

Exploring The Implementation And Challenges Of 360-Degree Holistic Assessment Among Secondary School Students: A Review

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Abstract

The shift from traditional, examination-focused grading to a 360-degree holistic assessment model is widely recognized as a critical educational reform aimed at nurturing the multidimensional potential of learners. This review examines the theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and systemic challenges associated with the implementation of holistic evaluation frameworks, particularly in the context of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and its precursor, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). Drawing upon findings from diverse global, national, and regional educational contexts, the review reveals a generally positive necessity for multidimensional tracking to foster 21st-century competencies. However, the practical execution varies significantly due to differences in administrative burdens, teacher readiness, technological integration, and school management types (Government vs. Private). To provide a comprehensive analysis, this review introduces relevant sub-topics, including the psychological impact of academic resilience during peer-assessment, the digital divide in educational tools, and the critical role of the National Mission for Mentoring (NMM). The findings underscore the importance of addressing grassroots infrastructural challenges to ensure that assessment transcends theoretical policy and becomes a functional tool for lifelong student empowerment.

Keywords: 360-degree holistic assessment, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, NEP 2020, secondary students, holistic development, teacher readiness, academic resilience.

1. Introduction

The growing demands of the 21st-century knowledge economy have shifted educational priorities from the mere acquisition of facts to the multidimensional development of higher-order competencies (OECD, 2021). Education is widely recognized as the fundamental foundation of human development and the primary driver of social transformation. According to Darling-Hammond, (2020), the true goal of education is not just academic preparation but the nurturing of the "whole child" through simultaneous intellectual, social, and emotional growth. This process aims to discover the hidden potential within every learner and prepares them to face real-world challenges with character, integrity, and ethical values.

In this transformative journey, assessment is an inevitable and inseparable part of education. Evaluation has been described as a systematic and continuous process of determining the merit, value, or

significance of an achievement against a set of established standards. According to Black and Wiliam, (2018), it serves as an essential bridge between the act of teaching and the reality of learning, ensuring that the efforts of the educator align with the actual understanding of the student. Furthermore, Agrawal, (2021) conceptualized evaluation as the vital compass that provides the learning journey with direction, clarity, and purpose, acting as a powerful diagnostic tool for teachers, parents, and students alike.

Despite this symbiotic relationship between teaching and multidimensional tracking, traditional academic achievement has historically served as the primary indicator of educational success. Das, (2023) defined the traditional Indian assessment system as a restrictive model dominated by high-stakes, pen-and-paper examinations that prioritize rote memorization and the mechanical reproduction of facts under time-bound pressure. Contemporary educational research suggests that examination scores alone may not adequately prepare students for complex real-world challenges, as they frequently fail to recognize vital human qualities such as leadership, teamwork, creativity, and physical fitness. By reducing a student's worth to a single numerical score, the traditional system offers an incomplete and often misleading picture of a child's true capabilities.

To address these systemic shortcomings, the 360-degree holistic assessment has emerged as a complementary construct that contributes significantly to students' socio-emotional growth and lifelong learning capacity. According to the Ministry of Education, (2022), the term "360-degree" signifies a triangulated feedback loop incorporating self-assessment by the student, peer-assessment by classmates, and teacher-assessment. This shift is the central focus of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which advocates replacing one-dimensional marksheets with a Holistic Progress Card (HPC) that tracks cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains alongside 21st-century skills. Consequently, educational institutions are increasingly expected to cultivate continuous, holistic tracking to maintain consistency across the nation, regulated by national centers like PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development).

Secondary school students occupy a unique developmental stage characterized by substantial intellectual and psychological growth. During this critical transition—particularly in secondary classes where the looming pressure of board exams clashes with holistic principles—learners develop advanced reasoning abilities and self-regulation skills that influence both creative expression and academic performance. Therefore, understanding the relationship between teaching methodologies and this new evaluation framework during this educational stage is of considerable importance. Despite substantial theoretical research, findings regarding practical implementation remain inconsistent across contexts, educational boards, and geographic regions. These inconsistencies highlight the need for a comprehensive review that critically examines existing evidence, identifies institutional factors, and explores the lived challenges of administrators, teachers, and students.

2. Methodology

The present review is descriptive in nature and utilizes a conceptual analytical methodology integrating both quantitative and qualitative insights to synthesize secondary information (Singh, 2023). The data for this extensive review was solely based on secondary information collected from research articles published in different journals which are available online with open access.

2.1 Literature Searches

For reviewing this article, related literature was retrieved through comprehensive online search engines such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, JSTOR, Social Science Information, Shodhganga, and

Academia.edu. Various combinations of keywords such as 360-degree holistic assessment, Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation, secondary school students, holistic development, academic resilience, and NEP 2020 were interchangeably used for searching the literature. Boolean Operators such as ‘AND’ and ‘OR’ were heavily utilized in order to get more productive and highly targeted results relating to the topic.

