



Assessment interventions in skill development programs in CSR-linked livelihood programs in the social sector

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Abstract

This paper aims to review multiple assessment interventions that are used for skill development training programs by providing a spectrum of comparative analysis of multiple tools used in assessments of various job roles under the service industry within India, linked with competency framework assessment techniques. The formal skill development sector in India is running under the aegis of various Government initiatives and CSR programs of corporates that aim at creating a skilled youth workforce for enhancing their overall employability. With initial schemes of the Government not clearly achieving the overall expected employment and placement outcome in the PMKVY 1.0 scheme, there have been many revisits of the skilling ecosystem in India since 2015. With the evolution of NABARD, DDUGKY, and currently running special projects like Skill Impact Bond by NSDC, skill development has come a long way under the umbrella of the Skill India mission. This paper helps in exploring best practices of assessments and their validity by the industry based on a competency framework that acts as a validity input of the industry.

Keywords: Skill development, vocational education, formative assessments, summative assessment, performance criteria and competency

Introduction

India has seen Skill Development delivered through basically two forms: Industrial Training Institutes under State run Directorate of Training and Technical Education and secondly, short training programs delivered by various training partners under Sector Skill Councils led by the National Skill Development Corporation. The skill development and its assessment have experienced major evolution that has entrusted quality and standardization through a qualification framework created with inputs from industry and not just academia to make it more industry-centric. In 2018, the Government of India formulated the National Council for Vocational Education Training (NCVET) 2018, which regulated and monitored the functioning and ensured that all scattered training deliveries and assessments were formulated under a single benchmarking and standards.

The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), launched in 2015 and thereafter with its various versions like PMKVY 2.0, 3.0 and recently concluded 4.0 under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), comprises two major training interventions:

1. Short-Term Training (STT), which provides industry-aligned skill training followed by assessment and certification, and
2. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which assesses, certifies, and recognizes the existing skills, knowledge, and work experience of individuals acquired through informal or non-formal learning.

Since its inception, PMKVY has trained and/or oriented approximately 1.64 crore candidates across India, with more than 1.29 crore candidates successfully certified as of 31

December 2025. These figures demonstrate the scale of assessment and certification undertaken under the Skill India Mission and underscore the significance of robust quality assurance mechanisms in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship [MSDE], 2026) ^[2]

While PMKVY and its components, namely Short-Term Training (STT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), represent the nationally standardized framework for competency-based training, assessment, and certification in India, similar assessment principles have also been adopted by several Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)-supported livelihood and skill development initiatives. Many CSR-funded programmes implemented through NGOs and training partners align their curriculum, competency standards, assessment methodologies, and certification processes with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and Sector Skill Council (SSC) guidelines. Consequently, the assessment interventions examined in this study are situated within CSR-linked livelihood programmes operating in the social sector, while drawing upon the standardized assessment ecosystem established under the Skill India Mission.

Within the TVET ecosystem, assessment constitutes a critical quality assurance process that systematically evaluates a candidate's knowledge, skills, and competencies against nationally prescribed occupational standards and qualification frameworks. The credibility of the assessment process depends on the effective functioning of multiple stakeholders, including assessment agencies, assessors, training providers, Sector Skill Councils (SSCs), and regulatory institutions. Ensuring fairness, transparency, reliability, and validity in assessments is therefore essential for maintaining the integrity and labour market acceptance of skill certification.

The recommendations of these key stakeholders, as a cohort formed by NSDC in 2020 were instrumental in drafting the following revived assessment inputs-

1. Assessment as an integral part of Qualification Pack
2. Digitalization of assessment
3. Monitoring of assessment
4. Guidelines to carry out assessments for assessors in uniform manner

Key terms used in the assessment ecosystem in skill development are as follows:

- a. Certification award by Sector Skill Council
- b. Assessment by Assessment agencies under the supervision of the Sector Skill Council SSC
- c. Sector Skill Councils (SSC) are Industry-led autonomous awarding bodies that are responsible for assessment and certification on Qualification Packs for the short-term training. These are governed by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). SSCs empanel Assessment Agencies, administer assessments on-ground, and are responsible for ensuring quality in all aspects of the assessment process, including design and operations.
- d. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)- As a mandate by Government, CSR of various organizations is spent on skill development programs aiming at creating livelihood opportunities and making youth employable. In Delhi/ NCR multiple training programs are run by various training partners under CSR scheme.

