though ICSSR institute were supposed to five yearly Reviews by an Expert Committee but such review were often not under taken on a regular basis nor corrective action were taken in line with recommendations of the committee. Again, while the Expert Committees review related generally to the overall performance of the Institutes, there was no effective internal mechanism in place to provide stimulus or incentive to individual members of the faculty to improve the quality of their research.

The Governing Bodies of the institutes were often headed by the powerful politicians or bureaucrats rather than renowned social scientist. This had severely undermined the autonomy of the institute, distorted research priorities and created an environment where striving the academic excellence was hardly valued if not positively frowned upon. The academic council of the institute was documented by the faculty of the institute except one or two outside expert. It was necessary for the academic autonomy of the institute to keep a distance from the government in the matter of constitution of Advisory Committee. The council played a more active role in making sure that the institutes has a well conceived programme of research, feasible time frame to implement it and effective leadership to administer it. The
council nominees on the Governing Board of the Institutes helped in monitoring the activities of the research institutes.

**Evaluative Elements in the ICSSR Programming**

The ICSSR conducted monitoring and evaluation periodically from time to time. In particular, the ICSSR specially carried out cycle by setting up Review Committees.

**Review of Past Performance and Preparation of Plans and Actions for the following years**

The Annual Reviews conducted by the Council for carrying out services or programmes in which ICSSR cooperates, ascertained progress, identified problems and possible solutions in order to reconfirm or revise plans for the coming year. Monitoring of the various schemes was prominent source of information for these evaluative reviews.

**Annual Report**

The results of the annual reviews are incorporated in the annual report sent by the Research Institutes and Regional Centres to ICSSR Headquarters. The overall thrust of Annual Report was evaluative and analytical. The report summarized which were the programmes or projects where the goals were accomplished, analysed the reason for their success or failure, and indicated where changed approaches needed to be taken up in the coming years.

**Special Studies and Research**

Research, especially action oriented research and special studies addressed specific programmes or project issues and contributed to programme preparation through prospective analysis of needs, constraints, and opportunities and evaluations by providing background data. These studies were undertaken throughout the programme cycle. Often, special studies were partially funded by ICSSR and usually they were prepared by national researchers. Studies were especially useful when they presented both facts and reasons behind them—especially from view point of beneficiaries. These research and studies played an important role by providing detailed data and analysis. The evaluations of these studies were done by the funded agencies and provided inputs for future research.

**Programme Strategy and Programme Preview Meetings**

These were usually conducted by the ICSSR officials in the year before the next programme plan was to be submitted to MHRD. The new programme plan
reflected the ICSSR priorities and lessons learned from past activities. The programmes strategies were based on the situation analysis and the results of the mid-term review, a position paper outlined the framework of the next programmes, indicating the overall programme direction and described the hierarchy of objectives. Strategy formulation and programme planning could be greatly strengthened if good evaluation results were available. Retrospective and ongoing evaluations of services or programmes were considered and consulted.

**Plan of Operations**

The basic document of the programming cycle, the plan of operations, covers the entire ICSSR Programme, usually for the forthcoming five year period. An overview of the effort in the ICSSR was followed by separate plans of operations for each area based programme. These included the objectives of each programme, measure of progress, key activities and who was responsible for each timeframe, mechanism for monitoring and evaluation, schedule of evaluations and budgets. When the plan of operations included specific objectives for each programme/project and described who was responsible for collecting data to measure progress at quarterly, semi-annual or annual intervals, the basis for effective monitoring and evaluation throughout the laid out five years period.

**Project Plans of Action**

To facilitate the monitoring and evaluation process, outcome impact objectives have been made specific and reflect the expected results not the process for obtaining the results. Expected results have been formulated to reflect a hierarchy of levels of objectives i.e. input and output. By identifying the special activities needed to accomplish each objective in the twelve month period, when they were to occur and who was responsible for each, the groundwork of monitoring was laid down. The annual plans of action also included detail approaches, sources of data, timing, how analysis was to be done, and how the information was to be used.

