



## From Policy to Practice: A Study on Teacher Preparedness for Competency Based Education in Secondary Schools

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**Abstract :** Competency-Based Education (CBE) is a pedagogical approach that shifts the focus from time spent in the classroom to mastery of learning outcomes. This paradigm empowers students to progress at their own pace, fostering deeper learning and a sense of ownership over their education. However, the successful implementation of CBE hinges on the preparedness of teachers. To effectively facilitate CBE, teachers require comprehensive professional development that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge to design and deliver competency-based curricula, assess student progress authentically, and provide individualized support. By investing in teacher preparedness, educational institutions can ensure the successful implementation of CBE and maximize its benefits for students. This research study explores teachers' preparedness in implementing competency-based assessments in CBSE schools in Bangalore. The results reemphasize the need for professional development. Teacher preparedness will be instrumental in fostering an education system that prioritizes skills and competencies over rote learning, ultimately shaping a more capable and informed generation.

**Index Terms –** Competency based Education, Teacher preparedness. Formative assessment.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Competency-based education (CBE) evolved around the 70s. CBE is defined as an outcome-based approach to education that incorporates modes of instructional delivery and assessment efforts designed to evaluate mastery of learning by students through their demonstration of the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and behaviours required for the degree sought. (Gervais, 2016) The characteristics of CBE were described by Schneck (1978), "Competency-based education has much in common with such approaches to learning as performance-based and is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and the community"

Competency-Based Education (CBE) represents a genuinely student-centered approach to curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices. This educational framework is built around the idea of empowering students through the effective implementation of CBE principles. By shifting the focus from traditional methods to a more individualized approach, CBE transforms the educational experience, fostering an environment where students take charge of their learning journey.

Competency-Based Education represents a transformative shift in how education is approached. By making education truly student-centric, CBE empowers students to take charge of their education, actively engage with the material, and progress based on their individual mastery of content. This approach not only enhances student motivation and engagement but also fosters a more equitable and inclusive educational environment. As schools and educators continue to implement CBE principles, the potential for positive change in student learning outcomes becomes increasingly evident, paving the way for a more effective and responsive education system that truly meets the needs of all learners. The following are the major aspects of a competency-based learning framework.

1. **Empowerment in Learning Choices:** One of the key aspects of CBE is that it empowers students to make significant decisions about their learning experiences. CBE puts students in charge of their learning. Every day, they get to choose how they learn and show what they know. This makes them feel more responsible and helps them become active learners, not just listeners.

2. **Meaningful Assessment:** Within a CBE framework, assessment is a formative tool that provides students with timely, relevant, and actionable feedback on their progress. This approach shifts the focus from grades to learning outcomes, fostering a growth mindset and empowering students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement.
3. **Individualized Support:** CBE recognizes the heterogeneity of student learning needs and provides timely, differentiated support to address individual requirements. This tailored approach ensures that students receive the necessary assistance to succeed, whether through additional resources, one-on-one mentoring, or alternative learning strategies. By addressing these diverse needs, educators can facilitate the academic growth and achievement of all students.
4. **Progress Based on Mastery:** CBE prioritizes mastery over time spent in the classroom. Students progress through the curriculum when they demonstrate a deep understanding of the material, rather than adhering to a fixed timeline. This competency-based approach fosters deeper learning by allowing students to explore concepts at their own pace, preventing them from being rushed through content.
5. **Active Learning Pathways:** CBE promotes active learning through various pathways and flexible pacing. Students are encouraged to explore different ways to engage with the content, whether through collaborative projects, independent research, or hands-on activities. This variety helps cater to diverse learning styles and preferences, ensuring that each student can find an approach that resonates with them. Additionally, varying the pace of learning allows students to dive deeper into topics that interest them, fostering a more engaging and meaningful educational experience.
6. **Equity in Education:** CBE fosters active learning by offering a variety of pathways and flexible pacing. Students are encouraged to explore different methods of engaging with the content, such as collaborative projects, independent research, or hands-on activities. This diverse approach accommodates various learning styles and preferences, ensuring that each student can find a suitable method of engagement. Furthermore, the flexibility in learning pace enables students to delve deeper into topics that pique their interest, fostering a more engaging and meaningful educational experience.
7. **Clear Learning Expectations:** CBE sets clear and consistent learning goals that include knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These expectations are clearly stated, easily understood, measurable, and applicable to various contexts. By outlining specific learning objectives, educators can develop a focused and coherent curriculum that guides instruction and assessment. This transparency empowers students to understand what is expected of them, enabling them to take ownership of their learning and strive towards achieving their goals.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India's New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 insists on holistic and outcome-based approach to education. This is possible if there is a shift from content memorization to experiential learning and competency-based assessment that are aligned to real life scenarios. According to NEP 2020, paragraph 4:34. "The aim of assessment in the culture of our schooling system will shift from one that is summative and primarily tests rote memorization skills to one that is more regular and formative, is more competency-based, promotes learning and development for our students, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. The primary purpose of assessment will indeed be for learning; it will help the teacher and student, and the entire schooling system, continuously revise teaching-learning processes to optimize learning and development for all students. This will be the underlying principle for assessment at all levels of education" (National Education Policy,2020)

The Competency-Based Education (CBE) project of CBSE was developed in collaboration with the British Council to enhance the capabilities of schools in delivering high-quality, competency-based lessons, particularly in the subjects of science, mathematics, and English. This initiative aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes a significant transformation in the assessment landscape of Indian education. The NEP advocates moving away from traditional assessment methods that predominantly focus on rote memorization and summative evaluations. Instead, it calls for a more formative and continuous assessment system that emphasizes regular feedback and learning.

