



EVALUATING INSIGHTS OF EDUCATORS TOWARDS SCHOOL ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK IN MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract:

Assessment frameworks play a crucial role in evaluating the education systems and guiding improvements in school performance. This study examines the perceptions of educators regarding the existing school assessment process implemented by the Maharashtra government. Additionally, it explores their feedback on a proposed assessment system aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The research is based on a structured survey conducted among teachers involved in assessment process and encouraged to assess their experiences, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. By comparing responses on the current and proposed frameworks, the study aims to identify key gaps, strengths, and areas for enhancement. The data collected is systematically analyzed using graphical representations to highlight trends and patterns in educators' perspectives.

Findings from this study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and acceptance of assessment methodologies in Maharashtra's schools. The results will help policymakers, education departments, and school administrators refine the assessment process, ensuring it aligns with NEP 2020's vision of holistic, competency-based evaluation. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on improving school assessment mechanisms to enhance educational outcomes and institutional accountability.

Keywords: *Assessment frameworks, educational stakeholder, feedback on assessment frameworks, National Educational Policy 2020, school accreditations, Teacher perspective.*

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Introduction:

School assessment is important for ensuring quality education in Maharashtra by evaluating teaching effectiveness, infrastructure, student performance, and overall learning outcomes.

With the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, there is a growing emphasis on competency-based education, inclusivity, and digital learning, making quality assurance essential for sustainable improvement.

Regular assessments help in identifying gaps in learning, improving teacher training, and ensuring that schools meet national and state-level academic standards. It also promotes accountability and

transparency, encouraging schools to adopt best practices for student-centric learning. Moreover, school assessment enables better resource allocation, helping underperforming schools receive the necessary support.

Literature Review:

Globally, assessment frameworks have evolved from traditional exam-based models to comprehensive evaluation systems incorporating qualitative and quantitative measures. Studies have shown that effective assessment frameworks contribute to better student performance, teacher accountability, and institutional improvements (Black & Wiliam, 1998, 2009; N. Hopfenbeck, T. 2018). Countries like Finland

and Singapore have adopted continuous and formative assessment models, emphasizing skill development over rote learning (Darling-Hammond, 2018).

In India, the school assessment framework has traditionally relied on standardized testing. However, with the introduction of NEP 2020, a shift towards competency-based assessments, critical thinking evaluation, and reduced high-stakes testing is encouraged (Ministry of Education, 2020). Maharashtra, being one of India's progressive states in education, has piloted various school assessment models to align with these changes.

Maharashtra's school assessment framework primarily follows the guidelines of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), integrating Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE). Various studies (Joshi et al., 2021; Patil & Deshpande, 2019) indicate that while the system provides a structured approach to evaluating schools, there are concerns regarding implementation efficiency, standardization, and educator training.

The NEP 2020 aims to reform India's education system by introducing holistic assessment methods, including formative assessments, peer reviews, and project-based evaluations (NEP, 2020). Research by Sharma & Gupta (2021), Bhadrappa et al (2024); highlights that educators view this transition positively but express concerns about infrastructure readiness and resource availability for effective implementation.

Several studies (Rao, 2021; Mehta, 2020, Yates et al, 2017) suggest that educators in Maharashtra acknowledge the benefits of competency-based assessment but stress the need for proper training, curriculum restructuring, and administrative support. A study by Nair (2022) reveals that teachers prefer a balance between traditional assessments and modern evaluation techniques to ensure fairness and inclusivity.

Research Methodology:

In Maharashtra, initiatives like State School Grading Systems and third party audits were introduced to enhance learning outcomes, infrastructure quality, and student development. Ensuring continuous evaluation and improvement through structured assessments is key to achieving global education benchmarks.

Study of existing school assessment frameworks

Currently, the Government of Maharashtra employs two main approaches for school assessment. The Educational Quality Enrichment Campaign (शैक्षणिक गुणवत्ता संवर्धन

अभियान), implemented since 2016. A revised assessment framework, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, is scheduled for implementation in the academic year 2025-26.

