

Issues in Education

Volume 1

Teachers and Teacher Education





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These papers present findings from Azim Premji Foundation's field engagements in trying to improve the quality and equity of school education in India. Our aim is to disseminate our studies to practitioners, academics and policy makers who wish to understand some of the key issues facing school education as observed by educators in the field. The findings of the paper are those of the author(s)/Research Group and may not reflect the view of the Azim Premji Foundation including Azim Premji University.

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Issues in Education | Volume 1

Teachers and Teacher Education

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Foreword

1. Why a Series on *Issues in Education*?

Education is fundamental to every society in many ways. It is the most organized process for economic, social and cultural development. It is also the systematic effort of a society to progress towards its ideals; in the case of India – to bring to life the vision and values of our Constitution. And for a democratic society, a vibrant public education system is foundational.

This Series on Issues in Education aims to bring into focus educational matters that are important for the improvement of the education system in India. These are all fundamental issues that need to be addressed on priority. The Series will attempt to connect to the reality of education on the ground, which is often complex and defies any kind of clear narrative and definitive conclusions.

Azim Premji Foundation's deep presence in 50 disadvantaged districts in the country, our work with school systems in over 15 States and with the Government of India, our 19 years of experience in working directly and continuously with over a million public schools, teachers and education leaders has enabled this Series.

The first volume in this Series is on Teachers and Teacher Education.

2. About this Volume

India has about 9 million teachers working in around 1.5 million schools. Almost all statements of education policy in the country recognize the central role of the teacher in education. This is not surprising because, at its core, education is the process between the teacher and the child. If education has to improve, teaching has to improve - there is no way around this.

The Kasturirangan Committee Report for the Draft National Education Policy 2019 envisaged teachers as the '*most important members of our society and the torchbearers of change.*' The Draft Policy put teachers at the heart of good education and laid out comprehensive actions for teachers across several fronts, illustratively:

- Four-year integrated stage-specific, subject-specific Bachelor of Education programme for teacher preparation at multi-disciplinary institutions
- Sub-standard and dysfunctional teacher education institutions to be shut down
- Robust recruitment processes based on comprehensive teacher requirement planning
- Ending the practice of '*para-teachers*' (unqualified, contract teachers) in the country by 2022
- Adequate physical infrastructure, facilities and learning resources, along with desired pupil-teacher ratio to facilitate teachers' work
- No interruptions in the form of non-teaching activities during school hours - in turn, teachers held accountable for being absent from school without cause

- Continuous teacher professional development based on a flexible and modular approach, with teachers choosing what they want to learn and how they want to learn it - no centralized determination of the curriculum, no cascade-model training and no rigid norms
- Each head teacher and/or school principal responsible for building strong in-school development processes and a supportive school culture
- High-quality resources and material in Indian languages for teachers
- Priority for rejuvenating academic support institutions for schools and teachers
- Strong career progression paths for all teachers with equivalence in service conditions across grades

The National Education Policy 2020 reaffirms this priority and emphasizes that teachers must be valued and empowered. It strongly underlines rigorous teacher preparation in vibrant multi-disciplinary institutions, availability of meaningful, continuous teacher professional development opportunities along with a positive working environment and enabling service conditions for all teachers.

Studies in this Volume

Teachers are, therefore, the focus of the first volume of Azim Premji Foundation's *Issues in Education* Series. Three major factors contribute to a teacher's professional competence and motivation:

- the process of preparation of teachers before they enter the profession
- the process of continuous professional development that they are part of throughout their careers
- the quality of the environment that teachers work in and the professional support that they receive

In this volume, we look at the functioning of teacher education institutions, examine the kind of support that teachers in the public system receive and understand the conditions within which teachers work.

The volume begins with a paper that maps the landscape of Teacher Education in India. It reveals that of the 17,503 teacher education institutions in the country, more than 90 percent are privately-owned, stand-alone institutions, offering single programmes localized in certain geographies. This is reflective of the deep inadequacy of our system. Teacher preparation is best achieved through long-duration programmes in vibrant multi-disciplinary institutions. Curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education must provide for a rigorous theoretical understanding of educational perspectives, subject and pedagogy, along with a strong theory-practice connect. This demands the availability of a range of faculty and learning resources in education and several other disciplines which most stand-alone colleges struggle to build.

The second paper is based on an empirical study about teacher education institutions in India. The study reveals the presence of a large number of sub-standard, dysfunctional teacher education institutions functioning as commercial shops. In such institutions, there is not even a pretence

of a genuine effort, and even the minimum curricular requirements are not met. This lack of adherence to the most basic norms and standards has been the single biggest reason for the poor preparation of our teachers. The National Education Policy 2020 reiterates that such institutions need to be immediately shut down. We must find the political will and the administrative intent to do so. Improving teacher education is at the core of improving education in India and that needs a full-scale, sustained, grounds-up redesigning of the system – both curriculum and operations.

The third paper is based on an empirical study of the environment within which teachers in the public system work. Our teacher support system struggles to provide an adequate number of teachers in every school or to ensure that qualified teachers teach the subjects that they specialize in. It does not guarantee uninterrupted teaching time, nor does it offer meaningful, continuous professional development opportunities and mentoring support. It also falls short in the timely supply of curricular materials. Competent and capable teachers are critical to improving the quality of learning – inadequate everyday support for teachers seriously undermines a teacher’s effectiveness. Teachers are accountable for their students’ learning but accountability without the basic pre-requisites in place is futile. The National Education Policy 2020 reiterates the importance of a well-resourced, enabling working environment for teachers.

The fourth and final paper reports on the continued prevalence of contract teachers across the country – those recruited for short periods through ad hoc processes on inadequate salaries with little or no benefits. Despite all evidence pointing to this being a pernicious practice, it continues. This has caused long-term damage not only to the teaching profession but also to student learning. All our classrooms must have fully qualified teachers who are selected through a common, rigorous selection process and are an integral part of the larger professional teaching community.

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Abbreviations

B Ed: Bachelor of Education

B El Ed: Bachelor of Elementary Education

B P Ed: Bachelor of Physical Education

CBSE: Central Board of Secondary Education

CTET: Central Teacher Eligibility Test

C P Ed: Certificate in Physical Education

D A Ed: Diploma in Arts Education (Visual/Performing Arts)

D El Ed: Diploma in Elementary Education

DIET: District Institute of Education and Training

DPEP: District Primary Education Programme

D P Ed: Diploma in Physical Education

DPSE: Diploma in Pre-School Education

HPT: Hindi Pandit Training

ICT Digital Initiatives: Information and Communication Technology Digital Initiatives

KGBV: Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

M Ed: Master of Education

M P Ed: Master of Physical Education

MHRD: Ministry of Human Resource Development

MDM/MDMS: Mid-Day Meals/ Mid-Day Meals Scheme

NCTE: National Council for Teacher Education

NEP: National Education Policy

ODL: Open and Distance Learning

PAB: Programme Approval Board

PPTTI: Pre Primary Teachers Training Institute

PTR: Pupil-Teacher Ratio

RMSA: Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan

RTE: Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Act)

SKP: Shiksha Karmi Programme

SSA: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

SS: Samagra Shiksha

TEI: Teacher Education Institute

TET: Teacher Eligibility Test

TLM: Teaching-Learning Material

TPT: Telugu Pandit Training

UDISE: Unified District Information System for Education

Paper 1

Mapping the Landscape of Teacher Education Institutions in India

Research Group, Azim Premji Foundation

Teacher education is complex and involves an understanding of a range of issues. A good teacher education requires expertise across all areas related to education – early childhood education; understanding pedagogy of subjects; assessment; curriculum and material development; school leadership and management; along with psychology, philosophy, sociology and history of education.

Curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education must provide for a rigorous theoretical understanding of educational perspectives, subject and pedagogy along with a strong theory-practice connect. This demands the availability of a range of experts and resources in education and several other disciplines and a continuous connect with schools and practising teachers.

India has one of the weakest teacher education systems in the world. It is marked by a large number of stand-alone institutions run by private entities, offering single programmes. Most teacher preparation programmes build very little perspective or capability on curriculum and classroom processes; what exists is out-dated and distanced from the reality of the school and the children the teachers are expected to serve. The average quality of teacher educators is poor. Stand-alone institutions struggle to build the kind of varied faculty and resources that good teacher education needs. This has also led to both intellectual and professional isolation of teacher education from the rest of higher education. The sheer number of such institutions, their uneven geographical spread and their poor outcomes are clearly indicative of the fundamental weakness of our system.

1. Overview

1. There are 17,503 Teachers Education Institutions (TEIs) in India with an intake capacity sufficient to prepare 18,86,028 teachers (including a small number of teacher educators) every year.
2. Around 1,452 public TEIs are run by the government, including about 600 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). The remaining, nearly 15,464 (around 92%), are privately-run.

3. Some states/UTs have a large number of TEIs (mostly private) while others have very few. This asymmetry is reflected at the district-level within states/UTs as well.
 - a. Four states (Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu) account for 54 percent of all TEIs in the country.
 - b. Only 12 states/UTs have at least one TEI in each district.
 - c. The number of TEIs in a district ranges from 0 (zero) to a maximum of 300.
4. Programmes offered by private TEIs:
 - a. Around 98 percent of private TEIs offer programmes to prepare elementary and secondary stage teachers.
 - b. Around 1 percent offer programmes to prepare pre-primary teachers.
 - c. Around 7 percent prepare teacher educators.
5. 64 percent of private TEIs are stand-alone (offer a single teacher education programme) and 31 percent have a single unit intake of one programme¹.
6. The pass percentage of the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), an essential qualification for employment as an elementary school teacher, at around 10 percent, remains dismal.

1 The Notification of NCTE (Recognition Norms and Procedures) Regulations, 2014 indicates the unit intake, that is, the maximum number of students a TEI can enrol in a programme; this number varies across programmes but is typically 50 students. Norms for programmes vary with the number of units of intake allowed.

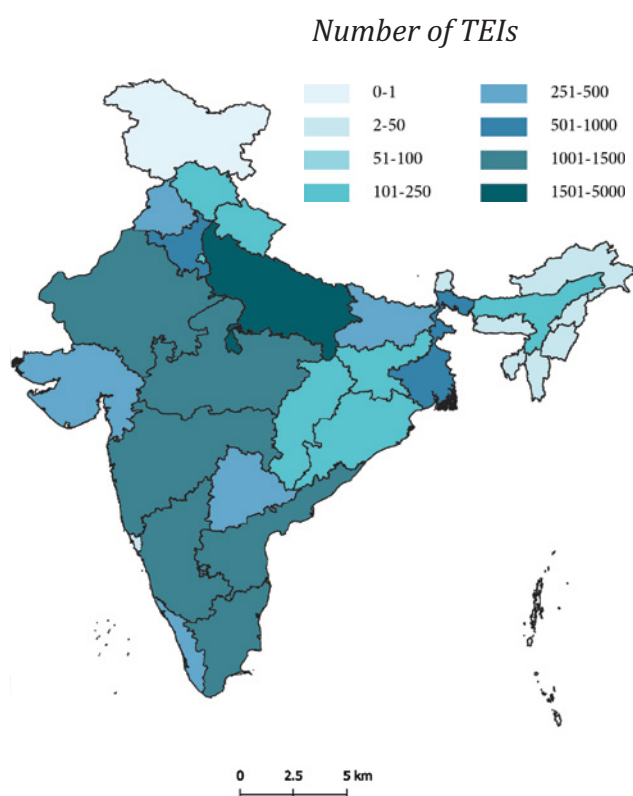
2. Some specifics

2.1 Geographic distribution of TEIs

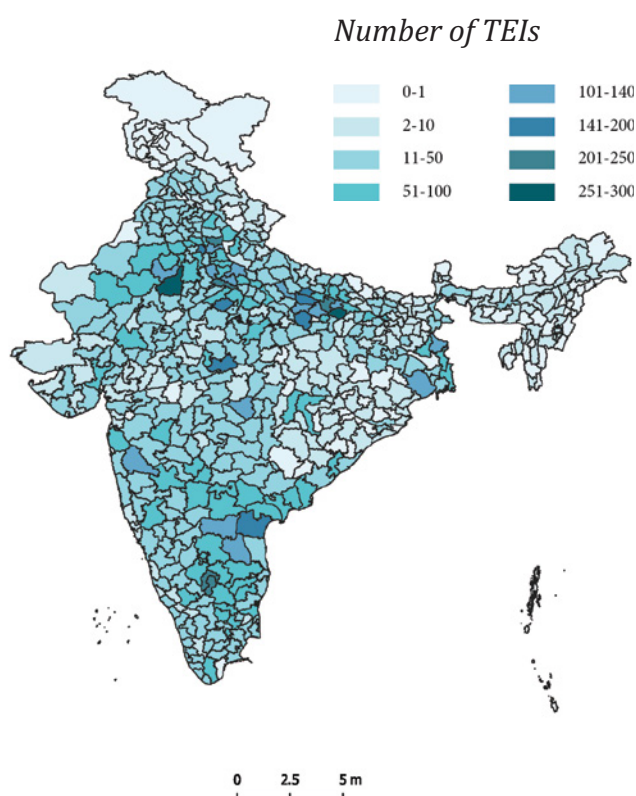
There is a vast asymmetry in the geographic distribution of TEIs with five states/UTs having less than ten institutes each and seven states with more than one thousand institutes each.

Figure 1. Distribution of TEIs across states and districts

Distribution across states



Distribution within districts across states



The heat maps indicate the distribution of TEIs across states and districts in the country. The concentration of TEIs is markedly high or low in certain states/UTs; this is seen in districts within a state as well.

There is no information on Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh since these were not under the purview of NCTE till 2019. The map is not updated post the change in status of Jammu & Kashmir.

Note: Intervals for the maps are not uniform; they are also dissimilar for the two maps. This is so as to show differences in density clearly.

Uttar Pradesh has 4,726 TEIs followed by Rajasthan (1,406), Maharashtra (1,363), Tamil Nadu (1,229), Karnataka (1,102), Madhya Pradesh (1,091) and Andhra Pradesh (1,045). The North-Eastern states, with the exception of Assam (116), have less than 25 TEIs each. Among states, Sikkim has the smallest number of TEIs (8)².

² NCTE. (2020). Recognized institutions. Retrieved 15 June 2020. <https://ncte.gov.in/Website/RecognizedInstitutions.aspx>

The majority of TEIs are in the private space with roughly 11 private TEIs for every one public TEI (public TEIs 1,452: private 15,464). In Uttar Pradesh, this ratio is 1:55. The distribution of private TEIs is skewed as well with 54 percent of all the private TEIs in the country present in the four states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Seven other states have more than a thousand TEIs each, while five other states/UTs have less than ten TEIs each.

The asymmetry persists at the district level, with the number of TEIs in a district spanning a range from 0 (zero) to 300. This does not necessarily imply the presence of a TEI in every district. The number of TEIs in a district ranges from zero (for example, 11 of the 28 districts of Chhattisgarh do not have any TEIs) to a maximum of 300 in Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. Only 12 states/UTs have a TEI in each district.

