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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	ISLAMIC FINANCE AWARENESS IN PUBLIC AND FINANCIAL SECTOR GHULAM MUSTAFA SHAMI, DR. MUHAMMAD RAMZAN & AFAQ RASOOL	1
2.	GREEN MARKETING: THE INDIAN CORPORATE SCENARIO RAVINDER PAL SINGH	5
3.	EXCHANGE RATE MANAGEMENT: A CRITICAL LOOK INTO SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES PURNASHREE DAS & SUJIT SIKIDAR	9
4.	AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF SERVQUAL, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY IN INDIAN BANKING SECTOR RAVINDRA KUMAR KUSHWAHA, DR. MADAN MOHAN & DEBASHISH MANDAL	13
5.	CHINA'S CURRENCY POLICY: WINNERS AND LOSERS OF AN INDIRECT EXPORT SUBSIDY GHULAM MUSTAFA SHAMI, DR. MUHAMMAD RAMZAN & AFAQ RASOOL	19
6.	SALES STYLES OF EXECUTIVES SELLING TWO AND FOUR WHEELERS DR. NAVPREET SINGH SIDHU	23
7.	FINANCIAL AND TAXATION ISSUES OF MICRO FINANCE BILL 2012: A MOVE TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE MICROFINANCE IN INDIA DR DHARUV PAL SINGH	29
8.	STUDENTS' CRITERIA IN SELECTING A BUSINESS SCHOOL DR. JEEMON JOSEPH	33
9.	CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN ELECTRONIC BANKING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY DHARMESH MOTWANI & DR. DEVENDRA SHRIMALI	38
10.	A NEW NOTION PROXIMITY FOR DATA PUBLISHING WITH PRIVACY PRESERVATION S. BOOPATHY & P. SUMATHI	41
11.	A STUDY ON ATTITUDE TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG KNOWLEDGE WORKERS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN MYSORE CITY NITHYA GANGADHAR & SINDU KOPPA	47
12.	MARKOV CHAINS USED TO DETERMINE THE MODEL OF STOCK VALUE AND COMPARED WITH P/E MODEL ROYA DARABI & ZEINAB JAVADIYAN KOTENAI	56
13.	APPLICATION OF PERT TECHNIQUE IN HEALTH PROGRAMME MONITORING AND CONTROL DR. SUSMIT JAIN	63
14.	ESTIMATION OF TECHNICAL EFFICIENCIES OF INDIAN MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS USING STOCHASTIC FRONTIER ANALYSIS B.CHANDRASEKHAR	69
15.	EFFECTIVE RETENTION STRATEGIES IN WORKING ENVIRONMENT C. KAVITHA	76
16.	A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF QUALITY OF WORK LIFE OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES WITH REFERENCE TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BANKS IN KANCHIPURAM DISTRICT A. VANITHA	78
17.	MANAGEMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORK MEENAKSHI CHAHAL	86
18.	A STUDY ON CONSTRUCTION OF OPTIMAL PORTFOLIO USING SHARPE'S SINGLE INDEX MODEL ARUN KUMAR .S.S & MANJUNATHA.K	88
19.	A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT OF SELECT PLANT MANUFACTURING COMPANIES OF RAJASTHAN VEDIKA SHARMA & SHUBHASHREE SHARMA	99
20.	RELIABLE AND DISPERSED DATA SECURITY MECHANISM FOR CLOUD ENVIRONMENT C. PRIYANGA & A. RAMACHANDRAN	104
21.	CONSTRUCTION OF OPTIMUM PORTFOLIO WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BSE 30 COMPANIES IN INDIA DR. KUSHALAPPA. S & AKHILA	108
22.	INVESTIGATING QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS PROGRAMS OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY (AAU) AND BAHIRDAR UNIVERSITY (BDU) BIRUK SOLOMON HAILE	112
23.	FACTORS AFFECTING APPLICABILITY OF SECURITY CONTROLS IN COMPUTERIZED ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS AMANKWA, ERIC	120
24.	THE EFFECT OF POVERTY ON HOUSEHOLDS' VULNERABILITY TO HIV/AIDS INFECTION: THE CASE OF BAHIR DAR CITY IN NORTH-WESTERN ETHIOPIA GETACHEW YIRGA & SURAFEL MELAK	128
25.	STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO CHANGES IN THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT: A CASE OF EAST AFRICAN BREWERIES LIMITED PATRICIA GACHAMBI MWANGI, MARTIN MUTWIRI MURIUKI & NEBAT GALO MUGENDA	134
26.	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AND THE LEVEL OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG THE TEACHERS OF GOVERNMENT HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MADURAI DISTRICT DR. S. S. JEYARAJ	139
27.	HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM DR. NEHA TOMAR SINGH	149
28.	THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKAN FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY RAVIVATHANI THURASINGAM	154
29.	A STUDY ON FINANCIAL HEALTH OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN INDIA: Z – SCORE APPROACH SANJAY S. JOSHI	159
30.	REGULATORY FRAME WORK OF GOOD CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WITH REFERENCE TO INDIAN CORPORATE GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS G. VARA KUMAR & SHAIK MAHABOOB SYED	165
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	171