**Audits**

Academic audit investigated the degree of programme/project compliance with laws, regulations, guidelines and agreed on plans and budgets. Audits performed at any time during the programming cycle. A programme audit overlapped somewhat with an evaluation as it examined accomplishment of proposed work, plans and objectives, but an audit did not normally review the relevance or impact of the project. Financial audit of ICSSR were conducted by the office of CAG. Sometimes, a
Committee of the social scientists of the country was constituted to audit the academic programmes of the Council. They examined carefully the monitoring documents.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Committees of ICSSR North-Western Regional Centre**

The North-Western Regional Centre monitored and evaluated the various schemes through the following committees:

1. Advisory Committee;
2. Seminar Grant Committee;
3. Study Grant Committee;
4. Library Committee; and
5. Management Committee of the ICSSR Complex.

**Advisory Committee**

The ICSSR constituted the Advisory Committee in consultation with the Chairman/ Vice-Chancellor of the Regional Centre. This Committee consisted of 9 to 12 members including the Chairman and Honorary-Director. The others members of the Committee were the senior social scientists of the North-West Region. The tenure of the Advisory Committee was for two years. The overall management of the Regional Centre was vested in the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee met at least once in a year. A quorum of six members was required to conduct the proceedings of the meeting. The Committee reviewed the work of centre during the preceding year and also recommended plans and programmes to be developed during the ensuing year. The Advisory Committee monitored and evaluated all the programmes.

**Seminar Grant Committee**

The Seminar Grant Committee of the Regional Centre sanctioned the grant for organizing seminars to various social science university departments and colleges in the region. The Chairman/Vice-Chancellor approved the Seminar Grant Committee for a term of one year. Honorary-Director of the Regional Centre chaired the meetings of the Committee. The Seminar Grant Committee consisted of the senior social scientists of different social science discipline. One or two members were given the representation from other universities of the Region. This was an internal committee of the Regional Centre. Therefore, limit of numbers was not fixed, however, researcher found that there were six to nine members in this Committee. The
minimum meetings of the Committee were held once on the basis of the numbers of
the seminar proposals received by the Regional Centre.

**Study Grant Committee**

The Study Grant Committee of the NWRC sanctioned the study grants to the
scholars who were doing Ph.D. in the field of social science. The purpose of the study
grant was to support the research scholars by providing financial assistance for
consulting libraries/ archives/ data centres in different cities in India for collecting
research material. The Study Grant Committee was approved by the Chairman/Vice-
Chancellor. The tenure of the Committee was one year. The Honorary Director of the
Regional Centre chaired the meetings. The Committee met four times in the year i.e.
January, April, July and October. The number of meeting also depended on the
number of applications received by the Regional Centre for study grant, as the scheme
remained open throughout the year. The number of members of Committee varied
between 5 to 8 with one or two members representing from other Universities of the
region.

**Library Committee**

The Regional Centre subscribed social science journals and also provided
Indexing and Bibliographic services for the use of researchers and social scientists.
The Regional Centre library activities were monitored by having Library Committee.
This Committee was also approved by the Chairman/Vice-Chancellor. The term of
this Committee was one year. Minimum one or more meetings were held as per the
requirement of the Centre. The Honorary-Director of the Centre chaired the meeting.
There were 7 to 9 member of this Committee and the Committee reviewed the list of
journals and suggested the deletion and additions of journals and others job to be
undertaken by the Centre after reviewing the present list.

**Management Committee of the ICSSR Complex**

The Regional Centre activities of Seminar cum Guest House complex were
monitored by management committee to manage the Seminar cum Guest House
Complex. This Committee formulated the guidelines for the management of the
complex. The meeting of the Committee was held once in a year to recommend the
tariff for the guest house room, conference hall and others areas which required
improvement. This committee also suggested the rates of the meals. The numbers of
the committee members varied between 7 to 8.
Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation

The NWRC monitoring and evaluations were carried out through the various Committees and the staff of the Regional Centre. Monitoring and Evaluation helped the Regional Centre in strengthening the activities. This constituted the feedback to the NWRC about working and how they could be improved further. The systems were devised for monitoring and evaluation of various schemes of the Regional Centre which is as follows.