Educational Quality Enrichment Campaign

The Educational Quality Enrichment Campaign (शैक्षणिक गुणवत्ता संवर्धन अभियान) employs

a continuous comprehensive evaluation method to assess and improve the teaching-learning process. Launched in 2015, it involves monitoring and assessment of schools by expert teams based on the following criteria: Physical Infrastructure (55 Marks); Administrative Policies (90 Marks); Teaching-Learning Process (60 Marks); School Section (50 Marks); Quality Enrichment Activities (35 Marks); Significant Unique Activities (10 Marks) Schools can ranked according to the grade ranges as: Grade A: 176 to 300 Marks; Grade B: 151 to 175 Marks; Grade C: 76 to 150 Marks; Grade D: 1 to 75 Marks;

The six evaluation criteria are further divided into a three-level hierarchy of sub-criteria, each with a minimum and maximum weightage of "1". Further; assessors primarily document the presence of facilities and implemented practices and not the quality or utilization. The grade ranges for final school ranking are defined by whole numbers, potentially creating

abrupt cutoffs.

School Quality Assessment and Assurance Framework (SQAAF) - NEP 2020:

This is proposed approach for school assessment with effect from May 2025. The NEP 2020 mandates the development of the School Quality Assessment and Assurance Framework (SQAAF) for all educational stages, encompassing both private and government schools.

SQAAF aims to enhance academic activities, teaching-learning processes, and financial/administrative activities. The assessment process intends to strengthen existing educational systems, motivate school administrations, and identify institutional strengths and weaknesses.

The SQAAF framework is structured around domains and sub-domains aligned with specific standards. The domains are categorized as; Curricular, Teaching Methods, and Assessment (44 standards, 12 sub-domains); Fundamental Facilities (30 standards, 12 sub-domains); Human Resources and School Leadership (12 standards, 5 sub-domains); Integrated Education and Gender Equity (14 standards, 11 sub-domains); Management, Control, and Administration (17 standards, 12 sub-domains); Beneficiary Satisfaction (11 standards, 7 sub-domains)

These 6 domains, 59 sub-domains, and 128 standards will be applied (with appropriate modifications) across educational stages: Pre-primary (up to standard 2nd), Primary (standard 3rd to 5th), Pre-secondary (standard 6th to 8th), and Secondary (standard 9th to 12th).

Based on the assessment results, schools will be classified into one of four categories: Preparatory (प्रारंभिक), Progressive (प्रगतिशील), Advanced (प्रगत), and Proficient (प्रवीण).

These classifications are determined by domain scores obtained through internal and external assessments, expressed as grades.

Within the marking scheme, each standard is assigned a maximum of four marks. Assessors can award between 1 and 4 marks based on the evidence provided by the school. Final grades will be assigned as follows: A+ (91–100), A (81–90), B+ (71–80), B (61–70), C+ (51–60), and C (less than 50). This new assessment approach is scheduled to be implemented during the academic year 2025-2026, and will feature both internal and external assessments due course of time.

Educator perspectives on school assessment approaches:

The feedback on both assessment approaches was taken through discussions and digital questionnaire. The rigorous interaction was taken place with teachers from primary, secondary and higher secondary stages of teaching.

Total 364 responses were recorded through digital questionnaire like google form. Figure 2; shows a typical structure of the same.

The feedback was asked through following questions –

1. How useful do you find the accreditation process in improving the quality of education?
2. How much successful do you think the previous accreditation campaigns have been in improving educational standards?
3. How much do you think SQAAF will be effective in enhancing curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices?
4. How much transparent do you think the previous accreditation campaigns were in terms of process and decision-making?
5. How much effective do you think SQAAF will be for future school assessment processes?
6. How much the SQAAF will be complicated than the previous assessment campaigns?

The responses were collected and analyzed. The outcomes of these responses are discussed in further paragraphs.

Results and Discussions:

Figure 1 below; shows the diversification of target group chosen from the cluster of educators who have already involved in school assessment process in either role.

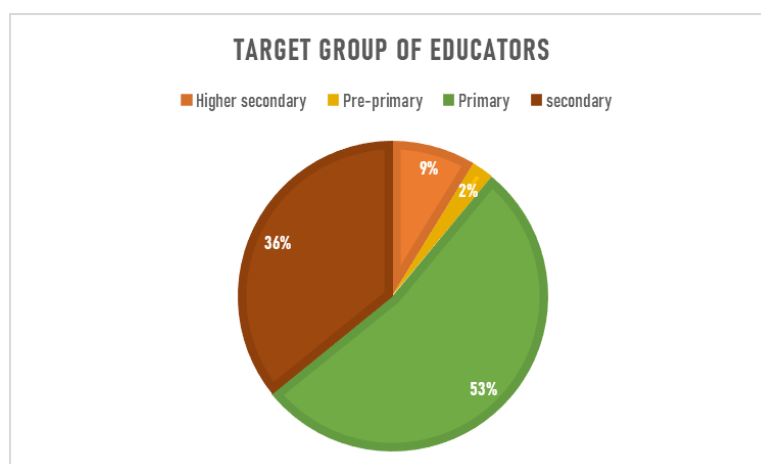


Figure 1: A graph showing diversification of respondent from various stages of teaching