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HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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APPLICATION OF PERT TECHNIQUE IN HEALTH PROGRAMME MONITORING AND CONTROL**DR. SUSMIT JAIN****ASST. PROFESSOR****INDIAN INSTITUTE OF HEALTH MANAGEMENT RESEARCH
JAIPUR****ABSTRACT**

The Program (or Project) Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) and Critical Path Method (CPM) are two analytical techniques which could be applied in monitoring and control of health programmes and projects. The technique helps in answering the expected time of completion of projects, identifying the jobs and activities and their start and finish times, the effect of delay of certain activities, what resources are required at various points of time, revising and rescheduling the projects and what additional resources are required, etc. Some of the examples of projects or programmes where PERT/CPM techniques could be applied are carrying out vaccination drive, eradication of polio, construction of a new hospital, addition of new wing in the hospital, Commissioning of Primary Health Centers (PHCs) or Community Health Centers (CHCs), Air-conditioning of Hospitals, Construction and commissioning of an intensive care unit, setting up a medical college, Organizing a Family Planning Camp, Conducting a training programme for health workers, establishment of network of Family Planning Welfare Centers, Construction of hostel for nurses, Mass Health education campaign, Organizing a sanitation drive, etc. This research specifically discusses the use of PERT technique in carrying out Vaccination Programme and will try answer questions like expected project completion time, effect of delay in completion of activities and associated probability of completing the project by the specified time.

KEYWORDS

PERT; CPM; Activity; Event; Slack; Float; Crashing; Beta Distribution.

INTRODUCTION

In all the Five Year Plans there had been outlay on number of health programmes and projects for the purpose of providing health care services to the rural and urban population. But the projects generally suffer in terms of timely completion and according to the schedules laid down. The Program (or Project) Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) and Critical Path Method (CPM) are two analytical techniques which could be applied in monitoring and control of health programmes and projects. The technique helps in answering the expected time of completion of projects, identifying the jobs and activities and their start and finish times, the effect of delay of certain activities, what resources are required at various points of time, revising and rescheduling the projects and what additional resources are required, etc.

Some of the examples of projects or programmes where PERT/CPM techniques could be applied are carrying out vaccination drive, immunization programmes and vaccination drives, national programmes for tuberculosis control, malaria control, blindness control, HIV preventions and control, construction of a new hospital, addition of new wing in the hospital, Commissioning of Primary Health Centers (PHCs) or Community Health Centers (CHCs), Air-conditioning of Hospitals, Construction and commissioning of an intensive care unit, setting up a medical college, Organizing a Family Planning Camp, Conducting a training programme for health workers, establishment of network of Family Planning Welfare Centers, Construction of hostel for nurses, Mass Health education campaign, Organizing a sanitation drive, etc.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The PERT Methodology was developed in 1957 to simplify the planning and scheduling the U.S. Navy's Polaris nuclear submarine project. CPM was developed independently by Du Pont and Remington Rand Corporation USA at the same time.