Seminar Grants

The NWRC invited seminar proposals to provide financial assistance for organizing seminar/ conferences/ workshops in the Region. The Seminar proposals complete in all respect received by due date were put up before the seminar committee. The Seminar Grant Committee evaluated the seminar proposals. The Committee examined the theme and sub theme of the proposals. On the basis of the quality of the proposals, the Committee recommended the amount to be given for organization of the seminar. The Regional Centre also had a procedure to monitor the utilization of the grants sanctioned for the purpose. The Seminar Committee considered the proposal only if no previous grant was outstanding in the name of the University Department/College. The grant to the universities department/ colleges was routed through the Registrar of the University in case of the University Department and through the Head of the Institution in case of the Colleges/others to keep a check for proper utilization. The Regional Centre also issued the conditions for proper utilization of the grant. The first instalment of grant i.e. 90 per cent the total grant sanctioned were released after receipt of the final dates of the seminar, tentative names of the participants and resource persons with date-wise/ session-wise schedule of the seminar. The organizer submitted the detailed accounts of expenditure incurred on various Heads. The utilization certificate had to be duly certified by the university/ college auditors. The organizer of the seminar also submitted the major findings/ recommendations of the seminar alongwith two sets of papers presented at the seminar within one month of holding the seminar. The Second Instalment of balance amount i.e. 10 per cent of the seminar grant was released if the utilization of grants are found in order. The organizer of seminar had to adjust the grant within three months.

The details of meetings of Seminar Grant Committee have been shown in Table 5.3.
Table 5.3 Distribution of Meetings for Sanction of Seminar Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Meetings</th>
<th>Months</th>
<th>No. of members Attended the meeting</th>
<th>No. of members absent</th>
<th>Total number of members</th>
<th>No. of seminar proposals received</th>
<th>No. of proposals sanctioned</th>
<th>No. of proposals rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>July, Nov. Jan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oct. Dec. Feb.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oct. Feb.</td>
<td>8 (2)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>68 (20)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Office Records of North-Western Regional Centre, Chandigarh.

The data in Table 5.3 shows the number of meeting held by the Regional Centre to sanction the grant for organizing seminar/conference/workshop. The Regional Centre held 1 to 3 meetings each year and examined the proposals for disbursal of grant. The demands for seminar grants increased over the years as the number of proposal submitted for seeking such grants increased. In the period of last five years (2007 to 2011), out of the total 324 proposals received only 195 proposals were accepted whereas 129 proposals were rejected. The rejections were generally done due to quality and financial constraints.

**Study Grant**

The Regional Centre provided study grant to the research scholars who were doing Ph.D. to consult the libraries throughout India. This scheme remained open throughout the year. The research scholar submitted the application for the financial assistance. The applications were put up before the Study Grant Committee to examine and decide the number of days and library to be consulted by the scholar for the collection of the research material keeping in mind the relevant material. The ICSSR evaluated the progress of the work before release of sanctioned grant to the research scholar. The scholars who were sanctioned the assistance, submitted a grant utilization report at the end of their stay and attached the required documents with the report.
The Table 5.4 depicted the number of meetings and study grant provided to the research scholars. It shows that the numbers of applications are decreasing. It decreased from 23 in 2006-07 to 10 in 2010-11. The maximum number of study grant was provided in 2006-07. The decrease trend of study grant shows that the scholars did not have interest in the Regional Centre Scheme because of the small amount paid as study grant. However, Regional Centre was liberal in granting the study grants.

Library Services

The Library Committee monitored and evaluated the library services such as the list of subscription of research journals, publications of indexing and bibliographic services. The committee evaluated the journal list subscribed by the Regional Centre and suggested the addition and deletion of research journals. The Library Committee provided the ways and means to strengthen the working of the Library. The details of meetings of the Library Committee are as under.
The Table 5.5 shows the numbers of the meeting of the Library Committee to approve the list of Journals and others matters in regard to functioning of the library activities. The maximum members of this Committee were 8. The Committee concerning Regional Centre held 7 meetings during the last five years i.e., 2006-07 to 2010-11. The Regional Centre did not hold any meeting of the Committee in 2006-07 and 2007-08, 1 meeting in 2009-10 and 3 meetings in 2008-09 & 2010-11 were held to evaluate the progress of the Regional Centre library.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of North-Western Regional centre by ICSSR Council**

Besides the Committees of the Regional Centre, the ICSSR New Delhi also devised a mechanism to monitor and evaluate the plan and progress of the Regional Centre. The Council monitored the progress of the Regional Centre by reviewing the progress report, tracking inputs, seeking information and visiting the Regional Centres. The Regional Centre regularly reported the Council through the Annual Reports. The Annual Report of the Regional Centre included the following information:

1. A list of specific objectives and activities accomplished during the past 12 months;
2. Expenditure made on various activities during the period;
3. Revised plan of activities for the following year.