With reference to first question out of total 346 teachers, around 166 teachers were found with an experience of assessor whereas 178 teachers worked for preparation of assessment works but not worked as assessors. Rest, very few teachers neither found an opportunity to work as assessor nor involved in preparation works so far.

It was found satisfactory that maximum teachers find the accreditation process helpful in improving the quality of education. The feedback shows that the 95% of teachers accepts that the assessment processes helps to improve education quality. It has been observed that the aim to enhance educational quality by identifying strengths and weaknesses can be achieved through such periodic assessment processes. This data-driven approach, focusing on teaching, facilities, and administration, informs targeted improvements and motivates schools towards continuous progress and higher standards.

Table 1, shows the graphical representation of responses received.

How much useful do you find the accreditation process in improving the quality of education?

Table 1. showing teacher response for accreditation practices and their effectiveness in quality of education

Perceptions →	Strongly Agree	Highly Agree	Moderately Agree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Percentage →	27%	42%	26%	4%	1%

In case of previous accreditation campaigns and their significance in improving educational standards; the responses indicates that 42% teachers are not sure about the effectiveness. This is due to the common model for all schools irrespective of their geographical location, basic infrastructural shortfalls and lack of strategic implication of assessment practices. Table 2, is the graphical representation of responses received from teachers from various stages of education.

How much successful do you think the previous accreditation campaigns have been in improving educational standards?

Table 2. showing teacher feedback for effectiveness of previous accreditation campaigns and their significance in improving educational standards.

Perceptions →	Strongly Agree	Highly Agree	Moderately Agree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Percentage →	15%	34%	42%	8%	1%

Table 3, shows the transparency of the previous accreditation campaigns in terms of process and decision-making.

How much transparent do you think the previous accreditation campaigns were in terms of process and decision-making?

Table 3 showing teacher feedback regarding transparency of older practices of assessment

Perceptions →	Strongly Agree	Highly Agree	Moderately Agree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Percentage →	13%	39%	37%	9%	2%

After announcement of new assessment framework in line with NEP 2020 teachers were further found very optimistic and assured about the success of SQAAC. The responses shows that more than 95% teachers have accepted this change. Table 4, indicates that the 42% teachers are “Highly Agree” for the SQAAC and this will be effective in enhancing curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices.

How much do you think SQAAC will be effective in enhancing curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices?

How much effective do you think SQAAC will be for future school assessment processes?

Table 4 showing teacher response for expected outcomes of proposed SQAAC

Perceptions →	Strongly Agree		Moderately Agree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Percentage →	27%	42%	26%	4%	1%

As per National Educational Policy 2020, SQAAC guideline framework has been developed for all stages of education to assess the performance of private and government schools. This framework has been designed for enriching academic activities, teaching learning process and financial as well as administrative activities. After crucial discussions and training sessions teacher found uncertain about the new SQAAC assessment approach.

How much the SQAAC will be complicated than the previous assessment campaigns?

Table 5 showing feedback from teachers regarding proposed SQAAC as per NEP 2020

Perceptions →	Strongly Agree	Highly Agree	Moderately Agree	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Percentage →	23%	34%	31%	9%	3%

The Table 5 shows the responses of teacher regarding this new approach. This system seems to be somehow robust and challenging.

Conclusion:

A qualitative assessment framework is essential for school evaluation in Maharashtra, aligning with global trends and NEP 2020. Relying solely on quantitative criteria may lead to conflicts, while a multi-criteria approach ensures balanced, transparent, and inclusive decision-making. Logical evaluation using linguistic variables enhances fairness, particularly in rural schools. Holistic assessment must integrate both quantitative and qualitative factors, considering the impact of facilities and stakeholder involvement. The current grading system struggles with school disparities, necessitating a model based on logical set theory. Outcome-Based Education (OBE) emphasizes competency over rote learning, requiring assessment reforms that focus on actual learning outcomes.

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