The primary objective of this project is to promote a learning environment that fosters the development of essential competencies among students. Competency-based learning encourages students to engage actively with the material, enhancing their understanding and application of knowledge rather than merely recalling facts. In this approach, assessments are designed to evaluate practical skills, including analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. These assessments aim to reflect students' actual understanding and their ability to apply what they have learned in real-world contexts.

Moreover, the project encourages school boards to re-evaluate and adjust their assessment patterns to better align with the skills and competencies required in the 21st century. This shift is crucial as it prepares students not only for academic success but also for future challenges in a rapidly evolving job market. By emphasizing skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, the CBE initiative aims to equip students with the tools they need to navigate complex situations and make informed decisions.

As part of this transformation, competency-based assessment questions have been meticulously developed to measure students' understanding and application of concepts in a more meaningful way. These new assessment formats are set to be implemented in public examinations starting from the academic year 2025. This timeline reflects a strategic approach to ensuring that both educators and students are adequately prepared for this significant shift in assessment philosophy.

### III. Significance of the Study;

As India moves towards implementing Competency-Based Education (CBE), particularly in the context of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), it becomes crucial to understand the preparedness of teachers to adapt to this new educational paradigm. Competency-Based Education focuses on equipping students with essential skills and competencies rather than merely assessing their rote memorization abilities. Before introducing competency-based assessments in board exams, it is essential to evaluate teacher preparedness, as their readiness directly impacts the successful implementation of CBE and, subsequently, student learning outcomes.

The study had both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the findings would add to the teachers' understanding of the broad area of competency-based education and outcome-based education. Practically, the information obtained from the research would help the schools, teachers and other educational bodies, with the quality of education and to work on the challenges in implementation of Competency based education as envisaged by NEP 2020.

### IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Research Design

The study was a descriptive design. It involved collecting data from teachers through a qualitative questionnaire followed by interview.

#### 4.2 Sample:

In this study primary sources of data were used. The primary sources of data would be teachers involved in the teaching in secondary schools through interview and questionnaire. The target population for the study comprised all secondary school teachers in the city of Bangalore. Purposive sampling methods were used. Data was collected through Questionnaires from 42 teachers and follow up interview was conducted.

#### 4.3 Data collection:

Data collection was done through questionnaire and personal interviews. In this study, a questionnaire was used in collecting quantitative data. The questionnaires consisted of 24 items which had both multiple choice as well as open ended questions. The questionnaire had questions related to 4 aspects of CBE implementation. Sections focused on teachers' instructional approaches, school wide practices, grading and assessment practices and professional development. Teachers also answered open ended questions on the challenges they face in Implementing the Competency based Education.

#### 4.4 Data analysis

The data analysis for qualitative methods in the current research required reading, describing, classifying and interpreting the collected data. Data collected through open-ended questionnaire and interviews would be analyzed qualitatively. The researcher employed thematic and narrative qualitative techniques to analysis teachers' comments found at the end of the survey in order to identify notable concerns. The data were presented according to the research questions of the study.

### V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS;

The survey was designed to examine four crucial aspects of Competency-Based Education (CBE) implementation in secondary schools. The initial questions specifically aimed to assess teachers' understanding and familiarity with the concept of CBE. The findings were concerning; many educators demonstrated a significant lack of foundational

knowledge about CBE, indicating that they had not been adequately prepared to implement this approach in their classrooms.

A key factor contributing to this knowledge gap is the absence of orientation or training on CBE during both pre-service and in-service training programs. Many teachers reported that they had never encountered training sessions that introduced them to the principles and practices of CBE. This lack of exposure underscores a critical need for comprehensive reform in the professional development landscape for educators.

To effectively implement CBE, it is essential that teachers receive targeted training that equips them with the necessary skills and understanding of the approach. Professional development programs should not only introduce CBE concepts but also provide practical strategies for integrating these principles into everyday teaching practices.

By prioritizing CBE training, educational institutions can empower teachers to shift their focus from rote learning to developing competencies in students. This shift is vital for enhancing the overall quality of education and ensuring that students are better prepared for real-world challenges. Ultimately, investing in the professional development of teachers is a crucial step toward successfully implementing CBE in secondary education and improving student outcomes.

Ultimately, the success of the Competency-Based Education project hinges on the commitment of educators, school administrators, and policymakers to embrace this new paradigm. Training programs and resources will be essential in equipping teachers with the necessary skills to implement competency-based teaching and assessment effectively. Continuous professional development will help educators adapt to new teaching methodologies and assessment techniques, fostering an environment of ongoing learning and improvement.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, studying teacher preparedness to implement Competency-Based Education in CBSE schools is a crucial step before introducing competency-based assessments in board exams. Teachers are the linchpins of the educational process, and their readiness directly affects the success of CBE initiatives. By assessing and enhancing teacher preparedness, educational authorities can ensure that teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively implement CBE principles. This proactive approach not only benefits educators but also enhances student learning outcomes, aligning with the broader goals of the National Education Policy 2020. As India strives to prepare its youth for the complexities of the modern world, investing in teacher preparedness will be instrumental in fostering an education system that prioritizes skills and competencies over rote learning, ultimately shaping a more capable and informed generation. In this context the researcher felt the need to find the teachers perceptions on competency -based assessments. Assessments become meaningful only if the teacher has used. CBE based teaching practices in secondary schools. This study also intends to check the reality of shift in educational practices in schools.

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