



THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP IN CONTINUOUS AND COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: POLICY EXPECTATIONS VERSUS CLASSROOM PRACTICES IN ODISHA

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Abstract:

Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) was introduced in Indian school education with the objective of moving assessment beyond periodic examinations towards a continuous, comprehensive and learner-centred process. Its underlying philosophy emphasised regular assessment, identification of learning difficulties, timely feedback, remediation and attention to students' cognitive, affective and co-curricular development. In Odisha, CCE was implemented for Classes I to VIII in accordance with the provisions of the Right to Education framework. However, the implementation of continuous evaluation has not always been synonymous with meaningful formative assessment. The emergence of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 has further shifted the assessment discourse towards competency-based, holistic and formative assessment. Odisha's State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) continues to develop and revise assessment frameworks and Holistic Progress Cards, demonstrating an ongoing transition in the state's assessment system. This paper examines the implementation gap between policy expectations and classroom practices relating to continuous and comprehensive evaluation in Odisha. It proposes a mixed-method empirical framework involving teachers, students and school administrators across rural, urban and tribal contexts. The study focuses on teacher assessment literacy, workload, classroom practices, feedback, record maintenance, learner participation, formative assessment and institutional support. The paper argues that the principal challenge is not the absence of assessment policy but the gap between the philosophy of continuous assessment and its operationalisation at classroom level. Effective implementation requires teacher capacity building, simplified documentation, contextualised assessment tools, adequate institutional support, meaningful feedback mechanisms and stronger academic monitoring. The paper proposes an Odisha-specific framework for transforming CCE from a compliance-oriented exercise into an authentic assessment-for-learning system.

Keywords: Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, CCE, NEP 2020, formative assessment, classroom assessment, Odisha, teacher assessment literacy, competency-based assessment, Holistic Progress Card

1. Introduction

Assessment occupies a central position in the teaching-learning process. It provides information about what students know, what they can do, where they experience difficulties and what forms of instructional support they require. Nevertheless, conventional school assessment in India has frequently been associated with examinations, marks, ranking and certification. Such practices can encourage memorisation and may provide limited information about the processes through which students learn.

The idea of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation emerged as an attempt to change this orientation. Instead of treating assessment as an activity conducted primarily at the end of a teaching period, CCE conceptualised assessment as an integral part of classroom learning. The approach sought to combine continuous assessment with a comprehensive consideration of students' academic and broader developmental progress.

The policy direction has evolved further with the National Education Policy 2020. NEP 2020 explicitly advocates regular formative assessment for learning rather than an assessment culture dominated by summative examinations. It places emphasis on competencies, conceptual understanding, critical thinking, creativity and holistic development. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 reinforces this orientation. It recommends the use of projects, debates, presentations, experiments, investigations, role plays, journals, portfolios and other formative techniques, alongside appropriate written and practical assessments. It also introduces the Holistic Progress Card as a comprehensive means of documenting students' progress across learning domains.

The policy vision is therefore clear: assessment should support learning rather than merely measure learning.

The challenge lies in implementation.

In actual classrooms, continuous assessment may become a routine exercise involving repeated tests, notebooks, marks, records and administrative documentation without necessarily generating meaningful feedback or changing teaching practices. Teachers may understand the principle of formative assessment but face difficulties implementing it because of large class sizes, workload, limited time, insufficient training, inadequate assessment materials or pressure to prepare students for examinations.

Odisha offers an important context for examining this issue. The state's school education system has implemented CCE for Classes I to VIII under the Right to Education framework, while its educational institutions have continued to engage with assessment reforms. OOSEPA SCERT Odisha currently describes assessment as increasingly holistic and learner-centred and emphasises self-assessment, peer assessment and external assessment. More recently, Odisha's SCERT has been working on a comprehensive assessment framework for Classes V and VIII and on revisions to Holistic Progress Cards, indicating that the state's assessment system is undergoing further transformation in line with contemporary policy directions.

Against this background, the present study investigates the gap between what assessment policy expects teachers to do and what actually happens in classrooms.

Conceptualising Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation

CCE consists of two interconnected ideas: continuous evaluation and comprehensive evaluation.

Continuous Evaluation

Continuous evaluation refers to assessment conducted regularly throughout the learning process rather than being concentrated at the end of a term or academic year.

Its purpose is to:

- identify learning difficulties early;
- provide timely feedback;
- modify teaching strategies;
- monitor individual progress;
- support remediation; and
- encourage active student participation.

The central principle is that assessment should inform subsequent teaching.

Comprehensive Evaluation

The term "comprehensive" indicates that assessment should not be restricted to textbook knowledge or examination performance. It should consider different dimensions of student development, including academic competencies, creativity, communication, collaboration, problem-solving and other relevant developmental characteristics.