METHODOLOGY

PERT/CPM techniques involve the depiction of the project in terms of activities and events. The activities consume time and resources and events mark the start or end of an activity. Some of the examples of 'activity' and events in health management context could be:

TABLE 1 : EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS IN HEALTH SECTOR

Activity	Event
Preparing a medical plan of the hospital	Medical plan made or completed
Placing an order for vaccines	Order for vaccines placed
Vaccinating children	Vaccination drive completed
Preparing curriculum for health workers training	Curriculum for health workers completed

PERT/CPM require the use of network diagrams which are the graphical or diagrammatic portrayal of the project. We could take an example of a vaccination programme against smallpox comprising of 23 activities which are shown below:

ACTIVITIES IN VACCINATION PROGRAMME

1. Survey the population
2. Prepare policies and procedures for records and reports
3. Get the vaccinators into position
4. Prepare estimates of vaccine, equipment, vehicles, etc. required
5. Procure vehicles on loan from other departments and put them into position
6. Get the forms printed
7. Plan public meetings
8. Plan strategy to enlist the cooperation of community leaders
9. Orient vaccinators with respect to the project, plans, jobs, etc.
10. Place order for vaccine
11. Call tenders for equipment
12. Assign population and post vaccinators.
13. Receive vaccine
14. Give contract for equipment.
15. Deliver vaccine at PHC
16. Receive vaccine
17. Deliver equipment at PHC

18. Conduct public meetings
19. Motivate community leaders
20. Help vaccinators to develop rapport with the community
21. Vaccinate
22. Review performance
23. Prepare project report and submit it.

The next stage of implementation of project is to estimate the time of completion of the activities. In PERT, the average time for an activity takes into account three time estimates for each activity.

1. The optimistic time estimate: This is the estimate of shortest possible time within which a given activity can be completed. This assumes that ideal circumstances prevail and everything goes well. This is denoted by t_o or a .
2. The pessimistic time estimate: This is the estimate of longest possible time required to execute a given activity if abnormal conditions prevail. This is generally denoted by t_p or b .
3. The most likely time estimate: This is the estimate of the time required to execute an activity under normal conditions. This is generally denoted by t_m or m .

The three time estimates are reduced to one time estimate (expected time, denoted by t_e) using the formula,

$$t_e = \frac{t_o + 4t_m + t_p}{6} \dots\dots\dots (i)$$

In the vaccination project, for a block in Jaipur district, the three time estimates were estimated based on past experience, and one average or expected time estimate was calculated. This is shown in the Table 2 below:

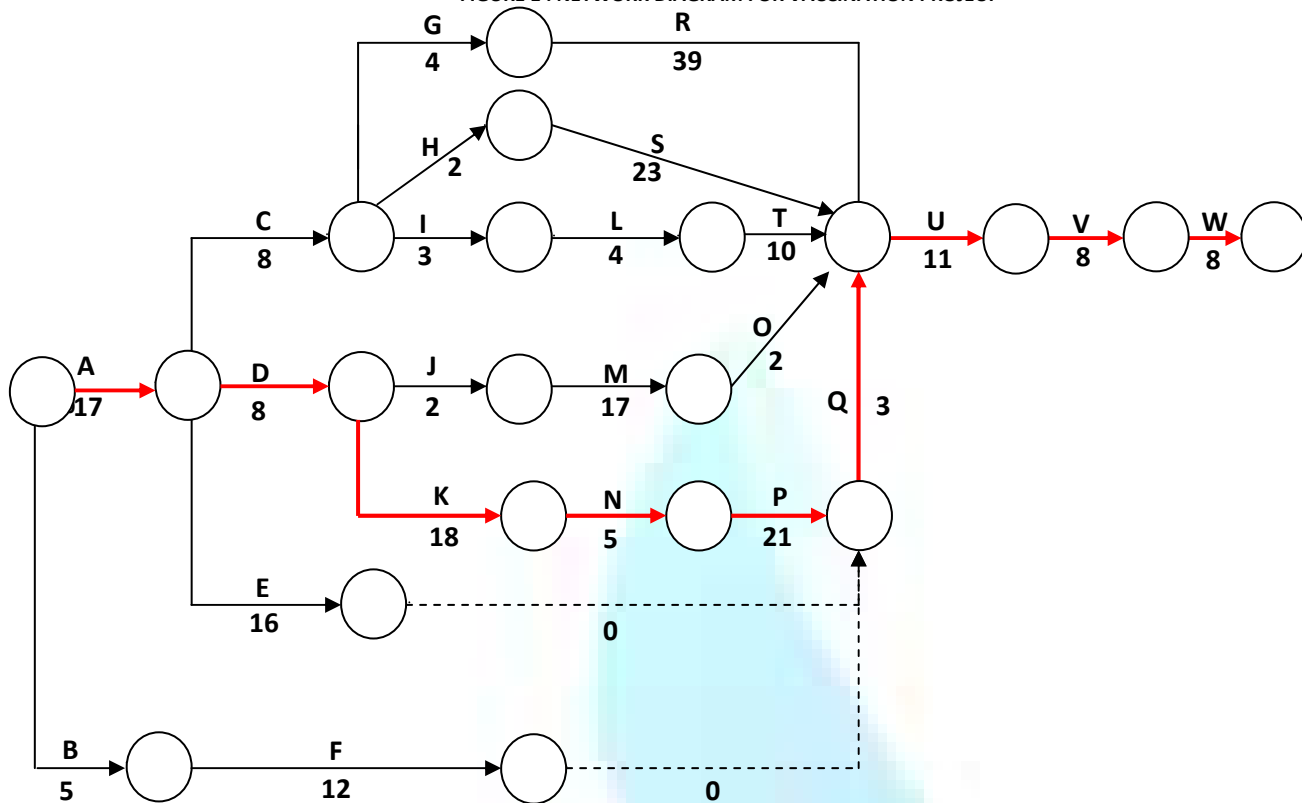
TABLE 2: PERT TIME ESTIMATES FOR VACCINATION PROGRAMME

ID	Activity description	Predecessors	Time Estimates (days)			Expected time t_e^*
			t_o	t_m	t_p	
A	Survey the Population	-	7	15	35	17
B	Prepare policies and procedures	-	2	5	8	5
C	Get the vaccinators into position	A	4	7	15	8
D	Prepare estimates of vaccine, equipment, vehicles, etc. required	A	3	7	15	8
E	Procure vehicles on loan from other departments and put them into position	A	7	15	30	16
F	Get the forms printed	B	5	10	25	12
G	Plan public meetings	C	1	3	10	4
H	Plan strategy to enlist the cooperation of community leaders	C	1	2	3	2
I	Orient vaccinators with respect to the project, plans, jobs, etc.	C	2	3	3	3
J	Place order for vaccine	D	1	2	5	2
K	Call tenders for equipment	D	10	14	40	18
L	Assign population and post vaccinators.	I	1	3	10	4
M	Receive vaccine	J	10	15	30	17
N	Give contract for Equipment	K	1	4	10	5
O	Deliver vaccine at PHC	M	1	2	5	2
P	Receive Equipment	N	7	20	40	21
Q	Deliver equipment at PHC	P, E, F	1	3	5	3
R	Conduct public meetings	G	15	30	100	39
S	Motivate Community Leaders	H	10	20	50	23
T	Help vaccinators to develop rapport with the community	L	7	10	15	10
U	Vaccinate	R, S, T, O, Q	6	10	20	11
V	Review Performance	U	2	7	15	8
W	Prepare project report and submit it	V	2	7	20	8

* t_e estimates are to nearest integer.