A comparison of the number of private TEIs and colleges in states/UTs with a high density of TEIs shows that the number of private TEIs is around half the total number of colleges per lakh population aged between 17-30 years (typical age of enrolment in a teacher education programme). The state-wide distribution of private TEIs with respect to per lakh population, as well as per lakh population aged between 17-30 years, also indicates a disproportionate presence of private TEIs.³

2.2 Private TEIs offering specific teacher preparation programmes

A large proportion of private TEIs, i.e., 62 percent offer B Ed and D El Ed programmes that prepare teachers for the elementary and secondary stage of schooling. Table 1 indicates the share of teacher preparation programmes.

Table 1. Stage-wise teacher preparation programmes

S No	Stage for which teachers are being prepared	Number of private TEIs offering the programme
1	Elementary and secondary stage	15113
2	Pre-primary stage	140
3	Physical education	734
4	Visual and performing arts	0
5	Teacher educators	1144

Some states/UTs have an oversupply of certain programmes as well as an undersupply of other programmes. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, 2,565 and 2,823 TEIs offer programmes preparing teachers for the secondary and elementary stages, respectively, while only 34 offer programmes preparing teachers for the pre-primary stage. On the other hand, the sum of all the programmes preparing teachers in the eight North-Eastern states is 118 (95 for secondary and 23 for the elementary stage). Among these states, Assam has the maximum number of private TEIs – 56, of which 53 offer B Ed and 16 offer D El Ed programmes. None of these states has private TEIs that offer programmes for the pre-primary stage.

³ All India Survey of Higher Education. 2018-19. <http://aishe.nic.in/aishe/viewDocument.action?documentId=262>

2.3 Number of programmes offered by private TEIs

Out of 15,464 private teacher education institutes, 9,971, i.e., 64 percent are stand-alone (offer a single teacher preparation programme). Most of these TEIs (9,938) offer two-year programmes for elementary and secondary teacher preparation; a few (25) are for preparing teacher educators and; those offering integrated programmes for preparing elementary and secondary school teachers and teacher educators are in single digit (8). On the other hand, almost one-third of the TEIs (5,493) run multiple programmes and, of these, 1,112 TEIs offer programmes preparing teachers as well as teacher educators.

Table 2. Number of TEIs offering specific programme (overall and private) and intake for these programmes

	Name of programmes	TEIs offering the programme (Overall)	Total intake	Private TEIs offering the programmes (Private)	Total intake [@] (Private)
1	B Ed*	10034	994270	9517	946200
2	D El Ed**	10577	669065	9583	592260
3	B El Ed	102	5900	95	5550
4	D P Ed	155	8475	145	7920
5	B P Ed	665	52290	589	45890
6	DPSE	166	9580	140	8230
7	M Ed	1204	61180	1045	52730
8	M P Ed	167	8095	112	5550
9	BA B Ed/B Sc B Ed	703	63660	674	61110
10	B Ed M Ed (Integrated)	24	1250	16	850
11	D A Ed#	2	100	0	0
12	Others##	213	12163	177	9055

Note: The number of institutes overlaps as institutes are offering multiple programmes. The actual number of institutes are 16917 (Public-1453, Private-15464)

** This does not include B Ed (ODL), B Ed (Part-time)*

*** This does not include D El Ed (ODL)*

Diploma in Arts Education (Visual Arts) and (Performing Arts)

Primarily includes HPT (54), PPTTI (40), TPT (40), C P Ed (26), Nursery (11) etc.

@Intake indicates the maximum number of students that can be enrolled in a programme – it does not necessarily reflect the actual enrolment

There is anecdotal evidence of TEIs offering a teacher preparation programme along with a programme in engineering or physiotherapy or a similar ‘professional’ degree; it is rare to find an institute offering a general degree programme with a teacher preparation programme.

2.4 Three districts with large numbers of private TEI

This section presents some details related to three districts with a very high density of private TEIs to illustrate some of the issues highlighted so far.

Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh

Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of TEIs in a district in India. It has 300 TEIs, 298 of which are private. Ghazipur also has 302 regular colleges meant for other courses in the district (some overlap with TEIs is possible).

Ghazipur has three regular colleges per lakh population of the district; it has eight TEIs per lakh population in the district. Three main pockets have a dominance of TEIs in the district, Ghazipur (76) Jakhaniya (91) and Saidpur (83).

Of the 300 TEIs, 242 are stand-alone. These TEIs offer either B Ed (68) or D El Ed (172) or B P Ed (2) programmes.

Of the remaining, 55 TEIs offer two programmes: 51 TEIs offer B Ed and B El Ed; 2 TEIs offer B Ed and B P Ed; and one TEI offers D El Ed and B P Ed. Only 3 TEIs offer three courses each: 1 TEI offers B Ed, B P Ed and D P Ed.; 1 TEI offers B Ed, M Ed and D El Ed and 1 TEI offers B Ed, M Ed and B P Ed.

A review of the data shows that some TEIs have addresses quite close to each other; some have the same plot number in their detailed address.

Jaipur in Rajasthan

Jaipur has the second-highest number of TEIs in a district in India. It has a total of 259 TEIs out of which 247 are private.

There are around eight TEIs per lakh population. Out of the 259 TEIs, 175 offer only a single programme – either B Ed (114) or D El Ed (61). In case of the remaining 84 TEIs, 54 run two programmes each, mostly B Ed and D El Ed; 21 TEIs offer three programmes, mostly B Ed, D El Ed, BA/BSc B Ed, and M Ed; 4 TEIs offer 4 programmes each and; 1 (one) TEI offers 5 programmes. Data is not available for 4 TEIs.

A review of the data shows that some TEIs have addresses quite close to each other; in one instance, eight TEIs are in the same locality; in another, five TEIs are in the same locality. The names of many of these TEIs are also quite similar.

Bengaluru in Karnataka

Bengaluru has the sixth-highest number of TEIs in a district in India. Out of the 1,102 TEIs in Karnataka, Bengaluru has 204, i.e., every fifth or sixth institute of the state is located in the district. The data of government and private colleges in the district shows 1,125 regular colleges (colleges in both rural and urban districts of Bengaluru).

The majority offer D El Ed (60%) and B Ed (30%) programmes. Most of them (127 out of 204) offer single programmes like D El Ed (104), B Ed (22) or M Ed (1). In the case of TEIs offering multiple programmes (77), B Ed and D El Ed programmes are offered primarily. Only two TEIs

offer the four-year integrated programmes of BA/BSc B Ed. None of the TEIs in Bengaluru offer the three-year integrated B Ed-M Ed programmes.

At least three institutes have very similar names; six have 'pre-primary' in the name but data related to programmes they offer does not include programmes preparing teachers for the pre-primary stage.

2.5 Performance on the Teacher Eligibility Test

The TET qualification, an essential requirement for employment as elementary school teachers, can be considered as one indicator of the quality of teacher education.

In September 2016, a total of 4,14,483 applicants registered for the Central TET (C-TET), managed by the CBSE, from 12,363 TEIs across the country. Of these, 3,37,609 appeared for the examination and 43,130 qualified. Thus, out of a potential cohort of qualified teachers, only 10.4 percent are eligible for appointment as elementary teachers. Performance, in terms of the percentage of candidates qualifying C-TET, is poorer in high-density states/UTs (in which we would expect a higher proportion of qualifying candidates given the larger number of candidates) compared to states/UTs with a relatively low density of TEIs.⁴

There is, thus, a huge amount of wastage in the teacher education system in India.

3. Concluding remarks

There has been an unprecedented and asymmetric growth of TEIs in the country. This growth has neither been systematic in terms of geographic or programme coverage nor consistent with demand and supply. The TEIs are not distributed comparably across geographies. The disproportionate concentration across geographies implies that a few areas have a glut of potential teachers, far more than the school system will need for years.

The current number of teachers in the school system is around 90 lakhs while estimates of current teacher vacancies are 10-12 lakh across the country. After these requirements are met, the teacher requirement every year will be determined by the number of retiring teachers and vacancies due to attrition. Considering a 30-35-year teaching career and relatively low attrition, it is estimated that the annual requirement of teachers could be 3-4 lakhs. With the 17,000 odd TEIs in the country, the current capacity of the teacher education system is roughly to graduate 19 lakh people from these teacher education programmes every year. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that in the past few years the actual number of students graduating from these TEIs has varied between 40-60 percent, i.e., 8 to 11 lakhs (annually), which is more than double the requirement. Thus, the demand is roughly 3-4 lakh, while supply is more than double of it.

There is an oversupply of teachers for some stages of school education and severe undersupply for others. Data on specific subject teachers is unavailable although anecdotal evidence tells us that teachers for subjects like mathematics, English and geography are in short supply. At the same time, not all these teachers are employable, given the low rate of passing the TET.

⁴ CBSE. (2017). CTET. Performance of institutions. Retrieved 30 Oct 2017 from <http://59.179.16.89/cbse/ctetstats/stats.aspx>

The share of private TEIs is disproportionately large. While it is not necessary that all private TEIs offer poor quality education, there is sufficient evidence that the quality of teacher preparation offered is generally poor with a large majority of these TEIs also being accused of being fraudulent.

Most TEIs are stand-alone institutions offering single programmes and about half of these have the minimum intake recognized by NCTE. If the number of students in a TEI is low, economic viability in terms of its ability to meet the norms required by NCTE becomes uncertain, given the low fee caps set by State Fee Regulatory Committees (ranging from Rs 20,000 to Rs 50,000). This kind of structure has ensured that a bare minimum faculty and resources are available to students. It has also ensured the complete isolation of teacher education from universities and the rest of the system of higher education.



Paper 2:

Corruption in Private Teacher Education Institutions

Research Group, Azim Premji Foundation

Executive summary

The Teacher Education System is perhaps the weakest dimension of the overall Indian school education system. The Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft NEP 2019 has clearly highlighted the dysfunctional nature of our Teacher Education system, calling for its complete overhaul. The same has been observed widely, in policy and other official documents like the J. S. Verma Commission Report. The gist of these observations is: (a) rampant corruption prevails in privately-owned TEIs; (b) the curricular practices, including pedagogical aspects, are woefully inadequate.

While the matter of corruption in TEIs is common knowledge, there is little by way of empirical evidence to size and characterize the nature and extent of these corrupt practices. This is unsurprising -- research on corruption is very difficult to conduct.

Corruption studies, in general, and more specifically in education, are rare in the Indian context. Challenges of researching institutional corruption are well-documented. Despite these challenges, and with intense efforts to surmount some of these, this study was conducted in the field, covering 35 private TEIs across 13 districts in 5 states to understand the nature and extent of corruption that prevails in private TEIs.

The study finds widespread prevalence of deliberate corrupt practices by private TEIs – both on institutional and academic areas.

TEIs are granted licenses to run teacher education programmes based on fulfilment of norms and standards prescribed by the NCTE on various dimensions. Broadly, these include infrastructure (ownership of space and facilities, including specified instructional facilities), staffing requirements, qualifications of teaching faculty, curriculum and programme implementation standards.

These norms are meant to enable the TEIs to conduct high quality education for the students. Our study shows that in practice most of these norms are being violated by the private TEIs:

- Private TEIs do not have required number of teacher educators and adopt deliberate corrupt practices to hide this issue
 - 26 out of 29 TEIs had such practices
- Private TEIs deliberately neglect basic curricular requirements that are committed to by them to get the approval to run the programs; some examples:
 - Classes are neither conducted seriously nor taken seriously by students. This reflects in a number of ways:
 - Almost all private TEIs allowed students with shortage of attendance to appear for examinations
 - more than 60 percent allowed students who had not completed their school internships to appear for examinations
 - At least 70 percent TEIs had an average attendance of students that was below 80 percent
 - Subject practicums were not conducted at all in more than 30 percent of the TEIs and action research was unheard of in most
- Private TEIs do not have basic instructional facilities:
 - Curriculum laboratories were not available in more than 50 percent of the TEIs
 - Around a third of the TEIs did not have libraries, computer labs or seminar halls

The quantitative mapping of corruption is based on responses of faculty and students of private TEIs – and it shows that such corruption is spread across geographies. It must be pointed out that our study is capturing the violation of the very basic institutional, curricular and programme parameters that are quantifiable or measurable simply; the state of the actual educational quality is much worse, as widely observed, and also gleaned in our interviews by the description of the respondents.

These qualitative responses of the faculty and students give depth and nuance to the quantitative findings, and underline how various malpractices, driven by commercial motives, generates a toxic institutional environment in which both faculty and students are drawn into the net of corruption prevalent in these institutes.

Overall, the study provides strong empirical evidence to substantiate the observations made by the Kasturirangan Committee in the Draft NEP 2019 and the J.S. Verma Commission Report on the unbridled corruption and commercialisation in the private teacher education institutes. Clearly, even the very basic requirements of faculty, curriculum and instructional facilities for a sound teacher education system are thoroughly compromised. National Education Policy 2020 envisions that Higher Education Institutions (including those that run teacher education programmes) should have the capacity and commitment to run programmes that are of high quality, without externally prescribed norms; that is, with full autonomy. However, the current TEIs seem to have neither the capacity nor the intent to do this. This study, thus, reinforces the need for a complete overhaul of the Teacher Education sector in India.

1. Introduction

Teacher Education is one of the weakest institutional structures to undergird the school education system in India.⁵ The recent Report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy 2019 makes this clear in no uncertain terms: **‘teacher education is severely lacking and indeed in a crisis at the current time’** (p.114; emphasis in original). The draft policy document, citing another recent report, reiterates the reasons behind this crisis: ‘There are approximately 17,000 teacher education institutions in the country, of which over 92% are privately owned. Various in-depth studies - including the Justice J.S. Verma Commission (2012) constituted by the Supreme Court - have shown that a large proportion of these teaching colleges are not even attempting to provide a good education; instead, many are functioning as commercial shops where even the minimum curricular or course requirements are not met, and where degrees are essentially available for a price. The integrity of teacher education cannot be attained without first shutting down this practice’ (pp. 114-115).

Indeed, though the commercialisation of teacher education has been underscored in these recent policy documents, what has received lesser attention is the corruption that prevails in the private TEIs and drives the commercial interests of private providers. Besides occasional observations by senior bureaucrats and media reports, there are hardly any studies on the corrupt practices that drive the commercial interests of the self-financing teacher education colleges.⁶ This is perhaps understandable, given that systematic studies of corruption are, in general, difficult to undertake and there are almost no studies of academic corruption in the Indian context (Tierney and Sabharwal 2017). In the area of teacher education, one such study focuses on the state of Haryana and primarily draws upon local newspaper reports to describe the violation of regulatory norms that is rampant among self-financed TEIs in the state (Deswal 2017).