The Council reviewed the progress report of the Regional Centre to strengthen the capacity of the Regional Centre official to manage programmes. The Annual Progress Reports and information provided by the Regional Centre made the basis for monitoring and evaluation of the ICSSR assisted services and projects. Annual monitoring was a process of reflection on the previous financial year and action planning for the coming financial year. It was driven by the reflection of the staff delivering a programme. The ICSSR approach to annual monitoring was based on a conversational not confrontational approach. Honest evaluation based on evidence of what had worked well and what had not. The purpose of annual monitoring was to ensure that standards were maintained. The Council on the basis of the reports submitted by the Regional Centre identified the constraints and obstacles in the way of the activities.

**Special Review Committees of the ICSSR Regional Centre**

The Council also constituted *Special Review Committee* to evaluate the progress of the Regional Centre. The working of the Regional Centre were reviewed
by these Committees as well as through special committees/sub-committees constituted by the Council from time to time.

In 1980 ICSSR constituted Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Ram Joshi, former, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bombay, which evaluated the working of the Regional Centres and assessed their performance and also evaluated the plans for development. Yet, another sub-committee was appointed in 1988 under the Chairmanship of Professor Iqbal Narain to look into the entire gamut of issues afresh in the light of the recommendations of the earlier Sub-Committee and the questions raised by the Research Institute Committee and the Council. This committee noted the recommendation of the earlier sub-committee. The committee also considered the issues regarding the legal status of the Regional Centres, legal agreements to be entered into between the ICSSR vis-à-vis the ICSSR Regional Centres and the host institutions, promotional avenues of staff, auditing and accounting procedures, centralization of major programmes at the ICSSR Headquarters and decentralization of functions, giving academic flavor to the activities of the Regional Centres. However, these reforms could not be implemented. A Sub-Committee was constituted by the ICSSR under the Chairmanship of Professor Amitabh Kundu in 1998 to look into the issues relating to legal status, administrative structure and relationship between ICSSR and the host institution, guidelines for functioning of the Regional Centres and financial implications for administrative infrastructure and activities to be undertaken by the Regional Centres.

Another Review Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Professor T.S. Papola in 2002 to have a fresh view of the working of the Regional Centres particularly in the context of the Council’s decision to treat Regional Centres as branches and its staff as that of the ICSSR. This was being done with a view to identify ways to make Regional Centres effective as the Council’s “extended arms” in the promotion of social science research in different regions. This Committee reviewed the performance of the ICSSR Regional Centres and gave its recommendations in 2003.

Internal Committees often refrained from being critical of their own programmes but the Review committees whose members were social scientists who knew about the institution provided additional insight and technical expertise. These committees evaluated the various schemes in relation to effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact on the basis of their discussion with the potential users,
beneficiaries and non participants. This had played a great role to monitor and evaluate the programmes of the ICSSR and Regional Centres.

**Summary**

Monitoring was not only the systematic collection and analysis of information but also aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization by reducing unwanted process variance and consequently an improvement in the process and the product it produces. On the other hand, evaluation as a continuous process of inquiry deals with the study, appraisal, and improvement of all aspects of a programme, i.e. concerning the growth and development of the organization. Both are interrelated and complementary each other. Monitoring and evaluation have been conducted to enable to check the “bottom line” of development work.