2.2 Eligibility Criteria

Works selected for this review focused fundamentally on theoretical perspectives on multidimensional assessment and the historical transition from Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) to the NEP 2020 frameworks. Focus was mainly given to articles that include practical implementation challenges, stakeholder attitudes (students, teachers, parents, and administrators), and institutional disparities between government and private management structures. Furthermore, studies evaluating technological integration, teacher training frameworks like the National Mission for Mentoring (NMM), and academic resilience were prioritized to provide a robust sub-topical analysis. The criteria considered for exclusion were articles not published in the English language, works published before the year 2000, data derived from unreliable sources, and articles in which full-text files were not available for in-depth screening.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Global Perspectives on Alternative Assessment and 360-Degree Evaluation

The relationship between multidimensional feedback and institutional professionalism extends far beyond India, representing a global shift in pedagogical priorities. Hussain and Matore, (2024) conducted a study on *How Can Teachers Survive Using 360-Degree Evaluation?* to explore the multi-dimensional impact of holistic appraisals on teacher professionalism. Through a systematic analysis of stakeholder responses involving policymakers, parents, students, and administrators, the study evaluated the effectiveness of the 360-degree model in enhancing teaching quality, work discipline, and professional ethics. Hussain and Matore, (2024) concluded that the 360-degree approach is highly effective in providing authentic and credible feedback, particularly from students, which directly helps teachers improve classroom delivery techniques. The findings indicated that while policymakers see it as a tool for accountability, and parents often express concerns regarding potential personal biases, the system successfully fosters a disciplined work culture and strengthens professional relationships by reducing the limitations of traditional, single-source appraisals.

Furthermore, Kumbhakar and Kumar, (2024) conducted a study on *Beyond Exams: Implementing Holistic Assessment in Education* to identify global alternative assessment methods and evaluate their potential for replacing traditional exams. The researchers synthesized data from diverse international models in 12 distinct fields, including STEM (UK/USA), Business (Singapore/France), Performing Arts (Italy/South Korea), and Health Sciences (Canada/India). Kumbhakar and Kumar, (2024) concluded that while traditional exams reward rote memorization, moving toward a system of continuous learning and life-skill development is essential for the 21st century. The findings indicated that successful global implementations—such as nursing simulations in Canada and entrepreneurship pitches in Singapore—offer a proven roadmap for creating inclusive, learner-centered educational environments.

In the realm of institutional leadership and sustainability, Keerio et al., (2025) conducted a study on *The Role of 360-Degree Feedback in Identification and Development of Successor During Succession Planning in Higher Education Institutions*. Utilizing an integrative literature review methodology, the

researchers investigated the interaction between self, peers, and supervisors. Keerio et al., (2025) concluded that while 360-degree feedback is a powerful tool for developmental planning, its efficacy will be severely constrained by resource limitations and the "ego-protective mechanisms" of individuals receiving negative feedback. The findings underscore that a successful evaluation cycle requires a strategic plan aligning individual aspirations with broader institutional goals.

3.2 The National Context: From CCE to NEP 2020

In India, earlier educational paradigms often viewed formative and summative evaluations as distinct constructs that were difficult to manage practically. Kumar, (2021) conducted a study on *Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation in Indian Schools: Opportunities and Challenges* to critically evaluate the successes and failures of the CCE framework and its evolution into the current holistic assessment model. Focusing on the massive gap between policy intent and classroom implementation, Kumar, (2021) concluded that "assessment for learning" frequently regressed into "assessment of learning" due to severe administrative burdens. The study indicated that while CCE provided the essential groundwork for holistic growth, the lack of standardized digital tracking was a major hurdle, asserting that the new 360-degree approach will only succeed if it simplifies the documentation process for teachers.

Contemporary evidence heavily suggests that holistic tracking relies fundamentally on educator preparedness. Mishra and Tiwari, (2023) conducted a study on *Implementation of 360-Degree Holistic Progress Card: A Study of Teachers' Readiness in Secondary Schools* utilizing a mixed-methods approach with 120 educators. Focusing on technological literacy, the affective domain, and time management, Mishra and Tiwari, (2023) concluded that while teachers possess a high level of theoretical awareness, their practical readiness is significantly hindered by large class sizes and a lack of specific training in socio-emotional evaluation. Similarly, Dhama and Naaz, (2023) conducted a comparative survey to evaluate educators' perceptions of learning enhancement strategies. Dhama and Naaz, (2023) concluded that teacher attitude is a primary determinant of reform success, indicating that a significant number of teachers will require continuous professional development to successfully transition to complex evaluation frameworks like the 360-degree model.