The PERT analyst then tries to logically sequence the activities i.e. identifying the predecessor and successor activities. The sequential constraints and the associated network diagram for the vaccination programme is shown in Table 2 and Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 : NETWORK DIAGRAM FOR VACCINATION PROJECT



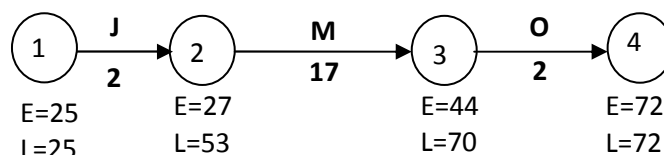
The critical path is shown through bold arrows i.e. A-D-K-N-Q-U-V-W and the total expected duration of the project comes out to be 99 days. Two time computations i.e. the Earliest Start (ES) and Latest Finish (LF) are shown on the network. The remaining two i.e. Earliest Finish (EF) and Latest Start (LS), Float or Slack are computed and shown in table below.

TABLE 3: PERT TIME COMPUTATIONS FOR THE VACCINATION PROGRAMME

		Expected Time	Earliest Start (ES)	Earliest Finish (EF)	Latest Start (LS)	Latest Finish (LF)
ID	Activity description					
A	Survey the Population	17	0	17	0	17
B	Prepare policies and procedures	5	0	5	52	57
C	Get the vaccinators into position	8	17	25	21	29
D	Prepare estimates of vaccine, equipment, vehicles, etc. required	8	17	25	17	25
E	Procure vehicles on loan from other departments and put them into position	16	17	33	53	69
F	Get the forms printed	12	5	17	57	69
G	Plan public meetings	4	25	29	29	33
H	Plan strategy to enlist the cooperation of community leaders	2	25	27	47	49
I	Orient vaccinators with respect to the project, plans, jobs, etc.	3	25	28	55	58
J	Place order for vaccine	2	25	27	51	53
K	Call tenders for equipment	18	25	43	25	43
L	Assign population and post vaccinators.	4	28	32	58	62
M	Receive vaccine	17	27	44	53	70
N	Give contract for Equipment	5	43	48	43	48
O	Deliver vaccine at PHC	2	44	46	70	72
P	Receive Equipment	21	48	69	48	69
Q	Deliver equipment at PHC	3	69	72	69	72
R	Conduct public meetings	39	29	68	33	72
S	Motivate Community Leaders	23	27	50	49	72
T	Help vaccinators to develop rapport with the community	10	32	42	62	72
U	Vaccinate	11	72	83	72	83
V	Review Performance	8	83	91	83	91
W	Prepare project report and submit it	8	91	99	91	99

Float or slack of an activity is the amount by which an activity could be rescheduled without increasing the project duration. For all critical activities float is zero, i.e. they could not be delayed. There are generally three measures of float which are generally used in computations. These are total float, free float and independent float. Let us consider the three measures of float in the case of a fragment of the network of the vaccination programme.

FIGURE 2 : PART OF NETWORK OF VACCINATION PROGRAMME

**Total Float**

The earliest tail and the latest head event times of an activity can be looked on as limits within which a non-critical activity can 'move' without increasing the project time.

For activity J:

The earliest possible starting time is day 25

The latest possible finishing time is day 53

∴ the total time available for the activity is 28 days

But the duration of activity is 2 days: i.e. the activity can 'move' by 26 days. Any greater movement will create a new critical path(s) and increase the project time. ∴ 26 days is the total float for activity J.

Free float

For activity M:

The total time available is 43 days

But the duration is 17 days

∴ the total float is 26 days

But if activity J uses its entire total float, then event 2 will not be reached until day 53.

In this case:

The available time for activity M is 17 days

But the duration of activity M is 17 days

So that if activity J uses its entire total float, then activity M has no float, hence the free float of J is zero, i.e. the amount of float which could be used without affecting subsequent activities. Similarly the free float of M is zero because if M uses its entire total float (of 26 days), then activity could only be finished at day 70, reducing the float of O to zero.

Independent Float

Independent float is the amount of float that can be used without affecting either subsequent or preceding activities. It is set to zero if it comes out to be negative.