Among the various agencies set up by the Government of India, ICSSR was set up to promote and encourage social science research, at individual or institutional basis. Besides providing financial assistance for various research schemes, ICSSR also arranged training programme on Research Methodology and provided guidance and consultancy services to the researchers. The Council monitored and evaluated every programmes and schemes supported by the ICSSR for the effective functioning and development of the organization. The objectives of monitoring and evaluation of the Council and its Regional Centre were to strengthen the various programmes, projects and supporting activities and to ensure optimum use of funds and other resources. By monitoring and evaluation, the Council assessed the requirements of social scientists and that the resources were used effectively, efficiently and for agreed upon objectives. Monitoring and evaluation provided the information to enhance advocacy for policies, programmes and resources, to improve the condition of social science research in India.

The MHRD was as much responsible as the ICSSR for monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects supported by the Council. Even though the Council played an important part to strengthen government policy to conduct research programmes, including the ability to monitor and evaluate them is one of the objectives of the ICSSR. The ICSSR had devised a process of monitoring and evaluation of its various programmes and schemes.

Regarding the research projects, the Council not only provided funds for conducting research but also constituted Research Project Committees which
consisted of the experts of social sciences to monitor the progress of the project. The project output was evaluated in two ways: First, the rate of completion with the actual submission of the final report; and second, the quality of the report, as gleaned from the comments of the evaluators (Report of Fourth Review Committee). While monitoring the progress of the project, the committee ensured that the investigators has submitted to the ICSSR six monthly comprehensive reports periodically indicating the progress of the research project for the release of subsequent funds. At the end of the Project, the Project Director was required to submit a detailed report in accordance with the guide-lines framed on the subject. The third Review Committee of ICSSR suggested that the monitoring procedure of research project sanctioned need to be strengthened with academic inputs from the secretariat.

The Council awarded several types of Fellowships to senior social scientists and doctoral students to engage them in research on a whole time basis. The monitoring and evaluation of such fellowships started with the selection of the candidates for the awards followed by an elaborate process of screening and then interview by the selection committees appointed for the purpose. To monitor the progress of fellowships, grants were released in three installments, i.e. after the receipt of the grant-in-aid bill; six monthly progress reports from the scholar duly forwarded by the Supervisor along with the simple statement of accounts for the previous installment and only after the Council received copy of the approved thesis and accounts. To control the utilization of the grants, it was released through the University/Research Institute/Regional Centres. The fourth Review Committee observed that due to the administrative procedures between the Council and the grant receiving institutions most of the awardees did not receive the fellowship on time or regularly.

Regarding the International Collaboration, there was no clear cut guideline to evaluate the proposals of foreign scholars who liked to work in India. Any agreements with other countries were operationalised through Joint Advisory Committees/Joint Commissioners consisting of social scientists and official of the implementing organizations between the council in India and its counterparts in the other countries. These committees met annually or once in two years to review the activities of the previous years, examined proposals for exchange of scholars, identified seminar
topics and joint projects of the next two years. By monitoring this scheme it was found that many of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed by the ICSSR however remained on paper only with neither side initiated any follow up action. The financial assistance for Indian Social Scientists/scholars to go abroad for participation in International Seminars/Conferences or data collection in connection with research work was provided. The scholars who received the financial support to go abroad for data collection or to attend conference were required to give a report to the council. A perusal of ICSSR Fourth Review Committee report showed that they hardly provided any useful feedback to the council; academic or administrative. Financial assistance extended by the council to scholars/ institutions in India for organizing international seminars, conferences and workshops for the country were reviewed by a specially constituted expert committee which made recommendations based on the academic quality of the proposal.

The Research Survey and Publication Division (RSP) took care of the Council’s Research Survey Programme and Publications. In the process, those areas (disciplines and subjects) that deserved more attention, the so-called neglected segments, were identified and efforts were made to fill the gaps by sponsoring specific types of research. All the surveys were published by the Council either on its own or through commercial publishers. The ICSSR provided subsidy to publishers to publish doctoral dissertations, research reports and books. The Council has its expert’s panel, which consisted of social scientists, for evaluation of the Ph.D. dissertations or research reports to make them eligible to receive subsidy for publication.