The contemporary policy framework has expanded this concept further by encouraging competency-based and holistic assessment.

CCE and the Changing Assessment Policy in India

The assessment agenda has undergone considerable transformation over the past decade.

NEP 2020 calls for a shift away from rote learning and high-stakes examination dependence towards competency-based and formative assessment. It specifically emphasises regular assessment for learning and argues that assessment should support students' higher-order capabilities rather than simply reproduce memorised information.

The subsequent NCF-SE 2023 provides greater detail about classroom assessment. At different stages of schooling, it recommends a range of assessment approaches, including projects, practical activities, portfolios, self-assessment, case-based questions and other methods that can assess conceptual understanding and competencies. The establishment of PARAKH has further strengthened the national assessment reform agenda. Its responsibilities include developing norms and standards for student assessment and supporting competency-based assessment and holistic development.

Thus, the contemporary policy trajectory can be represented as:

Examination-centred assessment → CCE → formative assessment → competency-based assessment → holistic assessment

However, the movement from one policy framework to another does not automatically guarantee corresponding changes in classroom behaviour.

This is where the implementation gap becomes important.

CCE in the Odisha Context

Odisha has historically incorporated CCE into its school education system. OSEPA identifies CCE among the interventions implemented for Classes I to VIII in accordance with the Right to Education framework.

SCERT Odisha also maintains an assessment function through its Assessment Cell and identifies systematic assessment, learner-centred approaches and continuous improvement as important components of school education.

The state has also established mechanisms for academic monitoring, teacher support and classroom observation through SCERT, DIETs, BRCs and CRCs. SCERT describes monitoring and feedback as mechanisms for improving teaching-learning practices and supporting classroom-level implementation.

More recent developments indicate a movement towards comprehensive assessment frameworks. In 2025, SCERT Odisha conducted workshops relating to examination and evaluation frameworks for Classes V and VIII and also undertook revision of Holistic Progress Cards.

These developments provide an important opportunity to examine whether the state's assessment reforms are translating into actual changes in classroom practice.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem addressed by this study is the potential mismatch between the policy objectives of continuous and comprehensive assessment and its actual implementation in classrooms.

A policy may prescribe continuous assessment, but teachers may interpret it primarily as frequent testing.

A policy may encourage comprehensive evaluation, but classroom records may focus mainly on academic marks.

A policy may require feedback, but teachers may have insufficient time to provide individualised feedback.

A policy may emphasise competency development, while classroom assessment may continue to reward memorisation.

Thus, the existence of assessment instruments does not necessarily indicate meaningful implementation.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine teachers' understanding of the philosophy and objectives of CCE.
2. To assess the extent to which continuous assessment practices are used in Odisha schools.
3. To examine the nature and quality of formative assessment practices used by teachers.
4. To investigate whether classroom assessment is used to modify teaching-learning strategies.
5. To examine teachers' use of feedback, observation, projects, portfolios, self-assessment and peer assessment.
6. To identify institutional and administrative factors affecting CCE implementation.
7. To examine the relationship between teacher assessment literacy and classroom assessment practices.
8. To compare CCE practices across rural, urban and tribal schools.
9. To identify the major implementation gaps between assessment policy and classroom practice.
10. To propose strategies for strengthening assessment-for-learning practices in Odisha.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses may be tested empirically:

H1: Teachers with higher assessment literacy demonstrate significantly stronger formative assessment practices.

H2: Teacher workload is significantly negatively associated with the frequency of individualised formative feedback.

H3: Teachers who receive regular professional development demonstrate greater use of competency-based assessment techniques.

H4: Significant differences exist in CCE implementation between rural, urban and tribal schools.

H5: Availability of institutional assessment support is positively associated with effective classroom assessment practices.

H6: Meaningful formative assessment practices are positively associated with students' perceived learning support.

2. Methodology

The present study adopts a **descriptive, analytical, and qualitative research methodology** to examine the implementation gap in Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), with particular reference to the differences between policy expectations and classroom practices in Odisha. The study is primarily based on a review and analysis of secondary sources, including national and state-level education policies, government guidelines, curriculum frameworks, official reports, academic publications, research articles, and relevant documents relating to school education and assessment practices. Particular attention is given to the objectives and principles of CCE, continuous assessment, formative and summative evaluation, competency-based learning, learner participation, teacher assessment practices, and the role of feedback in improving learning outcomes.