Rules for calculating float

The **total float** is the difference between the L value for the head event and the E value of the tail event minus the duration.

The **free float** is the difference between the E value of the head event and the E value of the tail event minus the duration.

The **independent float** is the difference between the E value of the head event and the L value of the tail event minus the duration. (set to zero if negative). It indicates the time availability for an activity even if it has Late Start and Early Finish.

The calculation of float is illustrated for the vaccination programme case in the following Table 4:

TABLE 4: FLOAT TABLE FOR VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Activity	Duration	Floats (days)			Remarks
		Total	Free	Independent	
A	17	0	0	0	Critical
B	5	52	0	0	
C	8	4	0	0	
D	8	0	0	0	Critical
E	16	36	0	0	
F	12	52	0	-52(0)	
G	4	4	0	-4(0)	
H	2	22	0	-4(0)	
I	3	30	0	-4(0)	
J	2	26	0	0	
K	18	0	0	0	Critical
L	4	30	0	-30(0)	
M	17	26	0	-26(0)	
N	5	5	0	0	Critical
O	2	26	26	0	
P	21	0	0	0	Critical
Q	3	0	0	0	Critical
R	39	4	4	0	
S	23	22	22	0	
T	10	30	30	0	
U	11	0	0	0	Critical
V	8	0	0	0	Critical
W	8	0	0	0	Critical

Negative values of independent float signify that there is no independent float.

PROBABILITY OF COMPLETION BY SCHEDULED DATE

Suppose the Chief Medical Officer wants that the project to be completed within 90 days if possible. What should the Health Officer tell his CMO about the likelihood that the Vaccination Programme be completed within 90 days. PERT can help in answering this question and also estimate alternative Scheduled Completion Dates with 70 per cent, 80 per cent and 95 per cent assurance of completion so that the Chief Medical Officer can choose one which suits him most.

Let us first estimate the probability of completion of the vaccination project within 90 days. PERT uses Beta-distribution (a frequency distribution curve) and uses the formula for calculating the standard deviation based on the three time estimates t_p , t_o and t_m as shown below:

Standard Deviation of an activity (σ) = $\frac{t_p - t_o}{6}$ (ii)

The variance of the project is calculated by adding the variances of the activities lying on the critical path.

$$\sigma_c = \sqrt{\sigma_1^2 + \sigma_2^2 + \dots + \sigma_n^2} \dots\dots\dots (iii)$$

Where σ_1^2 is the variance of the first activity lying on the critical path, σ_2^2 is the variance of the second activity lying on the critical path and σ_n^2 is the variance of the last activity lying on the critical path.

The normal variate Z is calculated using the formula:

$$z = \frac{T_s - T_e}{\sigma_c} \dots\dots\dots (iv)$$

Let us apply the concept of PERT in our Vaccination case.

TABLE 5: VARIANCES OF ACTIVITIES ON THE CRITICAL PATH

Time Estimates (days)				Expected time	Variance	Variances of Critical Activities
ID	t _o	t _m	t _p	t _e *		
A	7	15	35	17	21.78	21.78
B	2	5	8	5	1.00	
C	4	7	15	8	3.36	
D	3	7	15	8	4.00	4.00
E	7	15	30	16	14.69	
F	5	10	25	12	11.11	
G	1	3	10	4	2.25	
H	1	2	3	2	0.11	
I	2	3	3	3	0.03	
J	1	2	5	2	0.44	
K	10	14	40	18	25.00	25.00
L	1	3	10	4	2.25	
M	10	15	30	17	11.11	
N	1	4	10	5	2.25	2.25
O	1	2	5	2	0.44	
P	7	20	40	21	30.25	30.25
Q	1	3	5	3	0.44	0.44
R	15	30	100	39	200.69	
S	10	20	50	23	44.44	
T	7	10	15	10	1.78	
U	6	10	20	11	5.44	5.44
V	2	7	15	8	4.69	4.69
W	2	7	20	8	9.00	9.00
Variance of the Critical Path						102.86