This study, therefore, was undertaken as a field-level empirical study to understand the extent and nature of corruption in private TEIs in India. The study covered a total of 35 private TEIs across 13 districts in 5 states where we had access to a research team for conducting the study. Given the objective of the study, multiple challenges were encountered. First, understandably, respondents (here, the management of private teacher education institutions) directly implicated in corrupt practices and violation of mandated norms were unwilling to provide access to their institutions. So, an initial plan of visits to private TEIs to interview the management or owner-principals did not yield much by way of insights as the research team were neither allowed to make observations or ask questions. Second, the research team faced significant challenges accessing data as even the other respondents, mainly faculty and students of private institutes, were part of the corruption network in different ways. As a result, many were not willing to share information about the basic teaching-learning resources and facilities available in their institutes and the quality of the teaching programmes, and there was a high proportion of non-response and dropouts from among those who initially agreed to be a part of the study.

⁵ Teacher education system in this study refers to the teacher preparation programmes and related institutions only and does not include continuous professional development initiatives for teachers.

⁶ For example, a former Secretary of the MHRD has categorised private TEIs as a ‘mafia’ in the education sector, asserting the claim of these being ‘extremely well-connected and deeply entrenched [in political and commercial interests]’ and mentioned how, many of these institutions do not even exist in reality, ‘There are around 16,000 B.Ed. and D.El.Ed. colleges in the country. A large number of them exist only in name’ (The Financial Express 15 November 2018).

The study, therefore, adopted an approach whereby the research team first identified faculty and students of these private TEIs who were willing to share their experiences. Snowball sampling was used to access faculty and students in these institutions through initial contacts in the respective sites. A semi-structured interview schedule was used with the faculty and students of these private TEIs who consented to be a part of the study; this was followed up with discussions in instances where the respondents were more willing to share their experiences of these institutions. In addition, semi-structured interviews were supplemented with unstructured open-ended discussions with principals, faculty and students of these institutions in three sites based on their convenience and by means of snowball sampling.

The focus of the study is those aspects of the private teacher education institutes that have a direct and immediate implication on the quality of teaching-learning that takes place in these institutes. Given the inadequately designed regulatory framework of the NCTE, the study did not anchor itself as one seeking to assess the mismatch between prescribed norms of the NCTE regulations and the extent to which these norms are met in practice.⁷ Instead, the study used NCTE's current set of regulations only as a guiding frame for the tools of the study to elicit the corrupt practices that prevail in private TEIs around the core aspects of teaching-learning.⁸ The main findings of the study are summarised in Box 1.

7 The rationale and efficacy of the regulatory framework of the NCTE, excessively focused on infrastructural norms, and the way in which these are implemented, through an inflexible inspectorial mode, have themselves been observed to be a part of the problem that the teacher education system is in.

8 For more details on NCTE's regulations currently applicable dating to 2014, see: <http://www.ncte.gov.in/Website/PDF/regulation/regulation2014/english/appendix2.pdf>; <http://www.ncte.gov.in/Website/PDF/regulation/regulation2014/english/appendix4.pdf> (last accessed 17 September 2019).



Box 1. Key findings

Primary issues related to quality of teacher education programmes

Teacher educators

- Most private institutes do not have required number of teacher educators as per NCTE norms:
 - In the worst-case scenario, 1 out of total 29 institutes had faculty numbers matching batch size; in the best-case scenario, this was 3 out of 29
- Private institutes adopt deliberate corrupt practices to under-recruit faculty; they:
 - Do not have dedicated faculty for specific subject areas; they hire staff to teach across different subject areas
 - Retain faculty as part-time and allow them to teach in multiple institutes
 - Coerce faculty to appear as full-time faculty during inspection visits by not issuing formal appointment letters
 - Pay faculty less than their payroll salary; appoint faculty without required qualifications

Curricular requirements

- Basic curricular requirements are wilfully neglected by most private institutes.
 - In the worst-case scenario, 90 percent institutes had an average attendance of students that was below 80 percent; in the best-case scenario, this was 70 percent
 - Almost all private institutes allowed students with shortage of attendance to appear for examinations and more than 60 percent of the institutes allowed students who had not completed their school internships to appear for examinations
 - Subject practicums were not conducted in more than 30 percent of the institutes and action research was unheard in most of the institutes

Other issues

Instructional facilities

- Most private institutes do not have basic instructional facilities:
 - Curriculum laboratories were not available in more than 50 percent of the institutes
 - Around a third of the institutes did not have libraries, computer labs or seminar halls
 - Under-provisioning of basic instructional facilities was seen to be sustained through deliberate malpractices, such as sharing of resources with other institutions under the same management

The study finds that most private TEIs pay scant regard to fundamental requirements related to faculty, curriculum and instructional facilities that determine the quality of any teacher education institution and its programmes. Moreover, this disregard is seen to be sustained through deliberate and blatant malpractices by the private managements of these institutes. Such malpractices are found to be widespread across geographies and sites. Analysis of the qualitative interviews with the respondents in this study indicates deeply embedded corruption that underlies these malpractices. Indeed, given the reluctance of many probable respondents who were approached to share information about corrupt practices in their institutions, the extent of malpractices evident in the study can justifiably be regarded as an underestimation of the real scale of the rot in the system. Thus, what this study is able to bring to light, with its somewhat limited regional coverage and the inherent challenges of studying institutional corruption, can only be said to be the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in 13 districts across 5 states (Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand) where the research teams had access for conducting it. As the objective of the study was to understand the nature and extent of corruption in private, self-financed TEIs, those offering either a Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) or a Diploma in Elementary Education (D. El. Ed) or both were identified in the 13 districts. Efforts were made to cover four such institutions in the districts with a relatively higher concentration of private TEIs and two such institutions in the districts with a relatively lower concentration of private TEIs.⁹ A total of 35 TEIs were covered, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 principals, 29 faculty and 76 students (see Table 1).

⁹ This was based on publicly available information on the presence of private teacher education institutions in these districts. All selected teacher education institutions could not be covered due to non-response.

Table 1. Teacher education institutions, principals, faculty and students covered, district-wise

Districts	Principals	Faculty	Students	TEIs
Janjgir	2	1	6	5
Raigarh	1	4	6	2
Raipur	1	2	8	4
Kalaburagi	-	-	4	2
Mandya	1	1	4	2
Yadgir	1	3	4	3
Khargone	1	4	9	4
Barmer	1	3	5	2
Rajsamand	1	1	8	2
Tonk	2	3	6	5
Haldwani	1	2	4	1
Udham Singh Nagar	1	3	8	2
Uttarkashi	1	2	4	1
Total	14	29	76	35

A semi-structured interview tool was designed to capture the views of the respondents on faculty details, core curricular processes, and basic instructional facilities in their institutions. The current set of NCTE regulations served as a framework for the semi-structured interview tool. Though, as mentioned earlier, NCTE norms were not taken as a definitive guideline for assessing mismatch between prescribed norms and reported practices. Rather, the norms were used as a means to elicit the main areas of corruption that prevail in private TEIs.

As evident in other studies on corruption, both non-response and reluctance to respond to specific issues were quite high. Quantitative content analysis was carried out for responses that focused on availability/non-availability of basic faculty, curricular and instructional requirements in private TEIs. For responses that reported numbers (e.g. faculty strength; average student attendance), both the best-case scenarios and worst-case scenarios have been considered keeping in mind the variation in responses among respondents within an institution. That is, both the highest value and lowest value reported by the respondent group for these institutional parameters, for any particular institution, have been considered separately to provide a picture of what the best and the worst possible scenarios of these parameters would look like across institutions.

In addition to the respondents covered by the semi-structured interview tool, the research team covered a further set of respondents across three sites through unstructured, open-ended discussions around the same key issues that were part of the semi-structured interview tool (see Table 2). As these discussions were not structured enough to enable quantitative content analysis, only qualitative thematic analysis was used for this section of the data.

Table 2. Respondents covered by unstructured open-ended discussions

Districts	Principals	Faculty	Students	TEIs
Kalaburagi	8	12	30	12 (from Yadgir, Bidar, Raichur and Kalaburagi districts)
Dehradun	4	22	38	8
Haridwar	2	14	8	2
Total	14	48	76	22

For the qualitative data from the semi-structured interview schedules and the unstructured open-ended discussions, we analysed the narratives shared by the respondents to provide insights into the nature of the various corrupt processes that prevail in the private TEIs.¹⁰

3. Findings: Forms of corrupt practices in private teacher education institutions

3.1 Teacher educator-related

Understandably, the faculty of TEIs – the teacher educators – are expected to form a key component, if not the most important one, with reference to the quality of the institutes and their programmes. However, egregious violations are seen in the area of faculty provision, recruitment and retention in these institutes.

The analysis of faculty strength, vis-à-vis their batch size, revealed how most of the private institutes operated with minimal faculty on their payrolls. Only 3 out of 29 institutes for which this data was available, had the appropriate number of teacher educators as required by NCTE norms, in the best-case scenario (see Table 3).¹¹ In the worst-case scenario, there was only 1 out of 29 institutes that conformed to NCTE norms on the number of faculty required.

¹⁰ This analysis was supplemented both by media discourses around regulation and malpractices in teacher education in India and an interview with a previous senior bureaucrat with significant direct experience related to the domain of this study.

¹¹ The best-case scenario and worst-case scenario represent the variation in responses among the two respondent groups, faculty and students, on a corresponding parameter, here, the number of faculty.

Table 3. Status of faculty strength in the private TEIs

	Faculty strength commensurate to batch size	Faculty strength more than half as prescribed for batch size	Faculty strength half or fewer than half as prescribed for batch size
Number of TEIs (best-case scenario)	3	8	18
Number of TEIs (worst-case scenario)	1	6	22

Base (number of TEIs for which this data is available): 29

Moreover, faculty responses showed that in 5 out of 18 institutes, the faculty were teaching in multiple institutes – often 3-4 such institutes; for student responses, the same figure was 3 out of 13 institutes. Also, as per faculty responses, in 15 out of 19 institutes, faculty were teaching more than one subject – often 2-3; this figure was 22 out of 25 institutes when analysed by student responses (see Table 4).

Table 4. Status of faculty teaching in multiple institutes and more than one subject

	Faculty teaching in multiple institutes		Faculty teaching across multiple (more than one) subject areas	
	Faculty responses	Student responses	Faculty responses	Student responses
Number of TEIs	5	3	15	22
Base (no. of TEIs for which this data is available)	18	13	19	25

Interviews with teacher educators in these institutes revealed the malpractices behind the under-provisioning of faculty. The private institutes were reported to hire fewer faculty than stated norms and what they projected on their rolls. Strategically, many of the faculty were retained part-time and allowed to teach in multiple institutes. These faculty could then be called upon by multiple institutes to reflect appropriate faculty strength in the event of an inspection by regulatory authorities. A faculty from Kalaburagi had the following to share, *‘There is a gap in the records of faculty; in records, the college has all as full-time faculty with required qualifications and experience, but in reality, it is the dead opposite. Officially a teacher educator teaches in one college but unofficially, he teaches in another college. The available faculty are used in multiple programmes in composite colleges. A faculty of the B.Ed College could also work as a principal in the degree college of the same management. In some colleges, this is the opposite – a principal of the degree college is asked to teach in the B.Ed college.’* The Principal of a private institute in Barmer had this to add, *‘There are many colleges where no subject teachers are available, and they are managing without faculty. We have a retired teacher and he has a lot of experience to teach students.’*

Another strategy adopted by the institutes to minimise faculty costs is to recruit faculty based on the number of subjects they can teach and so these TEIs do not have dedicated faculty in specific subject areas. A faculty member from a private TEI in Dehradun shared, *'It also happens several times that institutions recruit persons whom they can use for multiple subjects. Example, if a competent applicant has graduated in biology and another less competent one has graduated in physics, chemistry and mathematics, then, they prefer the second one as that person can teach more than one subjects.'* Students also shared their awareness of similar practices. *'In private colleges, faculty teach in two-three colleges and even a single faculty teaches two-three subjects...three days in one college another three days in another college, or like morning in one college and afternoon in another. College timetable is prepared, keeping their availability in mind.'* (Student, Kalaburagi)

These arrangements not only allow the private institutes to operate with minimal faculty and related salary costs but also provide them with an opportunity to satisfy regulatory authorities during inspection visits. For example, one faculty from an institute in Uttarkashi, when asked about the satisfaction levels from his work, shared, *'No, we are not satisfied, but what we can do? There are no other opportunities available here. Showing faculty as per norms during inspections...it is happening in most of the colleges in Uttarkashi and even in Dehradun.'* This fraudulent practice by TEIs was shared by two other faculty, one from Dehradun and the other from Khargone.

Discussions with the faculty also revealed the subtle coercive techniques used by private institutes to sustain their deliberate corrupt practices. Institutions, reportedly, do not provide formal appointment letters to faculty and pay them less than the salaries they are asked to officially sign for. The former strategy was adopted to prevent legal challenges for under-payment of salaries. The requirement of proper qualifications for teacher educators is also bypassed. As one teacher educator in a college in Tonk shared, *'Management always focuses on how maximum profit can be earned. Hence, they explore cheaper options. It is a fact that a person who holds required degrees demands substantial amount [as salary]. Management prefers non-degree holders as they agree to the job at half the salary. On record, the salary is around 20 to 22 thousand [per month], but actually, he gets 10 to 15 thousand; this varies from person to person. Management has talked to faculty about this before recruiting them.'* The faculty further shared, *'They [college management] prepared appointment letters for everyone in which they mention the salary of employees and other terms and conditions. But it is not given to the employee, management keeps this with them. Otherwise, employees can file a court case against them due to differences in salary and terms and conditions mentioned in the appointment letter. They [the management] maintain all the records but keep [those] with themselves and show to visitors [visiting inspection teams] if they demand.'*

The faculty were asked whether there was a difference in the salary promised and the salary that they actually received. Out of 27 faculty for whom data for this question was available, 13 responded that there was a difference in the salary amount they signed for and what they received (see Table 5). In terms of the number of institutes, this was the situation in 10 out of 18 institutes for which data was available. These faculty members were also asked whether they were given appointment letters by their institutes. To this, 15 out of 29 respondents for whom data was available, responded in the negative; this was across 11 out of 35 institutes.

Table 5. Faculty appointments and salaries

	Differences in payroll and actual salary	Base	Did not get an appointment letter	Base
Number of faculty	13	27	15	29
Number of TEIs	10	18	11	35

The pervasive nature of this malaise of under-provisioning of teacher educators and false reporting by the private institutes has been acknowledged even by the NCTE. In an effort to curb such malpractices, NCTE had asked recognised TEIs to submit affidavits with basic information about institutional and programme details, including faculty strength. The following response of the then incumbent NCTE Chairman shows how the misrepresentation of faculty strength has become rampant among private teacher education colleges, *'We found that many colleges do not have enough teachers. We are trying to use Aadhaar [the twelve-digit biometric-based unique identification number] to find out how many teachers have been shown against multiple colleges. We are not stopping contract teachers from teaching, but they cannot be shown against the required strength'* (Scroll.in 30 May 2017). As found in our study, this response by a senior bureaucrat shows how teacher educators who are supposed to be working as permanent, dedicated faculty in specific institutes, in reality, have contractual positions in multiple institutes and are *'officially'* shown as permanent by the institutes.