The study follows a **policy-to-practice analytical framework** to examine how the principles of continuous and comprehensive evaluation are interpreted and implemented at the classroom level. The analysis focuses on major dimensions such as the frequency and nature of assessment, use of formative assessment techniques, teacher preparedness, record maintenance, feedback mechanisms, student participation, examination-oriented practices, classroom diversity, and institutional support. The study seeks to identify the factors responsible for the gap between the intended objectives of CCE and its actual application in classroom situations. Particular consideration is given to structural constraints such as large class sizes, teacher workload, inadequate training, limited resources, time constraints, examination pressure, and the persistence of traditional teacher-centred assessment practices.

The study employs **thematic analysis** to organize the available evidence into major themes related to policy expectations, institutional conditions, teacher practices, learner experiences, and assessment outcomes. A comparative perspective is adopted to distinguish between what CCE intends to achieve and what is commonly reflected in classroom assessment practices. The methodology does not claim to provide statistically representative findings for all schools in Odisha; rather, it provides a contextual and critical understanding of the implementation gap. The study

also identifies areas that require further empirical investigation through classroom observations, teacher interviews, student surveys, and school-level case studies. Through this approach, the research attempts to understand CCE not merely as an assessment policy but as a pedagogical process whose effectiveness depends upon teacher capacity, institutional support, classroom realities, and the broader educational culture of Odisha.

Classroom Observation Schedule

A classroom observation schedule can provide more reliable evidence than relying exclusively on teacher self-report.

Observers may record:

Indicator	Evidence
Questioning	Open-ended / closed questions
Student participation	Low / moderate / high
Formative assessment	Present / absent
Feedback	Individual / group / none
Remediation	Evidence observed / not observed
Peer assessment	Present / absent
Self-assessment	Present / absent
Competency assessment	Present / absent
Use of assessment evidence	Evident / not evident

Classroom observation is particularly valuable because a teacher may report using formative assessment while classroom practice remains examination-oriented.

Student Questionnaire

Students can be asked about:

- frequency of classroom feedback;
- opportunities to correct mistakes;
- project work;
- group activities;
- self-assessment;
- teacher support;
- understanding of assessment criteria;
- examination pressure;
- participation in classroom assessment.

This introduces the student voice into CCE research.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data can be analysed through:

- frequency;
- percentage;
- mean;
- standard deviation;
- t-test;
- ANOVA;
- chi-square;
- correlation;
- regression analysis.

For example, regression analysis can examine whether:

Teacher Training + Assessment Literacy + Institutional Support + Workload
predict:

Quality of Formative Assessment Practice.

Qualitative interviews can be analysed thematically.

Potential themes include:

- policy awareness;
- interpretation of CCE;
- assessment workload;
- examination pressure;
- teacher autonomy;
- resource constraints;
- documentation;
- feedback;
- professional development;
- classroom diversity.

Potential Dimensions of the Implementation Gap

Policy–Awareness Gap

Teachers may have heard of CCE or NEP 2020 without possessing a detailed understanding of assessment principles. Knowing the terminology is different from understanding how assessment evidence should influence teaching.

Policy–Practice Gap

Teachers may conduct frequent tests but use the results mainly to generate marks rather than diagnose learning difficulties.

This creates a fundamental distinction:

Continuous testing ≠ continuous assessment for learning.

Assessment–Feedback Gap

Assessment has limited formative value if students receive a score without knowing:

- what they did well;
- what they misunderstood;
- how they can improve.

Documentation–Learning Gap

CCE can generate considerable documentation. If teachers spend substantial time completing records without using those records to inform instruction, assessment becomes an administrative activity rather than a pedagogical process.

Competency–Content Gap

The contemporary policy framework encourages assessment of competencies and higher-order capacities. NCF-SE 2023 explicitly recommends assessment approaches that examine conceptual understanding and higher-order capacities rather than relying only on rote learning.

The challenge is whether classroom assessment has actually moved in this direction.

CCE and the Rural–Urban Divide

The implementation gap may not be uniform across schools.

Urban schools may have relatively greater access to:

- digital resources;
- trained teachers;
- assessment materials;
- libraries;
- laboratories;
- external academic support.

Rural and tribal schools may face greater constraints.

However, this should be empirically tested rather than assumed.

A comparative study should therefore examine:

Urban → Rural → Tribal

across:

- teacher training;
- assessment resources;
- class size;
- digital access;
- assessment methods;
- feedback practices;
- student participation.

This comparison can make the research substantially more valuable for educational planning in Odisha.

CCE and NEP 2020: From Compliance to Transformation

The current assessment reform agenda provides an opportunity to reconsider the meaning of CCE.

The objective should not be to preserve a particular assessment format. Instead, the underlying principle should be retained:

Assessment should be continuous, meaningful, diagnostic and capable of improving teaching and learning.