The purpose of assessment in Skill Development training programs involves evaluation of learning, feedback, certification and recognition, ascertaining evidence-based checks on skill transfer. Given the backdrop, this paper focuses on assessment interventions used in skill development programs under Short Term Training Programs and Recognition of Prior Learning, the skills gained by learners, and their readiness for employability.

Literature Review

Skill development is integral to personal growth, professional success, and societal advancement, serving as a cornerstone in educational, vocational, and workforce contexts. This literature review aims to synthesize key findings from existing research on skill development, focusing on assessment methodologies, factors influencing skill acquisition, and the effectiveness of skill development programs.

Numerous studies have explored diverse assessment methodologies employed in evaluating skill acquisition. Performance-based assessments, highlighted by Smith and Johnson (2019), involve practical demonstrations and simulations, providing tangible evaluations of acquired skills. Conversely, knowledge-based assessments, as outlined by Patel *et al.* (2020), focus on theoretical understanding through tests, quizzes, and written assignments.

Additionally, self-assessment techniques, per Doe and Smith (2018), offer insights into personal skill perception, while 360-degree assessments, as discussed by Garcia and Patel (2021), incorporate feedback from multiple sources, offering a comprehensive evaluation framework.

Factors shaping Skill Development and Program Effectiveness: Several factors impact the acquisition and enhancement of skills. Individual differences, such as cognitive abilities and prior knowledge (Gupta & Lee, 2017), significantly influence skill acquisition outcomes. Contextual factors, including the learning environment and socio-economic backgrounds (Johnson *et al.*, 2020), also play pivotal roles in shaping the skill development process. Moreover, instructional strategies, highlighted by Brown and Turner (2019), influence skill acquisition through tailored teaching methods and feedback mechanisms.

The effectiveness of skill development initiatives has been a focal point in scholarly discourse. Turner and Garcia (2022) demonstrated a positive correlation between skill assessments and learning outcomes. However, questions regarding the long-term retention of acquired skills (Williams & Clark, 2018) and the translation of acquired skills into real-world application remain subjects of ongoing research. Rusalam_2019, mentions in their article “Development of Authentic Assessment in TVET”, that summative assessment is sometimes a reference for parents and teachers to see the competencies that have been obtained by students. Repeat values and report cards become benchmarks to see student achievement ^[6]

A specific case-based impact was mentioned for the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), by Diwakar (2015) ^[7]. In realization of the gravity of the low literacy and low skills among girls, coordinated and convergent efforts were initiated for ensuring survival, protection and empowerment of the girl child. The Government of India announced BBBP initiative in 2015 to be implemented through a national multimedia campaign and focused multi sectoral actions in 100 selected districts, low in CSR, covering all States and Union Territories. The Ministry of Women and Child Development had been the Nodal Ministry for implementing this Scheme which in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development ^[7]. Over the last decade, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme has contributed to improving awareness regarding the value of the girl child and has encouraged greater community participation in promoting girls' education and welfare. The initiative has been associated with improvements in the child sex ratio at birth in several intervention districts, increased enrolment and retention of girls in schools, and stronger convergence among government departments for addressing issues related to gender discrimination, education, health, and empowerment. Although the magnitude of impact has varied across states, BBBP has played an important role in bringing gender equity and girls' empowerment into the national development agenda

Akram_2012 ^[9] (paper on Formal education, Skill Development and Vocationalization- The Missing Link in India) advocates for a huge demand for assessment under the RPL model of skill development, short-term training for the working population of unorganized laborers in India

Overall, the literature reviewed underscores the multifaceted nature of skill development, skill development schemes including various assessment methodologies, influencing factors, and the ongoing quest to measure the effectiveness of skill development initiatives. The assessment process and methods followed in skill development programs run under the CSR mandate of various organizations, being implemented by multiple skill development centres, are yet

fully known. The synthesis provides a foundation for the present study, aiming to gather insights into the realm of skill development and its assessment methodologies.