3.2 Unmet curricular requirements

Quality of teacher education programmes can be said to be satisfactory if basic curricular requirements are met, both in terms of expected coursework and other core components of such programmes, namely, practicum and school internships. As in the instance of provisioning of teacher educators, in this too, wilful violation of basic standards is observed in private TEIs.

Students were asked about the average attendance for coursework for their batch in the colleges that they attended. In the best-case scenario, where we consider the highest reported figures of attendance for a particular college from among the student respondents, in 10 institutions student attendance was reported to be between 50 percent and 80 percent on average and in 10 institutions the average attendance was 50 percent or less (see Table 6). In the worst-case scenario, where we consider the lowest reported figures of attendance for the college from among the student respondents, in 12 institutions student attendance was reported to be between 50 and 80 percent, and in 14 institutions the average attendance was reported to be 50 percent or less. Average attendance as low as 10 and 15 percent were reported by students from a few private institutes in Raipur. Similarly, in Khargone, the faculty of a private institute shared that only about 30-35 out of 100 students in the B. Ed. programme, and similar numbers out of 150 students in the D. El. Ed. programme attended classes regularly in her institute.

Table 6. Average attendance of students in private TEIs

	80% or more attendance	80% to 50% attendance	50% and less attendance
Number of TEIs (best-case scenario)	9	10	10
Number of TEIs (worst-case scenario)	3	12	14

Base (number of TEIs for which this data is available): 29

The scant regard private institutes pay to attendance is also evident in their allowing students to flout, without impunity, attendance norms in regular coursework and school internships that are supposed to be the minimum requirements for them to appear in their examinations. Analysis of student responses showed that 28 out of 29 institutes allowed students who had a shortage of attendance to appear for examinations (see Table 7). Likewise, 18 out of 29 institutes were reported to allow students who had not completed their school internships to appear for their examinations.

Table 7. Institutes allowing students not fulfilling programme norms to appear for exams

	Institutes allowing students with attendance shortage to appear for exams	Base	Institutes allowing students with incomplete internships to appear for exams	Base
Number of Students	63	72	40	69
Number of TEIs	28	29	18	29

Given that the basic requirements of the teaching programmes were not provided for by the private institutes, it is hardly surprising that students are not required to fulfil basic curricular requirements by the institutes. Subject practicums were reported as not being part of the teaching programme in 10 institutions out of 29 for which data was available, while action research was practically absent across almost all institutes – in 25 institutes out of the 29 reported (see Table 8). Therefore, it was hardly surprising that one of the student respondents of an institute in Tonk, when asked by the interviewer whether he had undertaken any action research during the course of his programme, to say, *'No, I have not heard the name earlier; what is action research? I will ask tomorrow about this in college.'* Even for school internships, an integral part of the teacher preparation during which students are required to actually become part of school processes and teach in classes supported by teacher educators and teachers in schools, student responses showed that in 16 out of 23 institutions, faculty did not make the regular visits to schools that they are required to do.

Table 8. Student responses on provision of programme-related activities

	No subject practicums	No action research	No regular visits to school by faculty during internships
Number of TEIs	10	25	16
Base (no. of TEIs for which this data is available)	29	29	23

The deliberate nature of the violation of basic curricular norms by the private institutes to serve their own commercially motivated interests was revealed in discussions with the faculty of these institutes. For example, the principal of a private college in Barmer had the following to share, *'Some of the institutions do not want students to come, because if students come regularly, they also need to teach them. One of my relatives shared that, "I enrolled my son in a B. Ed college here. He started to attend classes but after a few days, he stopped going. When I asked why he was not attending classes, he told me that there were no teaching faculty who came regularly to college and he felt that his time was being wasted in going to college"'*. The strategy of having minimal faculty resources, as observed in the previous section, therefore, complemented the plans of private institutes actively encouraging or indirectly signalling students to not attend the teaching programmes.

The private institutes were reported to sustain their non-adherence to basic curricular requirements through financial arrangements made with the students. As a student shared in an open-ended discussion in Dehradun, *'The institutions have made their criteria of payment for everything...non-attendees, non-internship attendees, practicum and so on. The rate varies from institution to institution, from Rs 5000-6000 to Rs 10000-12000.'* That such arrangements were common across sites was evident from the open-ended discussions with students even in Kalaburagi. Students shared that in some of their colleges, the principal allowed students to be irregular, in exchange of fines of around Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 from students, with students being required to come to the college only when the university committee was visiting. Besides students, faculty also shared their awareness of similar corrupt practices. A faculty from Yadgir observed, *'I feel these B.Ed. colleges are just for namesake. Students get marks by paying money... so much corruption at all levels, from internal marks to main exam marks. Students get 90% marks even if they remain absent for exams. You just imagine these students becoming teachers in future... what they will teach! I cannot do anything; I cannot swim against the department. Students score 80% without coming to college and without attending any classes; they do not know anything about lesson plans, teaching or blueprint, yet they secure 80% marks by giving money to faculty. This has a negative influence on other regular aspiring students, they also become the same soon.'* Even principals conceded such malpractices in their institutions. A principal from Raipur had the following interesting observation, *'There are two categories of students, regular and non-regular. Everyone knows about non-regular students. I will not say anything about that. Regular students complete the practice teaching fully. Non-regular students are also advised to at least do some days of practice teaching as they have to get attendance from the schools. They come for a few days.'*

What is evident, therefore, are the ways in which private institutes actively violate basic curricular standards and encourage students to bypass requirements of coursework, practicum, and school internships through financial malpractices. More worryingly, is the way these practices also lure students to opt for such institutes as they are assured of a degree without having to fulfil the mandated curricular requirements (see Deswal 2017).

3.3 Absence of core instructional facilities

In addition to the expected provision of classrooms, staff room, administrative office, and so on, which form the basic infrastructure of any educational institution, TEIs are, more importantly, required to have a number of additional instructional facilities that serve as the core of their curricular intent. These include curriculum laboratories, libraries, computers laboratories or ICT resource centres, and seminar halls. Student and faculty responses from our data showed that many of the private institutes did not make provisions for these core instructional facilities.

One of the most important instructional facility for any teacher education programme – the curriculum laboratory – was found to be not available in 9 out of 17 institutes, considering faculty responses, and in 19 out of 29 institutes, considering student responses (see Table 9). The status of some of the other instructional facilities was not found to be any better. Student responses showed that facilities like libraries, computer labs and seminar (or multipurpose) halls were not available in around a third of the institutes or more for which data was reported.

Table 9. Status of key and other instructional facilities in private TEIs

	Curriculum laboratory		Libraries		Computer labs		Seminar halls	
	not available		not available		not available		not available	
	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student	Faculty	Student
Number of TEIs	9	19	3	10	8	14	4	9

Base (no. of TEIs for which this data is available): 17 (for Faculty); 29 (for Students)

Analysis of the narratives of respondents and observations of the research team reflected the deliberate strategies behind the under-provisioning of instructional facilities. For example, in Khargone, the 9 student respondents from 3 private TEIs shared that facilities such as multipurpose hall, library and computer lab are combined with other adjacent institutions or schools of the same institution. In one of these institutions, a pharmacy college was being operated from the same building and with the same combined facilities as the teacher education institute. The students were neither aware of any curriculum laboratory nor had they come across any such space with teaching-learning materials for either language, science, mathematics or the social sciences. Similarly, in Uttarkashi, one of the private TEIs visited was running out of a small four-room residential building and did not have a multipurpose hall, library, or curriculum laboratory.

The so-called computer lab was also a classroom and had only one computer, while the principal's room, staff room and administrative office were all combined in a single room.

The abysmal condition of the facilities available in these institutions was also reflected in the responses of the faculty employed in these private TEIs (see Box 2). The responses also underlined how such facilities were faked and misrepresented to visiting inspection teams.

Box 2. Responses of faculty members of private TEIs (Dehradun) in open-ended discussions

'Students are required to pay for practicals in their fees, but the institutions do not have such facilities. Generally, there are no rooms or required infrastructure for carrying out practical... and everything happens using *jugaad* (ad-hoc arrangements).'

'In most institutes, projectors are not available for teaching. In my own experience of the last 5-7 years in two-three institutes, I have never used a projector because I did not find the same in the institute. As a result of this, we do not prepare our students for *Smart* classes.'

'At the time of inspection, we arrange 3000-4000 books (prescribed) as per norms. Syllabus books are available but there are no magazines, daily newspapers, books for personality development, vocational magazines. In an institute where I served for some time, the course was run in the second shift and in case of a need for the library arose, students were asked to call the librarian to open the library. The librarian had actually been recruited for the B.Tech. programme run by the college as well as the library. He used to come to open the library for half an hour only on request.'

'At the time of inspection, we talk about labs for mathematics, language, social science and computer. However, we simply attach a set of speakers to a computer, keep some headphones, a tape recorder and some CDs to display but, we actually do not know how to use these. We temporarily arrange a computer person but we even ourselves do not know how to run the labs. In maximum colleges, there is no recruitment for a computer teacher. We have put in the syllabus the use of PowerPoint presentations, e-assignments, portfolio and so on; but how to do it when we are not trained for this and when we do not have a computer person.'

The responses of the students and faculty indicate how private TEIs adopt different strategies to fabricate and misrepresent to visiting inspection teams what they calculatedly under-provide in terms of core instructional facilities. The under-provisioning for each aspect of the main institutional and teaching-learning components of the teacher education programmes – faculty, curricular requirements, and instructional facilities – are observed to complement each other and provide an opportunity to the private institutes to follow unfettered profit-making objectives instead of providing quality education to student teachers.

3.4 How is such deep-rooted corruption sustained?

Responses of senior bureaucrats and media discourse underlined the political and financial linkages of private TEIs with other institutions in the system—affiliating universities and even the regulatory authorities. A former senior bureaucrat, who had considerable experience with the teacher education system as part of his tenure, and was interviewed as part of this study, shared the following, *'So who runs these [private teacher education] institutions? They are basically liquor contractors, road contractors, MPs, MLAs.'* He then went on to elaborate the ways in which such private teacher education institutions are involved in the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of the university to which these private TEIs seek affiliation, and the system of bribes that connect the political machinery, the regulatory bodies, and the private colleges to ensure that these institutions can continue to evade regulation and inspection.

Even a former Secretary, Government of India, when describing in a media article the way in which the corrupt private colleges resisted efforts for regulatory reforms, emphasised the power that this nexus wields, *'The action was initiated by the then chairman of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), an upright officer, by way of issuance of notices to all the colleges to furnish the details of their existence on affidavits. The idea was to ensure that only those that existed got recognition, and in case of wrong information, they could be prosecuted. It worked initially, but the colleges realised that quite a few of them could be in trouble. So, despite the support the gentleman got from the top politicians, even from most of the states, he was put under enormous pressure by the mafias; and they took the "judicial" route to pin down the chairman. He had to ultimately quit.'* (*The Financial Express* 15 November 2018)

Thus, an elaborate and deep-rooted system of corruption is noted to be behind the private TEIs that continue to operate without fear of sanctions from regulatory authorities despite the deliberate strategies they employ to not deliver any form of quality teacher education. As even the Report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy (2019, p. 283) notes:

Heartbreakingly, the teacher education sector has been beleaguered with mediocrity as well as rampant corruption due to commercialisation. Most institutions today providing teacher education are small colleges in the private sector that offer only a single narrow programme, and where there is a general lack of commitment to the need for rigour and quality in teacher preparation. Indeed, according to AISHE data for 2015-16, of the 17000+ colleges in India that teach just a single programme, nearly 90 percent are teacher training institutes! Moreover, according to the Justice J. S. Verma Commission (2012) constituted by the Supreme Court, a majority of these standalone teaching institutes - over 10,000 in number - are not even attempting serious teacher education but are essentially selling degrees for a price.

This sordid state of affairs was perhaps aptly summarised by a faculty from one of the private institutes in Tonk, *'The owners [of the private TEIs] are either businessmen or political leaders. Actually, they do not know much about education nor are they interested in quality. The ultimate aim is to earn money.'*

4. Concluding remarks

The study brings into sharper focus one of the critical concerns plaguing the teacher education system in India today. The commercialisation of teacher education through the proliferation of private TEIs since the 1990s has been a phenomenon that has received attention in a few recent educational policy documents, but little effort has been made to address this malaise when channelizing policy into practice. However, both research studies and policy seem to have little to say about the widespread, deliberate and deep-rooted corruption in the private TEIs that sustain their commercial motives at the cost of a well-functioning teacher education system. The study underlines both the extent and depth of this malaise.

The findings of this study reveal the corrupt strategies that private TEIs adopt to both underprovide faculty, curricular requirements, and instructional facilities as well as misrepresent this to regulatory bodies. Under-recruitment of faculty, paying faculty less than payroll amounts, encouraging students to not attend coursework or school internships, and not providing for basic instructional facilities such as curriculum laboratories are only a few of these strategies. A noxious complementarity is seen to work among these strategies with each reinforcing the other with the ultimate objective of profit-making. The study also underlines how this corruption is not confined to particular geographies. Rather, it seems to have become a feature of private TEIs across states and districts, and this is further borne out in the responses of senior bureaucrats who have been part of the school education system and media discourse around these institutions. Undeniably, all this has serious implications on the quality of teacher education in India. And understandably, it is unrealistic to expect teachers emerging from such a system to be even near expected standards or have competencies that bolster a good quality school education system.

In such a context, it is surprising that not enough has been done to stem the rot that has set in the teacher education system through wanton corruption and commercialisation, despite repeated signals for change. The involvement of vested political interests in the private TEIs has also been underlined strongly by the media and senior bureaucrats. This study, therefore, reinforces the need to turn our educational policy thrust towards one of the fundamental building blocks of the school education system – the teacher education system – through more public investment in this domain and strengthening of the regulatory infrastructure to weed out dysfunctional private institutions that continue to operate and erode the foundations of the system.

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Paper 3:

Neglecting Support for Teacher: Bane of our Public Education System

Research Group, Azim Premji Foundation

Executive summary

Studies across the world have strongly underlined how teacher effectiveness is a key predictor of the quality of any school education system. The recent report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy 2019, aligned with the same understanding of the need for a strong teacher cadre for the school education system in India, has also pointed out specific areas of improvement around teachers' work that need stronger and more concerted policy efforts. To summarise, these key areas include: (a) eliminating the severe shortcomings and suboptimal practices in the deployment of teachers; (b) ensuring an environment where teachers are able to teach with full dedication and at full capacity with no non-teaching activities; (c) revamping continuous professional development and rejuvenating academic support institutions to provide school-based teacher support and mentoring, and; (d) ensuring provision and supply of high-quality textbooks and teaching-learning resources for use by school teachers.

The Azim Premji Foundation's work with the school education system over nearly two decades has also revealed that these are concerns of critical relevance for teachers in the school education system in India.

This field study was undertaken to understand, through the voices of teachers in the public education system in India, the extent to which the above concerns are a reality in their everyday work lives. A total number of 322 teachers were covered across 27 districts in 5 states. In each district, 12 schools with an equal proportion of easy to access and hard to access; lower primary and upper primary schools were visited. The research team administered a survey questionnaire with one teacher from each school who was present and accessible on the day of the visit and had been a regular teacher in the school for at least five years.