NEP 2020 calls for formative assessment for learning, while NCF-SE 2023 provides a broader competency-based assessment framework.

Consequently, the future of CCE in Odisha should not be understood as simply continuing an earlier assessment programme. It should be viewed as part of a broader movement towards:

CCE → Formative Assessment → Competency-Based Assessment → Holistic Assessment

The Holistic Progress Card is particularly relevant because it seeks to document students' progress across learning domains rather than reducing achievement to marks alone.

3. Policy Recommendations

Redefine Continuous Assessment

State-level guidelines should explicitly distinguish between frequent testing and formative assessment.

Reduce Unnecessary Documentation

Assessment records should be simplified so that teachers spend more time on assessment and feedback and less time on paperwork.

Strengthen Teacher Assessment Literacy

Teacher professional development should include hands-on training in:

- competency-based questions;
- rubrics;
- portfolios;
- observation;
- peer assessment;
- self-assessment;
- feedback;
- remedial teaching.

Introduce School-Based Assessment Mentoring

DIETs, BRCs and CRCs can support teachers through classroom observation, demonstration lessons and assessment mentoring. SCERT Odisha already identifies monitoring and feedback on classroom practices as part of its academic-support functions.

Develop Context-Sensitive Assessment Tools

Assessment resources should be adaptable to rural, tribal and multilingual contexts.

Strengthen Student Participation

Students should be taught how to:

- evaluate their own work;
- understand assessment criteria;
- provide peer feedback;
- set learning goals;
- reflect on mistakes.

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CCE and NEP 2020: From Compliance to Transformation

The objective should not be to preserve a particular assessment format. Instead, the underlying principle should be retained:

Assessment should be continuous, meaningful, diagnostic and capable of improving teaching and learning.

Digital assessment can support rapid feedback and record management, but technology should complement—not replace—teacher judgement.

Establish an Assessment Quality Monitoring System

School assessment should be monitored not simply for whether records are complete but for whether assessment evidence actually influences teaching.

Expected Contribution of the Study

The proposed study can contribute to research and policy in four ways.

First

It can distinguish between policy adoption and classroom implementation.

Second

It can generate empirical evidence about teachers' actual assessment practices in Odisha.

Third

It can identify whether the implementation gap varies across rural, urban and tribal contexts.

Fourth

It can provide an empirical basis for strengthening the transition from traditional CCE towards competency-based and holistic assessment under NEP 2020.

Limitations

The study may face several limitations.

First, teacher self-report data may be affected by social desirability bias. Classroom observation should therefore supplement questionnaires.

Second, assessment practices may vary considerably by subject and grade level.

Third, findings from selected districts may not be generalisable to every school in Odisha.

Fourth, policy implementation is evolving, particularly with the introduction of new assessment frameworks and Holistic Progress Cards. Therefore, the study should treat implementation as a continuing process rather than a completed reform.

4. Conclusion

The history of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation demonstrates an important lesson for educational reform: contemporary assessment reforms associated with NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023 provide an opportunity to address this limitation. The national framework now gives stronger emphasis to formative, competency-based and holistic assessment, while resources, academic mentoring and classroom-level monitoring. Assessment reform will become meaningful only when teachers have the knowledge, time, means, correlations or hypotheses as if they were actual findings. Those should be calculated from your field data. This is important if the paper is intended for a peer-reviewed journal or a policy can change assessment structures without necessarily changing assessment culture.

CCE was intended to move Indian schooling towards continuous monitoring, comprehensive evaluation and learner support. However, its classroom implementation may be weakened when continuous assessment is interpreted primarily as repeated testing, record maintenance or administrative compliance.

The contemporary assessment reforms associated with NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023 provide an opportunity to address this limitation. The national framework now gives stronger emphasis to formative, competency-based and holistic assessment, while Odisha is actively developing and revising assessment frameworks and Holistic Progress Cards. SCERT Odisha+1

For Odisha, the central challenge is therefore not simply to introduce another assessment framework. It is to create the conditions under which teachers can use assessment evidence to improve learning.

The implementation gap can be narrowed through sustained teacher professional development, manageable workloads, simplified documentation, adequate resources, academic mentoring and classroom-level monitoring. Assessment reform will become meaningful only when teachers have the knowledge, time, autonomy and institutional support necessary to translate policy principles into everyday classroom practice.

In this sense, the future of CCE in Odisha should not be judged by the number of assessment records completed. It should be judged by a more fundamental question:

Does classroom assessment help every learner understand what they have learned, identify what they need to improve, and receive the support necessary to progress?

If the answer is affirmative, continuous and comprehensive evaluation will have moved from being a policy requirement to becoming a genuine culture of learning.

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