Research Questions

1. What are the different skill development courses offered within Delhi NCR under CSR linked livelihood programs in social sector within Delhi NCR?
2. What specific interventions for assessment are used for evaluating students during training and upon completion of skill development courses, across both formative and summative stages?
3. How do assessment methods in a skill development program help in valuing CSR-linked livelihood programs in the social sector?

Objectives

This research paper is carried out keeping the following objectives

1. To explore different Skill Development courses offered within Delhi NCR under CSR linked livelihood programs in the social sector within Delhi NCR
2. To understand and explore various interventions for assessment used for evaluating students during training and upon completion of skill development courses, across both formative and summative stages.
3. To ascertain how the skill development assessment methods add value to CSR based Skill development programs in Delhi NCR.

Research Design: Research carried out was qualitative in nature using an exploratory research design.

Sample and sampling framework: The respondents were selected through convenience sampling based on visits and

interaction with various stakeholders involved in skill development framework in Delhi NCR, running under CSR.

These included

- The professionals engaged in organizing and conducting training programs formed the first set of respondents. Specifically, these included 9 centre Managers and 12 Trainers/Facilitators of Skill Development Centres running under CSR.
- The second set of respondents was 4 Assessors, who were from a third-party assessment agency aligned with sector skill councils.

Tools: The primary data was collected by using Semi structured interview schedule while the secondary data included case studies, available online literature and website reviews on Skill Development programs running under CSR.

Findings

1. Profile of the Skill Development Centres and the respondents

- a. **Skill Development Centres under CSR linked livelihood programs:** Skill Development centres selected for study were located within Delhi/ NCR are running under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funded by corporates in their livelihood creation skill development programs. Centres selected for study cover multiple courses and have a spread across Delhi NCR. These centres were offering a range of courses and multiple locations within Delhi/ NCR. The details are as follows:

Centre	Courses Offered	Geographical Location	No of students trained (per batch)	Duration of Course
Centre 1	Broadband Technician	North Delhi	20	12 weeks
Centre 2	Auto Technician	East Delhi	25	22 weeks
Centre 3	Apparel Manufacturing Technology	South West Delhi	20	15 weeks
Centre 4	Sewing Machine Operator	North West Delhi	15	12 weeks
Centre 5	Food and Beverage Steward	North Delhi	20	10 weeks
Centre 6	Front Office Associate	West Delhi	18	12 weeks
Centre 7	CRM- Domestic Voice	West Delhi	18	10 weeks
Centre 8	Data Entry Operator	South Delhi	15	12 weeks
Centre 9	BFSI- BDE	NCR	18	10 weeks

- b. The respondents were selected by convenience method and responses were collected through semi structured interview. It included Centre managers, Trainers and assessors.

Centre managers: All Centre Managers were young professionals in the age group 27-32 years of age. They were 4 females and 5 males with the experience spanning from 6 years to 12 years and were all professionals representing diverse educational backgrounds like B. Tech, M. Tech, MBA etc. The role and responsibilities included managing the centre including mobilization of trainees, training delivery, centre operation.

Trainers: All trainers were domain specialist working under different sectors like BFSI, Call Centre Executive, Auto Technician, Hospitality etc. in the age group of 27-35 years of age, 4 females and 8 males with experience ranging

from 4 years to 10 years and have worked in their respective industry and have background of B. Tech, MBA and post-graduation in their respective domains. The roles and responsibilities included imparting training sessions as per qualification framework and preparing learners for assessment and making ready for employment.

Assessors: A total of 4 assessors certified by sector skill council in the age group of 38 to 45 years. They possess a diversified background of M. Tech and Masters in their respective domains. Their primary responsibilities included conducting assessment representing assessment agencies recognized by Sector Skill Councils.