A major function of the ICSSR was the development and support of social science research institutes in the country. The research institutes accounted for the largest component of ICSSR expenditure i.e. nearly 50 per cent. Though research institute were funded by the council but they worked in isolation with each other. The primary responsibility of monitoring and evaluation however falls on the Council. The academic monitoring of the institutes was based on the work plans that they had prepared. The ICSSR institute was reviewed by an expert committee consisting of five or six members on five year basis. Such review was often neither undertaken on a regular turn nor corrective action was taken in line with recommendations of the
committee. Again, while the expert committees reviewed the overall performance of the institutes but there was no effective internal mechanism in place to provide stimulus or incentive to individual members of the faculty to improve the quality of their research. The current practice of receiving annual reports and audited accounts is not very adequate. The governing bodies of the institutes are often headed by the powerful politicians or bureaucrats rather than renowned social scientists which severely undermined the autonomy of the institute, distorted research priorities and created an environment where striving the academic excellence was hardly valued if not positively frowned upon (Report of Fourth Review Committee). The council can play a more active role to make sure that the institutes have a well conceived programme of research, feasible time frame to implement it and effective leadership to administer it through monitoring and evaluation of these institutes.

The ICSSR conducted monitoring and evaluation periodically from time to time. The review committees of the ICSSR were constituted after every five years. Annual reviews conducted by the Council for carrying out services or programmes in which ICSSR cooperates, ascertain progress, identify problems and possible solutions in order to reconfirm or revised plans for the coming year. Monitoring of the various schemes was the prominent source of information for these evaluative reviews. The results of the annual reviews were incorporated in the annual report sent by the Research institutes and Regional Centres to ICSSR Headquarters. The overall thrust of annual report was evaluative and analytical. The report summarized the programmes or projects goals have been accomplished, analysed reason for success or failure, and indicated where changed approaches needed to be taken in the coming year.

Evaluations were usually conducted by the ICSSR before the next programme plan was submitted to MHRD. The basic document of the programming cycle, the plan of operations, covered the entire ICSSR Programme, usually for the upcoming five year period. An overview of the effort in the ICSSR was followed by separate plans of operations for each area based programme which included the objectives of each programme, measure of progress, key activities and who was responsible for each time frames mechanism for monitoring and evaluation schedule and budgets. The plan of operations included specific objectives for each programme/project and
described who was responsible for collecting data to measure progress at quarterly, semi-annual or annual intervals, the basis for effective monitoring and evaluation were laid out five years period. A more detailed monitoring and evaluation plan were included in the annual plans of action.

To facilitate the monitoring and evaluation process, outcome impact objectives were made specific and reflected the expected results, not the process for obtaining the result. Expected results were formulated to reflect a hierarchy of levels of objectives: Input and Output. By identifying the special activities needed to accomplish each objective in the twelve month period, when they were to occur and who are responsible for each, the groundwork of monitoring is laid down. The annual plans of action also included detail approaches, sources of data, timing, how analysis is to be done, and how the information will be used.

Academic audit investigated the degree of programme/project compliance with laws regulations, guidelines and agreed on plans and budgets. Audits were performed during the programming cycle. A programme audit overlaps somewhat with an evaluation since it examines accomplishment of proposed work plans and objectives, but an audit did not normally review the relevance on impact of the project. Financial audit of the ICSSR were conducted by the office of CAG. Sometimes, a Committee of the Social Scientists of the country was constituted to audit the academic programmes of the Council. They examined and monitored the documents.

The Council monitored the progress of the Regional centres by constituting the review committee. These committees visited each Regional Centre and reviewed the academic activities performed by these Centres.

The NWRC was one of the six Regional Centres set up on the campus of the Panjab University. The Centre fulfilled the various objectives as defined by the Council. The working of the Regional Centre was reviewed by the various Committees as well as through Special Committees/Sub-Committees constituted by the Council from time to time.