Teacher voices from across the five states reaffirm the crucial relevance of the main concerns related to teachers' work emphasised in the report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy 2019. Box 1 summarises the key findings from the study.

Box 1: Key findings

Issue 1: There are critical deficiencies in the deployment of teachers.

- For each of these subject areas – science and mathematics, social science, and language – around one in every three upper primary schools lacked specifically qualified teachers.
- There were not enough teachers as per the sanctioned posts or the RTE mandate of pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) in two out of every five schools.
- No action had been taken by officials in three out of every five schools that reported teacher shortage.

Issue 2: Non-teaching activities take away a substantial portion of teachers' time with children.

- In a year, almost a month-long period—25 days on an average—was spent by teachers on non-teaching activities.
- In a week, around five hours, on an average, were spent by teachers on non-classroom activities.

Issue 3: Teachers lack avenues and opportunities for quality, continuous, professional development.

- Nine out of ten teachers reported that no structured training calendar was shared with them at the beginning of the academic year by senior functionaries.
- Around four out of five teachers reported that there was no assessment done by the senior functionaries to understand the professional development needs of teachers.
- More than two-thirds of the in-service trainings received was reported to not have any logical linkage to other in-service trainings done before or after. For more than four-fifth of the trainings, teachers did not receive any follow-up support by senior functionaries at the school level.
- More than two-thirds of the teachers indicated only a moderate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with reference to the ability of the in-service trainings to connect to their classroom practices, knowledge of the resource persons and quality of resource materials used in the trainings.

Issue 4: There is inadequate school-based support or mentoring for teachers.

- Around one out of every five schools had not been visited by any cluster-level functionary in the last one-and-a-half-years. Same was the case with the visits by block-level functionaries. Three out of every five schools had not been visited by any district-level functionary.
- More than 80 percent of the visits by functionaries—cluster-level, block-level, or district-level—are done in an inspection mode without any mentoring support.

Issue 5: Teachers face severe challenges in the timely supply of textbooks and support for teaching-learning materials.

- Around one in every two schools surveyed had a shortage in the supply of textbooks in the previous academic year.
- Three out of every five teachers did not receive any support for teaching-learning materials (TLMs) in schools.

Overall, the study aligns with the key concerns and recommendations around teachers' work underscored in the report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy 2019. Any emphasis on teacher effectiveness and a strong teacher cadre for the school system begs the question whether basic prerequisites such as an adequate number of teachers, uninterrupted teaching time, meaningful continuous professional development opportunities, mentoring support, and timely supply of curricular materials are available to teachers within the school system. What is evident from the study is a systemic neglect of basic forms of support that are required by teachers for performing their core teaching-learning responsibilities in public schools. The findings, at one level, suggest the need for comprehensive and continuous efforts from both the public education system and multiple stakeholders to address the concerns raised by the teachers. At another level, the findings challenge the simplistic idea of a teacher-centric accountability system that ignores the institutional context of the teachers' work and the everyday challenges they face within this institutional context.



1. Introduction

In recent times, in the context of ideas for the reform of school education in India, the work of teachers has received significant attention. However, many of these policy ideas have viewed reforms through the narrow lens of teacher accountability and suggested solutions in the form of contractual teachers, performance-based incentives for teachers, and para-skilling of teachers. Teachers, in the imagination of those suggesting these reforms, are no more than another input into the school system that must be efficiently managed. This strand of policy-thinking ignores, among other things, the institutional context in which teachers of the public education system work.

The report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy 2019 has underlined these institutional challenges around teachers' work in no uncertain terms. It has called for ensuring: proper teacher deployment and teacher conditions in every school; no overburdening of teachers with non-teaching activities or with the teaching of subjects outside of their expertise; robust opportunities for continuous professional development, along with access to learning the latest advances and ideas in both pedagogy as well as subject content; strengthening institutions that provide school-based teacher support and mentoring; and, provision and timely supply of textbooks and teaching-learning resources for teachers.

The Azim Premji Foundation's work with the school education system for over nearly two decades has also revealed that these institutional challenges have strong implications for teachers' work and the ultimate quality of school education.

This field study was undertaken to understand, through the voices of teachers in the public education system in India, the extent to which some of the key institutional issues around teachers' work pose a challenge in their everyday work lives. For the study, 322 teachers were surveyed across 27 districts in 5 states. Around 12 schools were visited in each district to cover both easy to access and hard to access schools and lower primary and upper primary schools in equal proportion. The research team administered a survey questionnaire with one teacher from each school who was present and accessible on the day of the visit and had been a regular teacher in the school for at least five years.

The study finds that even after almost a decade since the enactment of the RTE, there are significant deficiencies in the deployment of teachers. Across all surveyed schools, lower primary and upper primary, there are not enough teachers as per sanctioned posts or the RTE mandate of PTR in two out of every five schools. Again, violation of the RTE mandate is visible in the upper primary schools where around one in every three schools did not have specifically qualified teachers for each of these subjects – science and mathematics, social science, and language. Teachers also shared that no action had been taken by officials in response to the shortage of teachers in three out of every five schools in which redressal of such shortages was sought.

Analysis of the survey data also shows that non-teaching activities that keep teachers away from their core classroom teaching-learning engagement form a significant portion of their total work time. On an average, teachers reported spending almost a month-long period of their total workdays in non-teaching activities. Out of the different non-teaching activities, the maximum time is spent on election duties followed by administrative meetings and non-academic trainings. In the regular course of the work-week, teachers reported spending on an average around five hours every week on non-classroom activities.

In terms of opportunities for quality, continuous professional development, the study finds an absence of adequate planning and opportunities for these. A majority of the teachers reported that there is no planned assessment of professional development needs of teachers done by the relevant academic support structures, nor is a structured training calendar shared with teachers to provide them with a prior understanding of opportunities available. Teachers feedback on in-service trainings conducted shows that a majority of the teachers do not see any logical linkages between these trainings and other trainings done before or after; as a result, most in-service trainings become stand-alone events. When asked about their perception of the usefulness of the trainings, a majority of the teachers reported only moderate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the relevance of the trainings to their classroom practice, knowledge of resource persons, and quality of resource materials used in the trainings.

A similar absence of intent is seen at the level of support and mentoring of teachers at the school-level. A significant proportion of the schools were reported to have not been visited by cluster, block or district level functionaries over the previous one and a half years. Also, even when visits are made, a majority of these are done in a monitoring and inspection mode by officials at all levels, rather than in a mentoring mode that can capacitate and motivate teachers. Though not a focus of this study, many studies and recent policy documents have commented upon the inadequate capacity, and even the dismantling of the academic support structures in the system, and further underlined the need for a revitalisation of these structures. Finally, in terms of supply of textbooks and support for teachers with teaching-learning materials in their schools. our analysis shows shortages and delay in the supply of the former and inadequate support on the latter.

These findings resonate strongly with the key concerns around teachers' work that has been stated in the report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy 2019. The recommendations to overcome these concerns are also clearly laid out in this policy document and, overall, underline the need for strong investments in the public school education system and in building the institutional capacity of different components of this system. In addition, this study emphasises the fallacy of *only* accountability-centric assessment of teachers' work that ignores the systemic and institutional challenges that teachers continue to face in their everyday work lives.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in 27 districts across 5 states (Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand). Wherever possible, districts were chosen to broadly cover intra-state diversities in terms of regions, vulnerable groups, and challenges in terms of provision of schooling facilities. In each district, around 12 schools were visited with an aim to cover both easy to access and hard to access schools and both lower primary and upper primary schools in equal proportion. The research team administered a survey questionnaire with one teacher from each school who was present and accessible on the day of the visit and had been a regular teacher in the school for at least five years. In all, 322 teachers were covered (see Table 1). The fieldwork for the survey was undertaken from July to September 2019.

Table 1. State-wise teachers surveyed

States	No of districts	No of teachers
Chhattisgarh	6	72
Karnataka	6	72
Madhya Pradesh	3	36
Rajasthan	6	72
Uttarakhand	6	70
Total	27	322

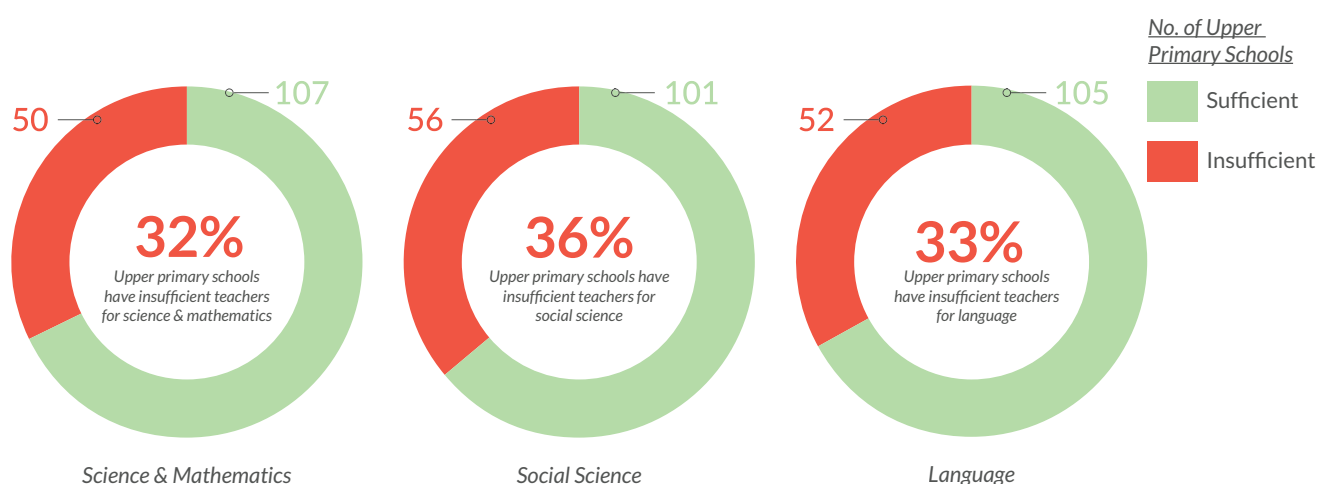
The survey questionnaire was designed to broadly capture the different types of support that public school teachers need and expect to receive to adequately conduct their core work of teaching-learning in school. These are: availability of an adequate number of teachers; ensuring focus of work is limited only to teaching activities; provision of support for continuous professional development; and timely and adequate provision and supply of curricular materials.

3. Findings

3.1 Teacher deployment

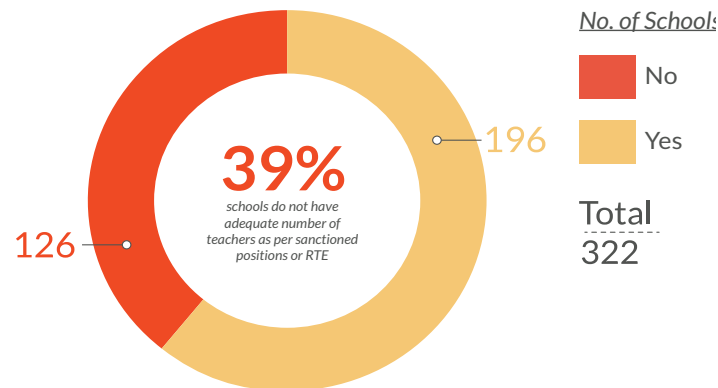
To understand the adequacy of teachers vis-à-vis the norms given under RTE, we asked public school teachers about the number of teachers in their schools. The RTE mandates one teacher for each of these subjects – science and mathematics, social science, and language – in the middle school (classes 6-8). Responses of the teachers showed that there are no teachers specifically for science and mathematics in around one-third of the schools. Similarly, there were no teachers specifically for social science in slightly more than one-third of the schools and for language in one-third of the schools (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Upper primary schools with no teachers for specific subject areas



When asked whether their schools had enough teachers as per the sanctioned teacher positions or as per the RTE-mandated PTR, two out of every five teachers said that their schools did not have enough teachers (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Schools without adequate number of teachers as per sanctioned positions or RTE



Teachers from schools without an adequate number of teachers were asked whether they (the school or the School Management Committee) had made any requests to higher officials about teacher shortage in their schools. The percentage of teachers who reported not having made any such requests to higher officials was 35 percent (see Table 2). When asked about reasons for not doing so, a large majority of teachers expressed that higher officials do not take such issues of teacher shortage seriously or do nothing despite being aware of this situation.

Table 2. Requests for more teachers made by schools with teacher shortage

	Yes	No	Total
Nos	82	44	126
%	65	35	100

Of the 82 teachers who reported that their schools had made requests to higher officials to address the problem of teacher shortage, 51 (62%) reported that officials had not taken any action in response to this request (see Table 3).

Table 3. Action taken by higher officials on teacher shortage

	Yes	No	Total
Nos	31	51	82
%	38	62	100

The schools in which action was taken, the response of officials to teacher shortage was directed more towards short-term solutions, such as ad-hoc appointment of para teachers and deputation of teachers, rather than towards longer-term solutions, such as deployment of new teachers (see Table 4).

Table 4. Responses of officials to teacher shortage in schools

	Nos	% of each response	% of total
Deputation of teachers	11	35	30
Ad-hoc appointment of para teachers	13	42	35
Deployment of new teachers	6	19	16
Any other	7	23	19
Base	37	31	100

(Multiple responses were allowed)

3.2 Non-teaching activities

The engagement of teachers in non-teaching activities has been a long-standing grievance within the public school system. Even the RTE takes cognisance of this and prohibits the deployment of teachers for non-educational purposes other than Census work, disaster relief duties, and central, state or local election duties. In our study, we asked teachers about the number of days they were engaged in various non-teaching activities in the previous academic year. Besides asking teachers separately about various non-teaching activities, teachers were also asked to give an estimate of the total number of days in the previous year that they had been engaged in any non-teaching activity.

The average number of days spent by teachers on non-teaching activities are higher for Census work, elections and meetings. The average number of days spent by teachers in non-teaching activity is around 75-80 days in a year when responses to various non-teaching activities are added up. Individual responses to estimates of the total number of days in a year spent on non-teaching activities are seen to be around 25 days (see Table 5).¹²

¹² This estimate is in alignment with other studies (e.g. Sankar, D., & Linden, T. (2014). How much and what kind of teaching is there in elementary education in India? Evidence from three states. South Asia: Human Development Sector; no. 67., World Bank Group., Washington, DC.). Sankar and Linden (2014, p. 26) find that 'In summary, while the official calendar in the 3 states [UP, AP, MP] prescribed 222 to 224 school days per year, the number of days in which teachers were actually present and available for academic activities ranged from 195 days in UP, 194 in AP, and only 187 days in MP. This represents a loss of one in seven official days.'