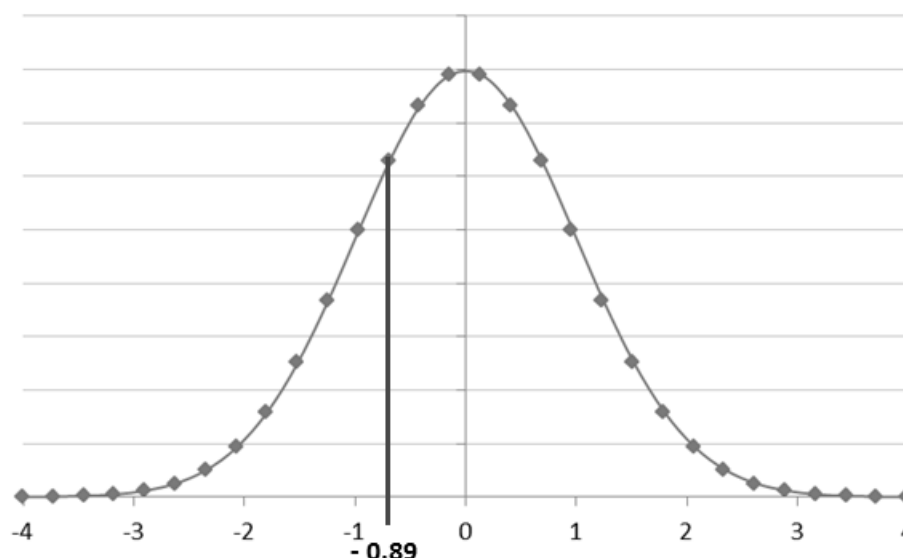
The variance of the critical path comes out to be **102.86** and the standard deviation (σ_c) of the critical path comes out to be **10.14**. The normal variate corresponding to schedule completion time of 90 days come out as:

$$z = \frac{90 - 99}{10.14}$$

$$z = -0.89$$

The location of z on a beta-distribution equated is shown below:

FIGURE 3: BETA DISTRIBUTION CURVE AND COMPUTATION OF DESIRED AREA



And the area corresponding to this (from normal distribution curve) 0.3133 or 31 % chance of being completed within 90 days.

Suppose we want to find that schedule completion times which have 70 %, 80% and 95% chance of being completed. In that case the values of z are 0.52 (for 70%), 0.84 (for 80%) and 1.65 (for 95%). The schedule completion days are:

- $99 + 10.14 (0.52) = 104.28$ days (which has 70% chance that the project will be completed in this specified duration)
- $99 + 10.14 (0.84) = 107.5$ days (which has 80% chance that the project will be completed in this specified duration)
- $99 + 10.14 (1.65) = 115.7$ days (which has 95% chance that the project will be completed in this specified duration).

The methodology discussed is entirely based on time dimensions and the project completion time and the probability of its completion on time were calculated and a criteria for differential control of activities based on Critical Path was explored.

Project cost analysis involves understanding the use of resources and their deployment in various activities. The objective of project cost analysis or crashing is to find out the optimum duration of the project at minimum total cost. The procedure used in this is called as crashing or reducing the project duration and the effect on direct and indirect cost of the activities are taken into consideration.

CONCLUSION

The methodology of Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) is based on 'time'. It assumes that any project or programme is a conglomeration of many activities or jobs. These activities are interrelated and interdependent on certain dimensions. The accomplishment of all the activities will only lead to the completion of the project/programme. The basic philosophy underlying PERT/CPM is nothing new and much of this is known to us. PERT/CPM provides a scientific basis for such a project planning. It provides a powerful and logical scheme for the execution of activities and for planning of the resources required to execute the activities, to facilitate the total project completion within the optimum time through expending minimum resources. It forces the project manager to think logically in the face of uncertainty, draws attention to various kinds of decisions to be made at different stages of the project. In the ultimate analysis, it is a scientific methodology that helps in implementation of projects within the constraints of time and resources.

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