The NWRC also devised a system of monitoring and evaluation of the various schemes. For this purpose the NWRC constituted an Advisory Committee which consisted the representatives from social sciences of all the universities in the region
on rotational basis. The meeting of the Advisory Committee held at least once in a year, to reviews the plans and programmes of the centre during the year and recommend programme to be developed during the coming year. The Regional Centre sanctioned the grant for organizing seminars to various social science university departments and colleges in the region. The Regional Centre also issued some conditions to monitor the proper utilization of the grant. The first instalment of grant i.e. 90 per cent the total grant sanctioned was released only after receipt of the final dates of the seminar, names of the participants and resource persons with date-wise/session-wise schedule of the seminar. The organizer has to submit the detailed accounts regarding expenditure incurred under various heads duly certified by the university/college auditors. They had to submit the major findings/recommendations of the seminar along with two sets of papers presented at the seminar within one month of holding the seminar, failing which the second instalment of seminar grant will not be released. The second instalment of balance amount i.e. 10 per cent of the seminar grant was released if the utilization of grants is found in order. The NWRC also sanctioned study grant for the scholars who were doing Ph.D. in the field of social sciences. The purpose of the study grant was to provide financial assistance for consulting libraries/archives/data centres in different cities in India for collecting research material. This scheme was monitored by the study grant committee. The scholars who got this assistance were required to submit a grant utilization report at the end of their stay with other required documents. The payment of the sanctioned grant was made directly to the awardee on receipt of the bill. The Library Committee monitored and evaluated the entire publications of indexing services undertaken by the Regional Centre. This committee also suggested the ways and means to strengthen the working of the library.

The Council (Head-Office) also reviewed the progress report of the Regional Centres to strengthen the capacity of the Regional Centre official to manage programme. The Regional Centre prepared the regular progress report and provided information which made the basis for monitoring and implementation of ICSSR assisted services and projects. These progress reports contained the objectives and activities accomplished during the plan period and how much these activities were completed and identified the constraints and obstacles for not completing the
activities. These reports pointed out the requirements of additional resources to overcome the constraints. The Council takes appropriate action and gives their suggestions for revision of work plans.

The researcher concluded that the Council and Regional Centres were providing value able services to the social scientists and researchers at national and regional level, but there were some weaknesses at the implementation level. The screening and evaluation of Research Projects were time consuming which was also pointed by the ICSSR Third Review Committee. In regard to Research Fellowships, the Council did not have a strong follow up process. The fellowship awardee did not comply with the requirement of submission of report. The fellowship amount was delayed and some of awardee did not receive the fellowship amount even after completion of the fellowship period. The Research Institute was sanctioned maximum grants by the ICSSR. The Review/Expert Committee pointed some weaknesses of the Research Institute. These institutes have not taken any corrective action to improve their weaknesses. The ICSSR other programmes such as training programme, seminars, financial assistance for visiting abroad were relevant and useful but they were inadequate to consider the demand and need of young scholars and social scientists. These important activities were not reviewed externally or internally since last five years as pointed by Fourth Review Committee in their Report.

The Regional Centre did not have any set procedure for monitoring and evaluation of various schemes. The Advisory Committee was the supreme Committee and meeting of this committee was held once in a year and even their suggestions were not implemented. The Regional Centre did not have a strong screening and interviewing system for sanction of seminar grants. There was only one committee i.e. Seminar Committee to review the seminar proposals and also to sanction the grant. In regard to study grant, it was found that the study grant committee liberally sanctioned the study grant because the centre received less numbers of applications as compared to allocation of budget. Few applications were rejected. There should be wider publication of this scheme so that the centre receives more application. The follow up procedure of the seminar grant should be strong. The ICSSR constituted a number of Review/Expert Committee for monitoring and evaluation of the ICSSR and Regional Centres working but their recommendation were rarely accepted. The researcher
analysed that monitoring and evaluation were philosophical or subjective and not sufficiently empirical.

References:

3. Some of these include: Suggested improvement, Recommended publication with revision, Recommend publication with modification; Found work to be of good quality, recommended publication grant with some suggestion; Found work to be of good quality, recommended publication grant; Suggested thorough editing, strongly recommended publication grant; Report reasonably good, not recommend for publication grant; Found it useful contribution, suggested improvements, not recommended for publication; Found the report monotonous and heavy reading, not recommended for publication; Found the report very poor, not recommended for publication; Found the report poorly conceived and badly planned; Consultant has recommended change in the sampling design; Consultant has recommended the report be accepted in the present form; Good study, recommended publication in the form of papers but not as a book; Did not find the report even up to the level of master's thesis, not recommended for publication; Given suggestions for improvement, silent on publication.