Table 5. Days in a year spent by teachers on non-teaching activities

Type of non-teaching activity	Average no of days	Median no of days	Base
Census work	16	15	48
Elections (Election duty / BLO)	12	6	193
Health schemes related work	2	2	81
Trainings	8	6	153
Meetings (periodic - cluster, block, teacher union work, community visit)	9	10	123
Bank related work	6	5	91
Requirements of higher officials (impromptu requests for data and communication of orders)	8	7	94
Exam duty	8	6	97
Miscellaneous	7	6	54
Individual estimate of days of non-teaching activity in a year	25	23	251

Based on the total amount of time spent by the teachers on different non-teaching activities, it is seen that maximum time is spent on election duties (29%) followed by non-academic trainings (15%) and administrative meetings (13%) (see Table 6).

Table 6. Proportion of time spent by teachers on different non-teaching activities

Type of non-teaching activity	% time
Census work	9
Elections (Election duty / BLO)	29
Health schemes related work	2
Trainings	15
Meetings (periodic - cluster, block, teacher union work, community visit)	13
Bank related work	7
Requirements of higher officials (impromptu requests for data and communication of orders)	9
Exam duty	10
Miscellaneous	5
Total	100

Teachers were also asked about the average number of hours spent per week in non-classroom activities. As per their responses, this was seen to be more or less evenly distributed across various activities and totalled around 13 hours when responses to various non-classroom activities are added up. The average for individual estimates of hours in a week spent on non-classroom activities is seen to be around five hours (see Table 7).¹³

Table 7. Hours per week spent by teachers on non-classroom activities

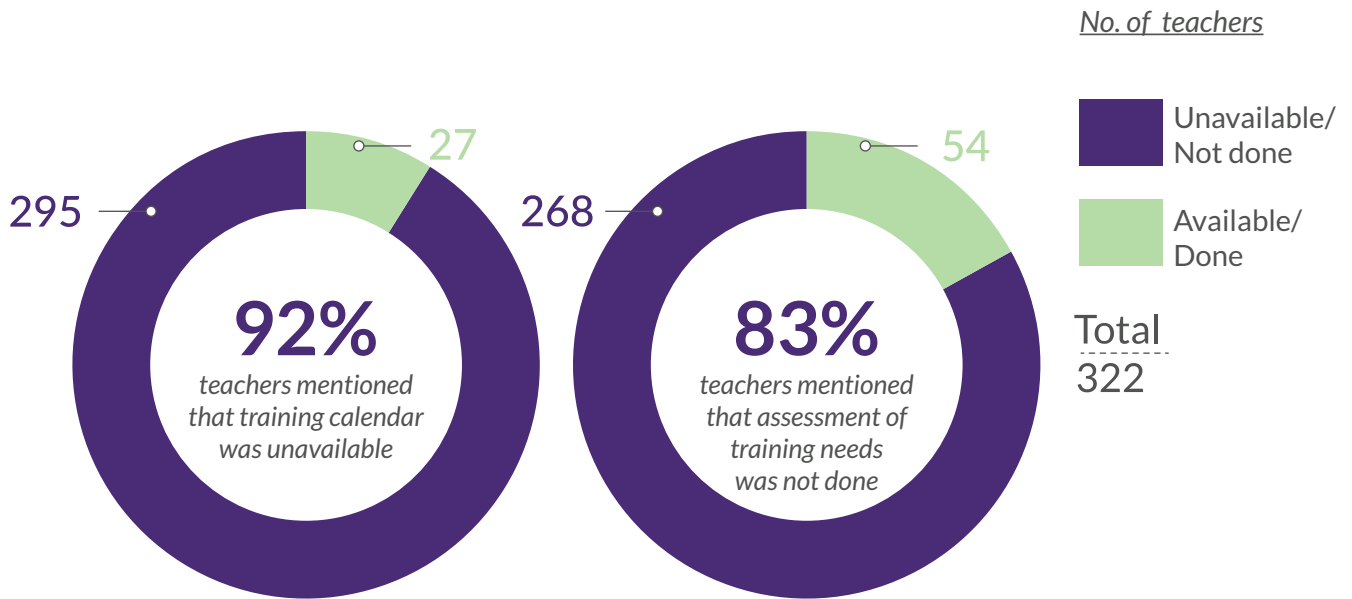
Type of non-classroom activity	Average hours per week	Median hours per week	Base
Maintaining records and registers	3	2	267
Administration of mid-day meals (MDM)	2	2	235
Interactions with parents/community	2	1	201
Events & celebrations	2	2	121
Any other	4	6	38
Individual estimate of hours of non-classroom activities in a week	5	5	276

3.3 Inattention to continuous professional development

One of the key components of any public school education system that has often been mentioned as deserving more immediate and intensive attention is that of the continuous professional development of teachers. In our survey, we had a number of questions about the opportunities for and nature of continuous professional development available to teachers. At a very basic level, on the question of availability of a structured training calendar for the year, 92 percent of the teachers reported that no such training calendar was shared with them at the beginning of the academic year by senior functionaries (see Figure 3). Along the same lines, 83 percent of the teachers reported that there was no assessment done by the senior functionaries to understand the professional development needs of teachers.

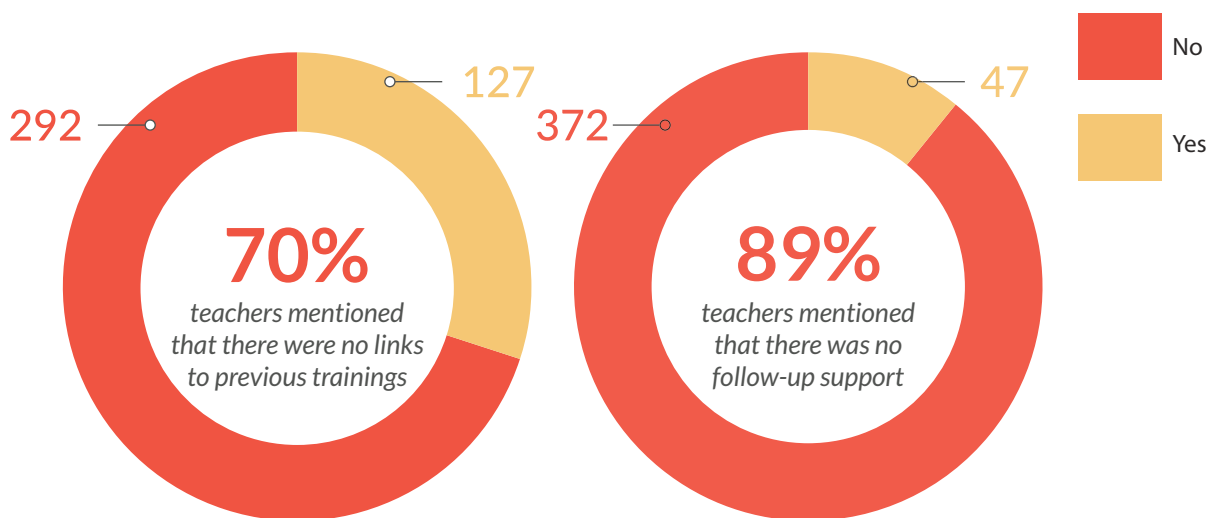
¹³ This estimate also matches the time-on-task estimates of other studies, for e.g., Sankar and Linden (2014, p.34).

Figure 3. Availability of training calendar and assessment of training needs of teachers



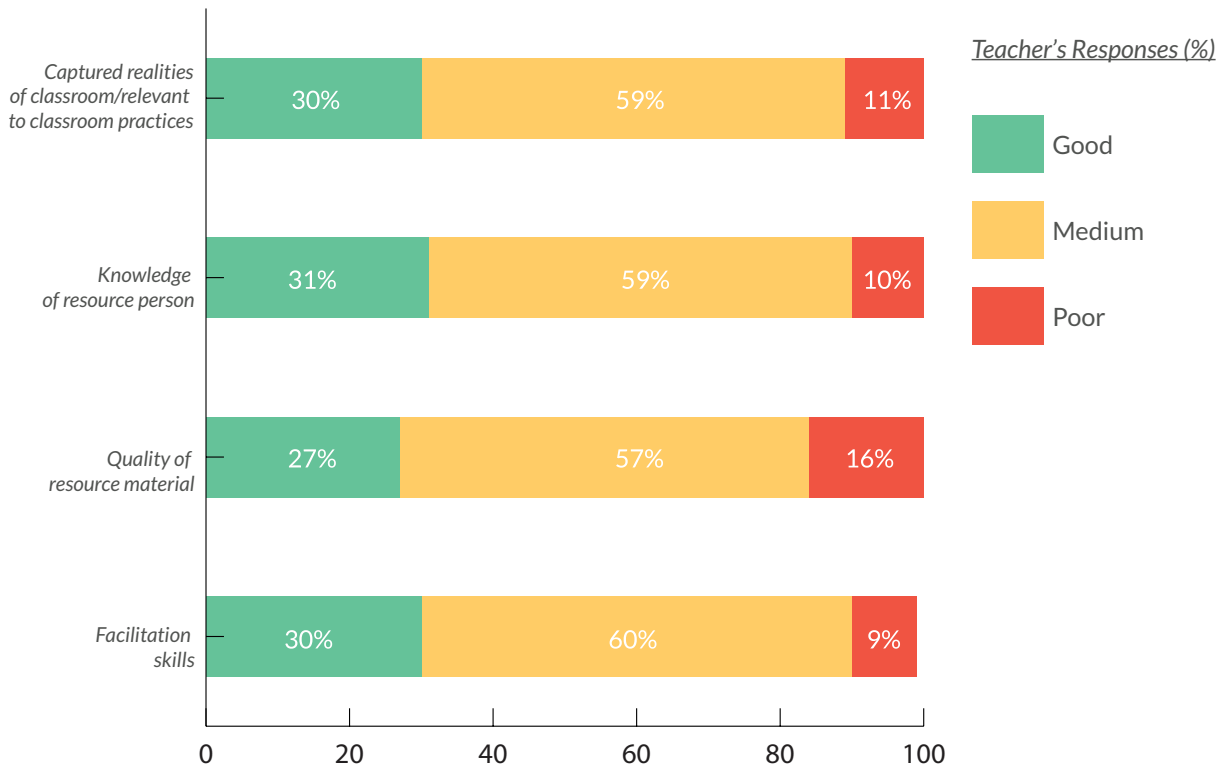
When teachers were asked about the logical linkages of in-service trainings that they had received in the previous academic year to other in-service trainings done before or after, a majority of the teachers (70%) reported that the trainings they had received did not have any such linkage. Similarly, for 89 percent trainings, teachers did not receive any follow-up support through the existing teacher support system (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Structured linkages of in-service trainings for teachers



When asked about the quality of the in-service trainings they had received in the previous academic year, most teachers (70% or more) indicated only a moderate level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction against the different quality parameters, such as the ability of the trainings to connect to their classroom practices, knowledge of the resource persons, and quality of resource materials used in the trainings (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Teachers' experience of in-service teacher trainings (%)



3.4 Inadequate school-based support and mentoring

There is an elaborate sub-district system, namely, the Block Resource Centres and Cluster Resource Centres, to provide school-based mentoring for teachers. However, concerns have been raised time and again regarding the effective use of these structures. In this study, teachers were asked about the frequency, duration and nature of school visits made by senior functionaries over the previous one and a half years. It was found that over this time period, 22 percent of the schools had not been visited by any cluster-level functionary, 22 percent of schools had not been visited by any block-level functionary and 60 percent of schools had not been visited by any district-level functionary (see Table 8).

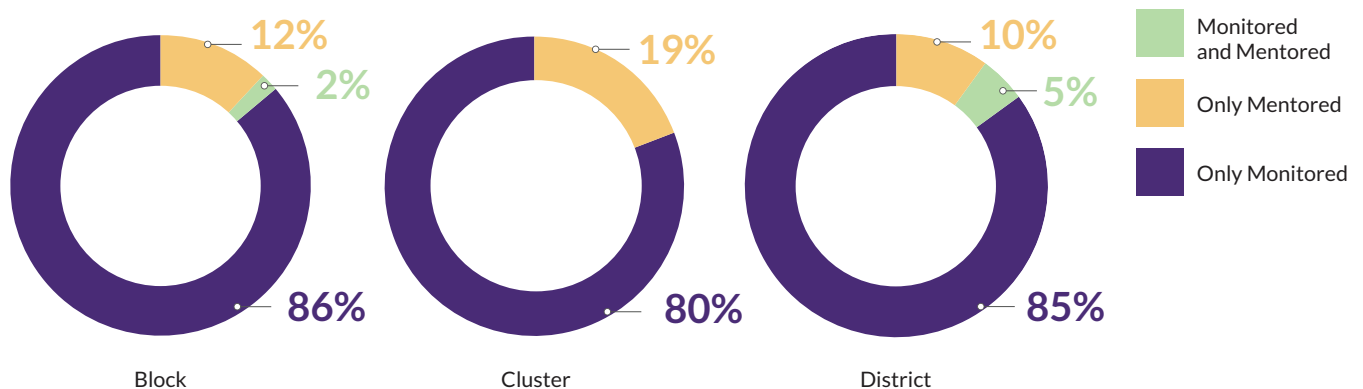
Table 8. Schools not visited by senior officials

	Cluster	Block	District	Total
Nos	71	72	194	322
% of total schools	22	22	60	

Teachers were asked about the nature of visits of the senior functionaries. The verbatim responses were recorded and post-coded to categorise the nature of visits into two broad categories—monitoring and mentoring. Short-duration visits that are focused only on inspection of records, registers and classroom observations were categorised as monitoring. On the other hand, active efforts by the functionaries to provide support to the teachers through demo lessons, substantive feedback on teaching-learning and classroom processes were categorised as mentoring.

Of all the visits conducted by various functionaries, the majority were focused on monitoring as reported by the teachers. That is, 80 percent or more of the visits by functionaries—cluster, block or district-level – are done in an inspection mode with monitoring being the main focus (see Figure 6).