Preparing the next generation of educators is equally vital. Behera and Malik, (2024) conducted a study on *360-Degree Holistic Assessment In Teacher Education* to explore the theoretical underpinnings of integrating multidimensional feedback into teacher training programs. Behera and Malik, (2024) concluded that while this approach holds significant promise for enriching educator training by incorporating self, peer, and supervisor feedback, its success will be challenged by logistical hurdles and the urgent need for a cultural shift toward a trust-based learning environment. Analyzing the broader policy framework, Naik and Ghose, (2024) conducted a qualitative analysis of NEP 2020 and its challenges. They concluded that while the policy's shift toward tracking all-round ability is transformative, it will face significant barriers due to a general lack of understanding among school staff, indicating that systematic teacher empowerment and clear assessment rubrics are non-negotiable prerequisites.

3.3 Crucial Factors Influencing the Implementation of Holistic Assessment

The transition to a 360-degree framework is a multidimensional challenge heavily influenced by institutional management, technological access, student psychology, and professional mentoring. The following sub-topics elaborate on the core variables dictating the success of this reform:

3.3.1 Institutional Management and Resource Disparities (Government vs. Private)

The administrative and financial structure of secondary schools acts as a massive variable in the execution of holistic tracking. Singh and Naaz, (2025) conducted a study examining the perceptions of stakeholders across State Board and Central Board middle-stage education. Utilizing a descriptive survey method with a sample of 50 students, 20 teachers, and 10 parents, the investigation focused on perceived usefulness, accuracy, fairness, and challenges. Singh and Naaz, (2025) concluded that while all stakeholder groups held a moderately positive attitude toward the holistic model, actual operationalization faces severe challenges due to a lack of resources and deep understanding, particularly in government-run state board schools.

In a parallel study, Singh and Naaz, (2025) explicitly compared government and private schools in Uttar Pradesh using the same sample sizes. They concluded that students and parents in private schools demonstrated a significantly more positive outlook toward the 360-degree system compared to their government school counterparts. Interestingly, no significant contrast was found between the attitudes of government and private school teachers, indicating that a universal lack of resources and training acts as a systemic barrier across the board, requiring better infrastructure to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

3.3.2 Teacher Training and the National Mission for Mentoring (NMM)

Equipping educators to evaluate beyond the cognitive domain is arguably the highest barrier to holistic assessment. As indicated by Mishra and Tiwari, (2023), evaluating socio-emotional skills, leadership, and values requires qualitative tools that most teachers are currently untrained to use. To combat this, institutional support mechanisms like the National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) are necessary to provide professional hand-holding. The NMM represents a critical sub-topic, as it is fundamentally designed to transition teachers from traditional instructional patterns to competency-based performance evaluators. Without aggressive activation of such mentorship programs, the 360-degree model risks being perceived merely as an overwhelming clerical burden rather than a functional diagnostic tool.

3.3.3 Stakeholder Synergy and Academic Resilience

The psychological response of the learner is central to the 360-degree feedback loop. Reddy and Gupta, (2024) conducted a phenomenological study to capture the "lived experiences" of students, parents, and teachers using focus group discussions. Focusing on how "peer-assessment" and "self-assessment" impact motivation, Reddy and Gupta, (2024) concluded that involving students in their own evaluation significantly reduces examination anxiety and fosters a "growth mindset". However, they also indicated that parents require intensive orientation to shift their mindset away from traditional ranks and marks.

A critical component of this psychological shift is "Academic Resilience". This refers to the educational capacity of secondary students to adapt to non-traditional grading systems. When faced with the pressure of being evaluated by their peers—a core component of the triangulated feedback loop—students must maintain emotional stability. The success of the 360-degree model is heavily dependent on a classroom climate that fosters trust and prevents peer assessment from devolving into anxiety-inducing peer pressure.

3.3.4 Technological Integration and the Digital Divide

Technological intervention serves as the ultimate bridge in scaling the 360-degree assessment without exhausting educators. Sharma and Singh, (2024) conducted a qualitative analysis of NEP 2020 and concluded that the biggest barriers to implementation are the digital divide and inconsistent assessment

methods across regions. They indicated that schools must invest in comprehensive, technology-enabled tools to track a student's "whole" development accurately.