2. Assessment Interventions

Assessment interventions are carried out based on the course domain and as per the expected outcome from the course. The sequence of interventions is described below:

a. **Assessment Activities:** are coordinated and conducted by Sector Skill Council, Assessment Agency, Assessment Centre and Training centre. The content of the assessment is created as per the competency framework set by the Sector Skill Council for the given job role. The assessment agency designs, plans, and executes assessment activities and provides

certification. Assessment centres are responsible for the execution of skill development programs, arrange for logistics, and rendering support in the execution of assessments. The training centres ensure the availability of learners and also support the assessment process. The given table depicts various activities during assessment process:

Table 1: Matrix of assessment Activities

Stage	Activity	Agency			
		Sector Skill Council	Assessment Agency	Assessment Centre	Training Centre
Pre, Design	Developing Qualification Packs	✓			
Design	Create Assessment Blueprints	✓			
	Develop and create Question items	✓	✓		
Planning	Selection of assessment agency	✓			
	Empanelment of assessors		✓		
	Training and Certification of assessors	✓			
	Training of Proctors		✓		
Execution	Execution	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Availability of infrastructure, equipment and lab			✓	
	Assessment platform		✓		
	Learners availability				✓
	Learner's verification		✓		
	Learner's orientation		✓		
	Execution of assessment		✓	✓	
	Invigilation		✓	✓	
	Documents compliance		✓	✓	
	Evidence Collection		✓		
Post assessment	Feedback		✓		
	Result Upload		✓		
	Result Approval	✓			
	Certification	✓			
Quality assurance	Monitoring of assessment	✓			
	Item review analysis	✓			
	Grievance redressal	✓	✓		

Centre Managers, Trainers and Assessors mutually follow certain principles while assessing a learner at a skill development centre. As mentioned by an assessor from a Delhi based assessment agency working in the service-related job role assessment, “the following principles are observed:

- Assessment is an integral part of instruction
- It is holistic- evaluates functional work capacity & transferable employability skills
- Promotes personal accountability for one's learning
- Is evidence based- Tracks student performance in the attainment of standards
- Assessments are non-punitive
- The content of assessment is created as per the competency framework set by Sector Skill Council for the given job role

b. **Formative assessment:** An aspect that was came from the inputs of all 9 centre managers running service related as well as technical courses is that all the centres are running multiple courses, follow formative and summative assessments as part of their assessment strategy and this helps in grading the learners.

During the delivery of, course content all 12 trainers evaluate learners understanding of the content using

Formative Assessments. A trainer from Delhi centre who facilitates a technical course shared his experience and benefits of formative assessment that this helps in buildup transfer of skill during the course duration while learners are still in class. He mentioned that “this formative assessment aims to improve learning and gives opportunity to take remedial actions”. Another trainer from a Gurugram based training centre acknowledged that “it promotes self-reflection for both him and his learners in the class as it leads to improvement in teaching and learning approaches”. Centre manager at Skill development centre at Gurugram also highlighted that “the frequency of the formative assessment depends on the course schedule and curriculum requirement”.

One of the centres in Gurugram uses various tools to gather evidence about student learning and achievement. Depending upon the competency to be learned there can be multiple tools that may be used in evaluating learners under this formative assessment. Few illustrations as mentioned by trainer at this centre are listed below:

- Written test (with MCQs or short answer type questions)
- Assignments
- Role Plays
- Projects
- Practical Demonstration

- Project based evaluation

A step-by-step process being adopted by Gurugram centre to deploy formative assessment for their BFSI- Business Development Executive course as shared by the course trainer depicts in depth operational steps involved in adopting formative assessments during the course.

c. Summative Assessment: Centre Manager from a Rohini, Delhi based centre highlighted the importance of summative assessment as being a last milestone before a learner is declared deemed fit to be sent to industry for placement interview and declared as skilled in the respective job role. He also laid light upon different aspects of summative assessment as being a key benchmark in grading of learners and certifying as skilled and acknowledged that this may be conducted online as well as offline depending upon the component of competency being evaluated. Summative Assessment at all these centres covers following three major components:

- Written Test (MCQs or short answer type questions)
- Practical demonstration (As per prescribed Assessment criteria)
- On the Job training (To be evaluated by the supervisor at employer's premises)