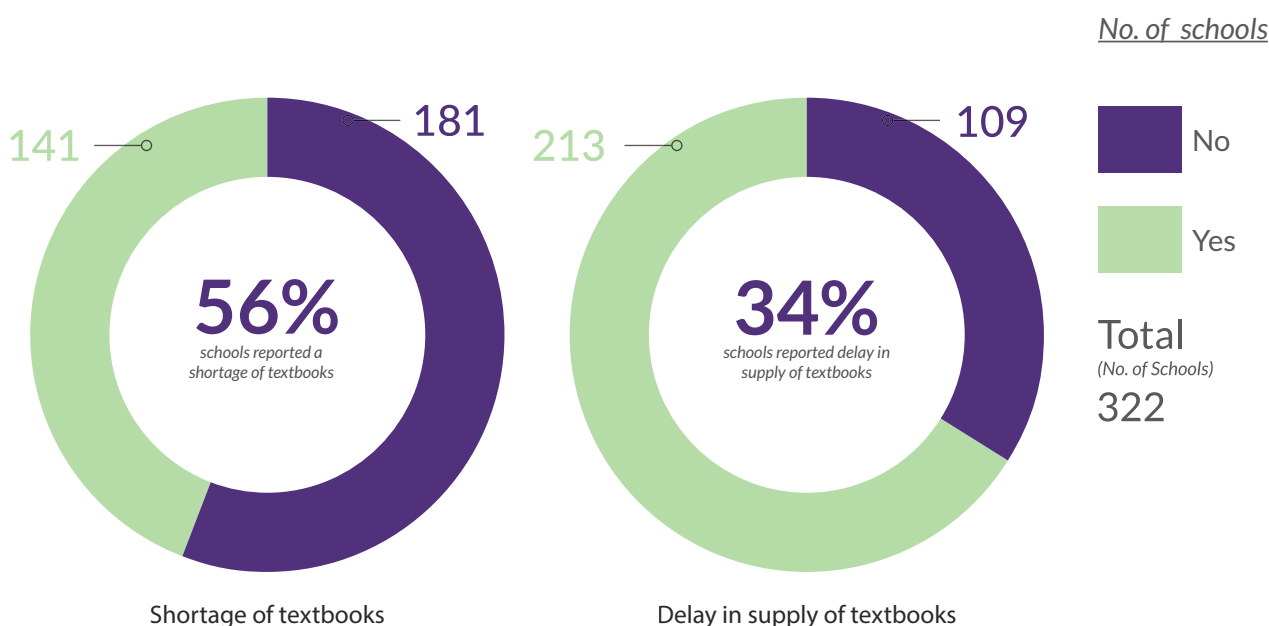
Figure 6. Nature of visits by senior officials



3.5 Challenges with supply of teaching-learning materials

Adequate and timely availability of basic curricular materials like textbooks and other teaching-learning aids is a prerequisite for any teacher to carry out their core teaching-learning work. We asked teachers about both the adequacy and timeliness of supply of textbooks to their schools. The percentage of teachers who reported that there was a shortage in the supply of textbooks in their schools in the previous academic year was 56 percent. On timeliness of supply, teachers reported that in 34 percent schools there was a delay in terms of all students receiving their textbooks (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Adequate supply of textbooks in schools



When teachers were asked whether they received any support from the higher levels of the system for TLMs in schools, 61 percent responded that they did not receive any support (see Table 9). The main support that teachers receive for TLMs is seen to be in the form of financial provisions for procuring/making TLMs. Even the monetary support provided for TLMs was found to be inadequate by most teachers, that is, 68 percent teachers who had indicated that financial support for TLMs was provided by senior officials (n=117), deemed the amount inadequate (Table not shown).

Table 9. Support and types of support received by teachers for TLMs

<i>Support received for TLMs</i>	Yes	No	Total
Nos	125	197	322
%	39	61	100

<i>Type of support for TLMs</i>	Nos	% of each response	% of total
Direct provision of TLMs by department	10	8	8
Money provided for procuring/making TLMs	117	94	90
Officials worked with teachers to prepare TLMs	3	2	2
Base (Multiple responses were allowed)	130	125	100

4. Concluding remarks

The study underscores the lack of support public school teachers receive for their core teaching-learning work from within the public education system. At a broader level, the study sharply illustrates the key concerns around teachers' work voiced in the report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy 2019. These include teacher shortages across many lower primary and upper primary schools; loss of classroom teaching-learning engagement for teachers due to demands of non-teaching activities; absence of processes and opportunities for continuous professional development of teachers; ineffective institutional system for school-based support and mentoring; and, inadequate and untimely supply of textbooks. It is not surprising, then, that such a basic lack of prerequisites for the teacher cadre cannot produce highly effective teachers across the public school system.

The findings of the study also question ideas of policy reforms related to teachers' work that are overtly focused on teacher-accountability and offer solutions, such as contractual teachers, performance-pay and teacher-proofing of curricula, situating the problems within the public school system within a narrow lens of 'only teachers are to blame'. Our study directs attention to the institutional context of the public school education system and the larger public investments, both financial and in terms of political will, that are required to continually strengthen this system around the core area of teachers' work – teaching-learning.

The challenges that teachers face in terms of their everyday work are underplayed and underreported in policy discourses around the public school education system in India. This study squarely underlines such challenges and calls for policy reforms that can immediately address such challenges, continued negligence of which will have debilitating consequences for the morale and motivation of teachers who form the backbone of the public school education system in the country.

Paper 4:

Contract Teachers in India – Current Trends, Issues and Challenges

Vimala Ramachandran and Deepa Das¹⁴

Executive summary

The practice of recruiting teachers on contract has become part of the public education system over the past three decades. This is in the absence of any formal policy endorsing the same and more as a convenient, low-cost solution to address the requirement of more teachers and to fill existing teacher vacancies.

This paper, based on secondary government data, maps the current status of contract teachers in public schools by type and stage of education, their distribution across rural/urban areas, gender distribution, professional qualifications, opportunities for professional development/in-service training and issues and challenges that arise from contractual appointments of teachers in schools. The data throws up disturbing patterns with reference to the presence of contract teachers in the public education system.

- Contract teachers have steadily increased from 5,62,504 (2012-2013) to 6,32,316 (2017-2018). In 2017-18, 13.8% teachers at the elementary level and 8.4% teachers at the secondary level were contract teachers.
- One out of every four schools in India have at least one teacher on contract, with state-wise variations in the proportion of such schools.
- In 2017-18, 5,33,882 children were enrolled in primary, upper primary and secondary schools with a single contract teacher only and another 17,11,455 children were enrolled in primary, upper primary and secondary schools with two contract teachers only.
- 79.2 percent of “small schools” function with all teachers on contract, making them the most disadvantaged schools.
- Enrolment of children in schools having only contract teachers is skewed heavily towards rural areas where 95.83 percent of children study.

¹⁴ This article is based on the full report: Ramachandran, Vimala, Deepa Das, Ganesh Nigam and Anjali Shandilya. 2020. Contract Teachers in India: Recent Trends and Current Status. Study supported by Azim Premji University, Bangalore. <https://azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/SitePages/pdf/ContractTeachersReport.pdf>

- Schools meant for the most deprived, run by the Ministry of Labour (child labour) and the Social Welfare Department have 41.6 and 22.5 percent teachers on contract, respectively.
- Poor teacher recruitment standards are visible in many states with the persistence of teacher vacancies, particularly related to subject teachers, along with a concurrent surplus of teachers in the system.
- Around 30% of contract teachers were without professional qualifications in 2017-18. Only 22.9 percent of contract teachers in the country have been provided the opportunity of professional development through in-service training.

The study clearly illustrates that the practice of hiring contract teachers has a deeply detrimental effect on the overall effectiveness of the public school education system. Therefore, it must end, to be replaced by a comprehensively designed teacher recruitment and tenure system for all teachers in the system, as suggested by the Report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy submitted in 2019 and the National Education Policy 2020.



1. The emergence of contract teachers

All education policies of Independent India – the policies of 1968¹⁵, 1986¹⁶ and the NEP 2020¹⁷ – underscore the centrality of the teacher for ensuring good quality education. Interestingly, none of the three policies mentions ‘contract teachers’ or ‘para teachers’. Also, there is no policy to endorse either the practice of hiring teachers on contract for specific purposes or the appointment of such teachers to perform the role of regular teachers.

The practice of hiring contract /para teachers slipped into educational practice in the 1990s. Drawing from the experiences of the Shiksha Karmi Programme (SKP) of 1987 in Rajasthan that had introduced community teachers in under-served schools, states like Odisha adopted the model to overcome serious teacher shortage. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994, extended the practise of hiring contract teachers. This practice continued under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Samagra Shiksha (SS) through funding provisions for contract teachers. This gave rise to disparities in recruitment processes, service rules, tenure and payment.

Contract teachers gained in popularity because their engagement was seen as an immediate measure to address teacher shortages by following a far simpler process of recruitment within a short time, without having to go through arduous processes of getting teacher posts sanctioned and adding to the state’s/UT’s financial burden.

Consequently, the number of contract teachers in India’s education system has steadily grown from 3,16,091 at the elementary level in 2010-11 to 6,32,316 together at the elementary and secondary levels by 2017-18 (UDISE, various years). Rigorous monitoring for compliance with norms for pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) mandated in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 contributed to hiring more contract teachers as they were easy to deploy without any long-term financial liability. However, one must add that the entry norms set by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in 2010 tried to ensure only those with basic qualifications and/or having cleared the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) were hired.

Schools also hire part-time teachers, as evident in the UDISE data. A study on Teacher Workforce (Ramachandran et al 2018) showed that part-time teachers were appointed for subjects like physical education, arts and craft, music and vocational education in many of the nine states it studied. States/districts with a shortage of subject teachers, especially mathematics, science and commerce, appointed retired teachers and other qualified people on a part-time basis for secondary and higher secondary schools. (Ramachandran et al 2018)

15 The 1968 policy (Para 4 (2)) *“Of all the factors which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the teacher is undoubtedly the most important... Their emoluments and other service conditions should be adequate and satisfactory having regard to their qualifications and responsibilities.”* (NPE 1968, GOI).

16 The 1986 policy states *“The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers... The pay and service conditions of teachers have to be commensurate with their social and professional responsibilities and with the need to attract talent to the professional.”* (Paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2 of NPE 1986 Modified in 1992, MRHD, GOI).

17 NEP 2020: *The teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. (p. 3, NEP 2020) According to the NEP 2020 one of the fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions within it is: teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions (p. 5)*

In 2019-20, the Project Approval Board for SS (MHRD, GOI) approved 66,463 part-time teachers for the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), residential schools/hostels and vocational education. Approvals were also made for ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Digital Initiatives, sports and physical education, training in martial arts and self-defence and special training, all of which attract engagement of contract teachers. A part of the lump-sum budget (usually allocated per school) is utilised to hire the services of part-time teachers/instructors.

This paper seeks to map the current status of contract teachers in government schools by type and stage of education, their distribution across rural/urban areas, gender distribution, professional qualifications, opportunities for professional development/in-service training and issues and challenges that arise from contractual appointments in schools. It is based on secondary sources, primarily government data, such as the UDISE and minutes of the Project Approval Board for Samagra Shiksha (SS), MHRD, GOI. The analysis is expected to bring into focus the areas of action required to be taken by governments to streamline the recruitment, service rules, entitlements and opportunities of professional growth of teachers as articulated in both the Report of the Kasturirangan Committee for the Draft NEP of 2019 and the recently announced NEP 2020.

2. Teacher vacancies and non-availability of subject-teachers

The need to hire teachers on contract can be linked to teacher vacancies and skewed PTRs. The year 2018-19 saw 11.7 percent vacancies against the sanctioned posts of teachers (Table 1). Of the 1,764,956 posts of teachers under SS, 19.1 percent posts were vacant and 8.8 percent of teacher posts under the states/UTs were vacant¹⁸. States like Bihar (1,26,740 i.e., 31.5%), Chhattisgarh (38,039 i.e., 71.8%), Jharkhand (56,299 i.e., 45.9%), Madhya Pradesh (34,556 i.e., 19.3%), Punjab (1,049 i.e., 9.8%), Rajasthan (13,334 i.e., 10.9%), Uttar Pradesh (1,33,911 i.e., 53.5%) and West Bengal (32,861 i.e., 16.4%) had significant numbers and proportions of teacher posts lying vacant against those sanctioned under SS. Though reasons for this vary from state to state, their fiscal situation could be a deciding factor for their ability/inability to fill the sanctioned posts of teachers. States/UTs argue that the closure of SS would shift the total salary burden of teachers to the state exchequer. To avert such an eventuality, they are perhaps prompted to hire contract teachers through SS funds and are also reluctant to regularise the appointments made under SS over the long-term. In the Teacher Workforce study (Ramachandran et al, 2018) a number of other state-specific reasons, like recruitment processes being held up in court, lack of proactive effort by state governments to fast track recruitment processes and apathy, were identified as reasons for hiring contract teachers.

¹⁸ The type of posts under the states/UTs and SS are the same. Only the funding sources are different, i.e., either by the states/UTs or SS.

Table 1. Status of elementary teachers by state/UT 2018-19

State/UT	Sanctioned Post			Working			Vacancies		
	By State	Under SS	Total	By State	Under SS	Total	By State	Under SS	Total
Andaman & Nicobar	2,963	206	3,169	2,540	150	2,690	423	56	479
Andhra	89,287	24,353	1,13,640	78,672	24,353	1,03,025	10,615	0	10,615
Arunachal Pradesh	6,717	7,342	14,059	6,717	6,850	13,567	0	492	492
Assam	1,36,753	45,686	1,82,439	1,27,118	32,469	1,59,587	9,635	13,217	22,852
Bihar	1,90,497	4,02,044	5,92,541	1,04,431	2,75,304	3,79,735	86,064	1,26,740	2,12,806
Chandigarh	2,894	1,390	4,284	2,462	1,390	3,852	432	0	432
Chhattisgarh	1,10,782	52,946	1,63,728	1,10,229	14,907	1,25,136	553	38,039	38,592
Daman & Diu	483	118	601	267	118	385	216	0	216
Delhi**	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	858	946	1,804	766	877	1,643	92	69	161
Goa	2,037	179	2,216	2,037	179	2,216	0	0	0
Gujarat	1,63,418	53,688	2,17,106	1,63,418	49,469	2,12,887	0	4,219	4,219
Haryana	52,696	13,435	66,131	50,493	13,435	63,928	2,203	0	2,203
Himachal	40,441	5,556	45,997	38,446	5,556	44,002	1,995	0	1,995
Jammu & Kashmir	57,830	43,471	1,01,301	52,816	41,343	94,159	5,014	2,128	7,142
Jharkhand	64,187	1,22,678	1,86,865	50,190	66,379	1,16,569	13,997	56,299	70,296
Karnataka	1,53,726	29,057	1,82,783	1,51,290	19,719	1,71,009	2,436	9,338	11,774
Kerala	1,23,457	2,925	1,26,382	1,23,457	1,554	1,25,011	0	1,371	1,371
Lakshadweep	699	32	731	649	32	681	50	0	50
Madhya Pradesh	1,84,171	1,78,928	3,63,099	1,44,372	1,44,372	2,88,744	39,799	34,556	74,355
Maharashtra	3,09,414	15,387	3,24,801	2,85,851	15,387	3,01,238	-	-	-
Manipur	12,963	3,235	16,198	12,963	2,889	15,852	0	346	3,468
Meghalaya	9,215	12,541	21,756	9,215	12,541	21,756	0	0	0
Mizoram	0	2,228	2,228	0	2,193	2,193	0	35	35
Nagaland	13,866	3,464	17,330	13,866	3,147	17,013	0	317	317
Odisha	1,36,669	92,337	2,29,006	1,36,669	92,337	2,29,006	0	0	0
Puducherry**	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Punjab	62,375	10,661	73,036	61,326	9,612	70,938	1,049	1,049	2,098
Rajasthan	1,61,392	1,22,024	2,83,416	1,38,150	1,08,677	2,46,827	23,242	13,334	36,576
Sikkim	8,010	405	8,415	8,010	405	8,415	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	1,12,893	35,020	1,47,913	1,10,531	35,020	1,45,551	2,362	0	2,362
Telangana	92,453	14,277	1,06,730	89,782	14,277	92,242	2,671	0	2,671
Tripura	29,021	6,070	35,091	25,177	5,478	30,655	3,844	592	4,436
Uttar Pradesh	3,29,174	2,50,448	5,79,622	2,82,611	1,16,537	3,50,125	47,087	1,33,911	1,80,998
Uttarakhand	35,144	10,909	46,053	30,589	8,459	39,048	4,555	2,450	7,005
West Bengal	2,53,890	2,00,970	4,54,860	2,53,890	1,68,109	4,21,999	0	32,861	32,861
Total	29,50,375	17,64,956	47,18,331	24,37,451	12,93,524	39,01,684	2,58,334	3,37,508	5,51,879

Source: PAB Minutes for SS 2019-20, MHRD, GOI

* Figures are for the combined numbers of elementary, secondary and senior secondary teachers

** Data not available

Note: The totals in the data does not add up because of the data discrepancies in the PAB minutes.