Expanding on this, Sharma and Baliya, (2024) conducted a study on *Unveiling Educational Transformation*, identifying specific digital tools required for this paradigm shift. Categorizing evaluation into six clusters—including academic progress (portfolios), social-emotional development (peer feedback), and technology tools (LMS/Apps)—Sharma and Baliya, (2024) concluded that the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning will transform the assessment culture into a scientific methodology for continuous improvement. They noted that national regulators like PARAKH are essential for setting uniform standards. Looking toward the future, Saxena and Srivastava, (2025) conducted a study on the long-term trajectory of holistic evaluation by 2050. They concluded that integrating advanced tools such as blockchain technology for tamper-proof records and lifelong digital portfolios is indispensable for shaping visionary leaders. By combining PARAKH principles with AI-driven analytics, the educational ecosystem can accurately capture the multifaceted nature of growth, provided that challenges like data privacy and scalability are effectively resolved.

3.4 Regional Realities: Implementation Challenges in Assam

While global and national discourse provides a theoretical roadmap, the practical implementation of the 360-degree holistic assessment in diverse, rural, and agrarian contexts presents unique logistical challenges. In the state of Assam, organizations like Samagra Shiksha Assam (SSA) and SCERT are attempting to bring NEP 2020 changes to grassroots levels through initiatives like "Gunotsav," aiming to shift the focus from the quantity of marks to the quality of learning. Additionally, technology-driven projects like the World Bank-funded ASAP (Assam: School Education and Adolescent Wellbeing Project) are being deployed to track progress.

However, local literature highlights a severe disconnect between policy ambition and institutional infrastructure. Borah, (2021) conducted a comparative study of government and private secondary schools in the Dhakuakhana Subdivision of Lakhimpur District. Utilizing a descriptive survey methodology with a robust sample of 706 students and 40 teachers, the investigator focused on variables such as school type and gender regarding High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) results. Borah, (2021) concluded that private school students significantly outperformed government school students, achieving nearly 100% pass rates. The findings indicated that while private schools favor play-way methods, government schools rely heavily on traditional lecture and demonstration. Borah, (2021) further noted that bridging this massive achievement gap requires an urgent strengthening of administrative systems and the provision of scientific teacher training.

Focusing on the specific tools mandated by NEP 2020 in the region, Meitei, Pete, et al., (2024) conducted a study analyzing teachers' perspectives on the feasibility of implementing the Holistic Progress Card (HPC) in secondary schools. Utilizing a descriptive survey method, they found a stark contrast between theory and practice: while 71% of teachers strongly agreed with assessing students across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, a mere 36% currently engaged in actual self and peer assessment in their classrooms. Meitei, Pete, et al., (2024) concluded that targeted professional development is urgently required to bridge these gaps, particularly in the creation and use of rubrics and student portfolios. They also indicated that approximately 19% of teachers remain highly skeptical of the policy, highlighting the need for systemic support to ensure the shift is sustainable.

To finalize the evaluation of regional readiness, Meitei and Singh, (2025) conducted a study investigating the synergy between curriculum delivery and new reporting methods. Exploring inquiry-based and project-based learning assessments, Meitei and Singh, (2025) concluded that traditional reporting is definitively no longer sufficient for the 21st-century learner. Their findings firmly asserted that an integrated approach to assessment is essential for fostering critical thinking and creativity, ensuring that every learner's unique identity is continuously captured and celebrated through the 360-degree feedback loop.

4. Conclusion

The transition from a high-stakes, examination-driven system to a 360-degree holistic assessment represents an ambitious and deeply necessary paradigm shift in secondary education. This comprehensive review demonstrates that evaluating the whole child across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains is highly beneficial for fostering adaptive, creative, and competent learners capable of navigating the 21st century. The triangulated feedback loop—incorporating self, peer, and teacher assessment through the Holistic Progress Card (HPC)—serves to reduce examination anxiety, foster a growth mindset, and provide a highly authentic evaluation of a student's true capabilities.

However, extensive analysis of global, national, and regional literature reveals that the practical execution of this multidimensional system is fraught with immense systemic hurdles. Research consistently indicates a vast chasm between theoretical policy ideals and the actual grassroots infrastructure of secondary schools. Challenges such as the severe lack of targeted teacher training in socio-emotional evaluation, overwhelming administrative and clerical burdens, the stark digital divide, and profound infrastructural disparities between government and private schools must be actively and aggressively addressed.

For the 360-degree holistic assessment to transcend being merely a theoretical policy mandate or a "rebranding" of previous failures like CCE, institutions and policymakers must collaborate deeply. Essential systemic supports—such as user-friendly digital tracking infrastructure via AI and LMS platforms, simplified evaluation rubrics, and the aggressive activation of robust mentoring programs like the National Mission for Mentoring (NMM)—must be provided to empower educators. Furthermore, careful attention must be paid to fostering academic resilience among students to ensure that peer evaluation remains constructive rather than destructive. By successfully resolving these practical constraints and bridging the gap between policy and practice, the 360-degree assessment can shed its perception as a clerical obligation and rightfully evolve into a meaningful, lifelong instrument for holistic student progress and empowerment.

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