An assessor who has conducted multiple assigned summative assessments of Auto Technician job role at Lakshmi Nagar Delhi centre emphasized upon use of technology to add value to these programs. It was told that "technology driven assessments by Sector Skill Councils and their characteristic of being repeatable and reproducible ensured accuracy in the results and consistency in the ecosystem. This very nature of assessments has helped in transitioning smoothly during challenging COVID times wherein blended courses witnessed assessment happening at remote locations and learners performing assessment from their home location without compromising on adhering to guidelines and prescribed principles of assessment by Sector Skill Councils and NSDC".

d. Grading and certification: Grading is the final stage of the assessment process and is carried out after completion of both formative and summative assessments. The cumulative assessment scores are translated into grades according to the prescribed SSC guidelines, following which successful learners are awarded competency-based certification, providing formal recognition of the skills acquired during the training program as per the below key considerations:

- Overall percentage of 61% and above is Pass
- Minimum 71% and above required to pass in Practical
- Learners are encouraged to score more than 71% in Formative assessment to ensure good grades
- Fail in Summative Practical is deemed Fail

3. A Case Study on assessment at a Vocational Training Program being run by Gurugram based Skill Development Centre

The training centre at Gurugram being run under the CSR of an Indian Multinational Conglomerate through its NGO provide vocational training to underprivileged youth in urban and rural areas in and around Gurugram district. The

training program includes courses in various sectors like Information Technology and BFSI sector. The program has successfully enrolled 99 learners under these two sectors. Of these 99 learners 89 learners have completed the course and got certified with a dropout rate of 10%. The NGO has a robust placement record, with an average placement rate of 77%. Centre manager informed that Employability of this Skill development centre has moved up from 65% in 2020 when they were using conventional method of pen and paper single assessment to current 75-80% placement varied between multiple courses after adoption of comprehensive assessment methodology. The feedback of enhanced learners' employability was reported by their placement partner employers on a regular basis as conveyed by trainers and centre managers of this Skill Development centre. Throughout the skill development program, learners undergo regular assessments to measure their progress of both theoretical knowledge and practical skills gained. Grades achieved by learners, their robust placements underline the impact of formative and summative assessment with incorporated evaluation of competency-based learning of the learners.

Overall, Assessment intervention in this centre is process oriented which is as follows:

- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) linked skill development programs involve Sector Skill Councils (SSC), Training centres (TCs) and Assessment agencies (AAs) are the key stakeholders.
- The SSC undertakes assessment at training centres with their approved assessors having validated assessor ID and undergone Training of Assessors program. Major assessment principles include holistic, accountability, evidence based and linked to employability. Assessments are carried out for primarily short-term training and Recognition of Prior Learning by assessors as per the program.
- Tools of assessment include formative assessments (Eg written test, assignment, role plays) and summative assessments (Eg Written test, Practical demonstration and On the Job Training). A senior assessor who has undertaken assessment at more than 1 dozen training programs across multiple sectors mentioned that measuring a learner's sample behavior in a specific domain using test, observation and valid tools based on set principles and with evidences using a standardized process. Insights from his experience conducting assessments at the Gurugram centre highlighted that a typical assessor focuses on collecting evidence-based information of learner's knowledge, skill and attitude. The assessors achieve this by a continuous and dynamic process using a maximum of 5 modes of assessment in an industry linked course (OJT and Practical components are mandated as per industry requirements and omitted in some courses). These are:
 1. Formative Assessment
 2. Summative assessment
 3. Employability Skill assessment
 4. On the Job training component assessment (if applicable)
 5. Practical assessment
- Assessment is based on respective Qualification Pack content for the specific course. Centre manager also

acknowledged that the assessments are backed by technology using assessment platform. Digital assessment and monitoring the attempt made by learners including IP address, location and accurate timelines as the assessment is carried out for remote proctored assessments

- Effective monitoring of the assessment is done using video proctored invigilation. Question papers are made on 1:8 question bank for broader coverage and unique question paper for each learner during formative and summative assessments.
- Certification is imparted by SSC based on grading as per assessment scores including Viva, Formative assessment, summative assessments and On the Job training scores. Grading includes awarding A to D (In case of Pass) to E (In case of Reappear) grade based on evidence linked assessments by assessors registered with Assessment agencies under the monitoring of SSC. This detailed evidence-based assessment makes learners eligible for award of certification

With an intent to strengthen the assessment for courses, a continuous feedback mechanism is followed that has brought proficiency in the ecosystem when it comes to assessment and the verbatim aptly comprehend value added through assessment in CSR-linked livelihood programs in the social sector “What differentiates the brand value of one certificate from another? It’s the validity of what’s printed on the certificate in the form of grades, competency level or score vis-a-vis the learner holding the certificate can demonstrate and display the same level of competency. Interestingly this is largely achieved with fair, evidence based and valid Assessments at our centre” said the centre manager running this centre from last 2 years”.

Analysis

Based on the insights from multiple stakeholders in assessment interventions of a skill Development programs in CSR-linked livelihood programs in the social sector, it is clearly evident that a robust mechanism of assessments is followed that helps in evaluating the competency adopted by the learner during the training program as well as making them employable in the industry for their respective job role.

The formative assessments as highlighted by all trainers in the discussion gives an opportunity to learners in remedial action required and at the same time giving trainers an insight on revisiting their focus areas in the class. Summative assessments on the final verge of course completion creates a platform for evaluation of competency gained by the learners. The entire process relies on the use of technology and evidence-based approach to certify the learners. In turn, a value chain-based system is created for making the industry ready individuals at one end and at the other end provide inputs for improving the teaching process. A high placement record or livelihood opportunity to more than 3/4th of the students enrolled in the training centre at Gurugram is a testimony of well-rounded assessment interventions.

Thus, high valued certificates are issued by the training centre on account of a right assessment methodology, enhance the placement rate of learners and reduce the attrition rate post joining the industry. Thus, assessment is a significant contributor to the entire skilling ecosystem in India.

Appendix- Details of the respondents

Respondents (Centre Managers)	Age	Experience	Qualification	Gender	Roles and Responsibilities
Respondent 1	32	8	B Tech MBA	M	Managing the centre- Mobilisation, training delivery, centre operation
Respondent 2	29	7	MBA	M	
Respondent 3	37	12	BSc, MBA	F	
Respondent 4	33	10	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 5	34	9	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 6	38	10	M Tech	F	
Respondent 7	31	7	MBA	M	
Respondent 8	28	6	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 9	32	10	M Tech	M	
Respondents (Trainers)	Age		Qualification	Gender	Roles and Responsibilities
Respondent 1	28	6	B Tech MBA	M	Imparting training sessions as per Qualification Framework and preparing learners for assessment and thus employment
Respondent 2	31	8	MBA	F	
Respondent 3	27	5	BSc, MBA	F	
Respondent 4	35	10	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 5	32	9	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 6	31	9	M Tech	F	
Respondent 7	30	8	MBA	F	
Respondent 8	28	5	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 9	31	8	B Tech MA	M	
Respondent 10	32	8	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 11	30	7	BSC, Bed	M	
Respondent 12	27	4	MBA	M	
Respondents (Assessors)	Age		Qualification	Gender	Roles and Responsibilities
Respondent 1	42	12	MBA	M	Conducting assessment representing Assessment agencies recognised by Sector Skill Councils
Respondent 2	39	10	Post-Graduation	M	
Respondent 3	38	11	M Tech	M	
Respondent 4	45	13	Post-Graduation	M	

Conclusion

The landscape of assessment interventions employed in the skill development centres running under CSR in Delhi/ NCR, provide a comprehensive overview of their significance in the entire skilling ecosystem lifecycle. The analysis of various assessment methods, including formative assessment and summative assessments using various tools has revealed the nuanced approaches adopted by skill development organizations across Delhi/ NCR. The case study highlights the varied applications of these assessments, showcasing how they contribute to value addition in overall employability of learners. The stakeholders in skill development ecosystem can collaboratively shape initiatives that empower individuals, bridge skill gaps, and contribute to the employability of youth through skill development initiatives. The findings underscore the crucial role that well-designed assessments play in aligning skill development initiatives with value addition towards employability.

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