Jammu and Kashmir is the state for the data in this report.

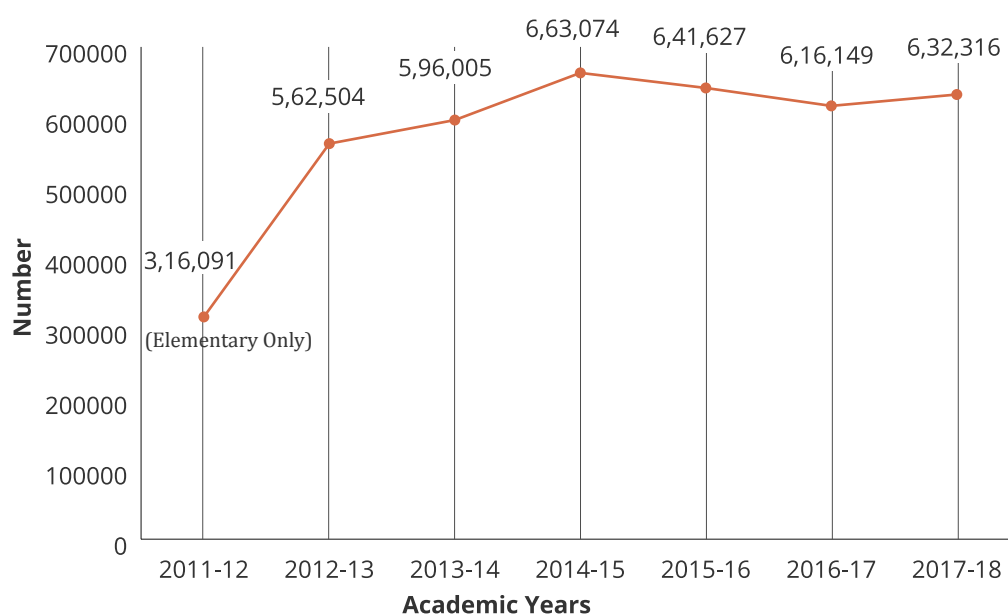
Several states are without three subject teachers in more than one-fifth of their upper-primary schools¹⁹ (PAB Minutes, SS 2019-20). The worst scenario is in Uttar Pradesh with 90 percent upper-primary schools without subject teachers, followed by Maharashtra (80%), Jammu & Kashmir (70%), Madhya Pradesh (69%), Jharkhand (57%), Rajasthan (53%) and Uttarakhand (42%). In Uttar Pradesh 41 percent primary and 42 percent Upper Primary Schools have high PTR and 90 percent Upper Primary Schools are without three subject teachers. At the same time, there are 78,372 surplus teachers in Uttar Pradesh at the elementary level! *This could point to the possibility of extraneous reasons for not recruiting teachers as per requirement.* The Teacher Workforce Study argues that teacher recruitment is not done in line with the requirement of schools, and Head Masters (HM) and block-level officials are not consulted when teachers are deployed (Ramachandran et al, 2018).

Of the 14 states that do not have four subject teachers in secondary schools, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have more than half their schools without four subject teachers. Jharkhand has 2 percent, Jammu & Kashmir 10 percent, Madhya Pradesh 12 percent, Punjab 6 percent, Rajasthan 13 percent, Uttar Pradesh 5 percent and West Bengal 28 percent schools with all four subject teachers (PAB Minutes, SS, 2019-20).

3. Contract teachers: Trends over time

The number of contract teachers peaked in 2014-15 when it reached 663,074 (Figure 1 and 2). Despite a declining trend since, the number has remained above the 6,00,000 mark until 2017-18 and constitutes 12.7 percent of teachers (Figures 1 & 2).

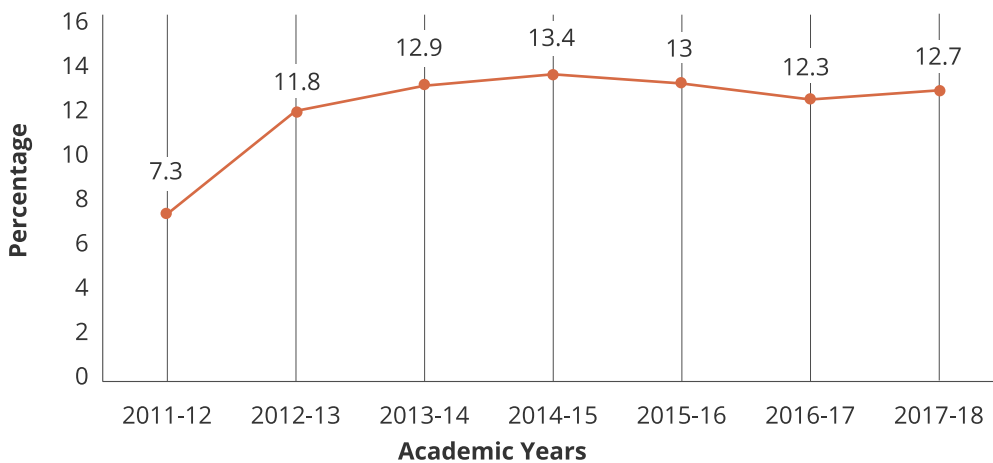
Figure 1. Number of contract teachers, India



Source: UDISE, various years

19 For more details, see Ramachandran et al (2020).

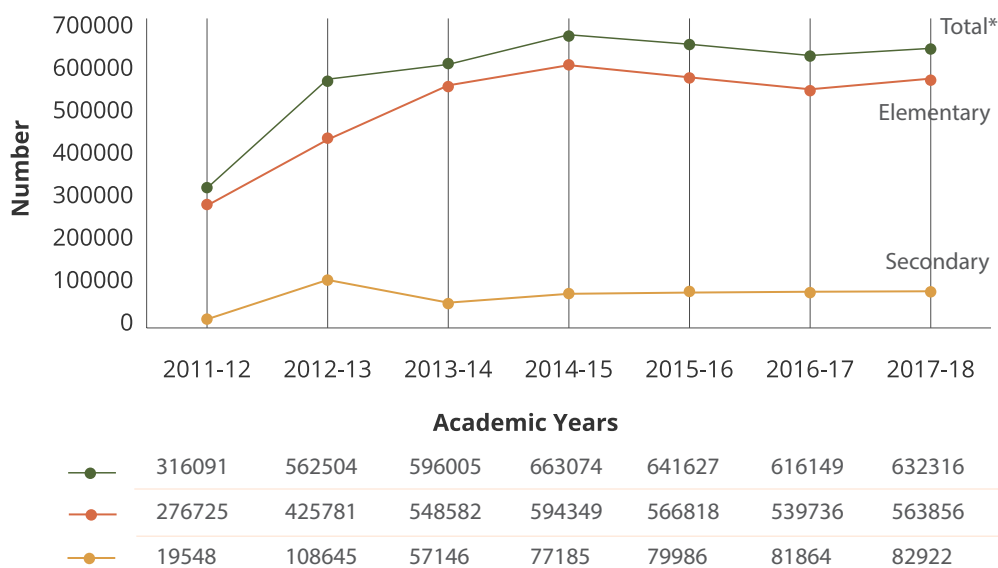
Figure 2. Percentage of contract teachers to total teachers



Source: UDISE, various years

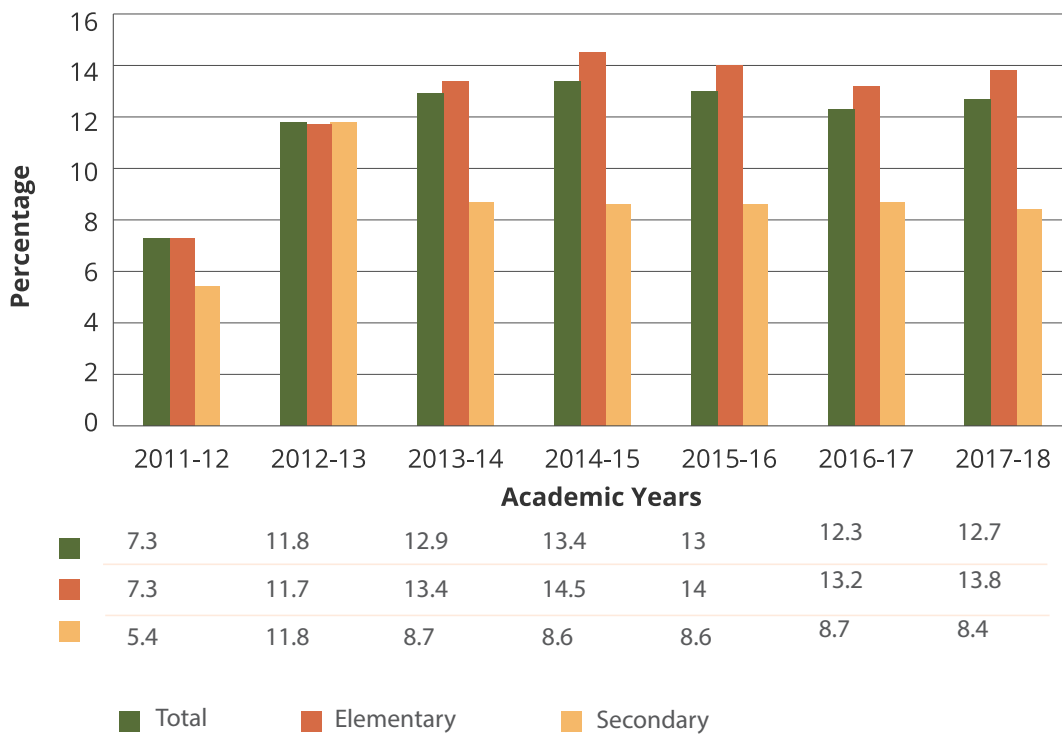
Across elementary and secondary levels of education, there is a huge gap in the number of contract teachers as evident in Figures 3 and 4. There are many more contract teachers at the elementary level as compared to the secondary. This could be attributed to the increase in enrolment of students and number of elementary schools from 1990 onwards, as RMSA was launched only in 2009 and the expansion of secondary schools and increase in enrolment started only after that. Even after this increase, a significant gap exists in the numbers of schools at the elementary and secondary levels as also enrolment. Equally, many states do not follow the practice of hiring contract teachers at the secondary level. All these factors combined could possibly explain the gap in the number of contract teachers at the elementary and secondary levels.

Figure 3. Year-wise number of contract teachers in government schools by stage of education



Source: UDISE, various years

Figure 4. Year-wise percentage of contract teachers in government schools by stage of education



Source: UDISE, various years

The state/UT-wise numbers and proportion of contract teachers presented in Tables 2 and 3 reflect significant variations. Proportionately, contract teachers may appear relatively low in states like Uttar Pradesh, but their number at 1,08,000 is quite high.

Table 2. State-wise percentage of teachers on contract to total teachers by stage of education, 2017-18

State/UT	Pr.	U.Pr.	Pr.+ U.pr.	Sec	HSc	U.Pr.+ Sec	Sec.+ HSc	N.A.	Total
Chhattisgarh	0.01	0.01	4.26	0.43	0.07	4.92	0.21	-	0.06
Madhya Pradesh	0.14	0.14	-	0.14	0.12	59.09	11.01	-	0.14
Karnataka	0.18	0.35	-	0.74	0.48	-	-	25.00	0.36
Gujarat	0.08	0.93	-	5.47	5.67	36.36	39.13	-	0.59
Rajasthan	1.71	0.30	0.26	0.08	0.06	-	0.67	-	0.82
Maharashtra	0.42	1.35	4.75	5.38	7.71	7.41	13.64	-	0.88
Puducherry	1.52	2.67	2.13	1.44	5.48	2.83	8.77	-	2.70
Manipur	1.86	4.97	9.45	3.00	3.99	7.76	23.53	-	2.90
Andhra Pradesh	0.37	3.14	12.45	4.35	35.73	6.50	5.95	-	3.18
Uttarakhand	2.41	0.58	2.52	4.54	8.92	5.13	14.15	4.35	3.73
Tamil Nadu	0.90	10.44	1.67	0.96	0.74	0.67	5.26	-	3.84
Kerala	5.80	4.58	4.88	4.40	7.15	2.63	3.51	-	5.49
Jammu & Kashmir	8.41	5.64	-	0.69	4.38	-	-	-	5.65
Andaman & Nicobar	1.50	9.81	50.00	7.75	4.04	36.11	38.46	-	6.40
Nagaland	6.24	7.53	9.85	24.07	8.87	35.63	15.79	10.00	9.11
Goa	7.16	7.34	-	10.92	39.01	-	-	-	10.18
Bihar	12.68	11.46	12.35	12.38	6.61	3.32	11.80	-	11.78
Haryana	12.56	14.93	6.67	14.17	12.45	26.38	11.51	-	14.36
Tripura	14.65	24.50	47.06	7.30	0.53	4.00	2.94	-	14.57
Telangana	11.60	25.38	55.24	27.12	40.95	13.78	25.52	-	15.56
Assam	22.42	9.02	26.46	13.64	3.68	12.32	4.76	-	16.36
Punjab	17.51	26.77	-	16.36	9.94	-	-	-	18.50
Uttar Pradesh	24.75	5.62	-	1.78	2.56	4.94	8.11	-	18.69
West Bengal	25.46	28.12	21.43	0.58	1.91	1.03	1.57	3.83	21.48
Lakshadweep	17.41	14.88	28.93	14.11	46.84	11.00	43.37	-	23.38
Delhi	17.30	38.81	-	21.83	24.08	-	-	-	25.28
Chandigarh	28.64	33.57	32.48	23.13	15.68	30.82	27.90	13.53	27.87
Himachal Pradesh	18.29	38.87	-	35.63	25.81	38.01	51.23	-	28.16
Mizoram	23.97	31.19	-	36.93	26.39	-	-	-	29.30
Sikkim	21.29	41.92	-	44.08	54.34	-	-	-	35.19
Daman & Diu	35.88	36.45	-	33.82	38.27	27.78	46.15	-	35.86
Odisha	38.82	40.66	41.69	36.08	10.99	31.45	20.18	-	38.63
Arunachal Pradesh	56.25	55.67	49.42	31.39	11.36	42.39	43.30	-	50.46
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	44.96	67.43	-	54.08	69.52	-	-	-	54.99
Jharkhand	64.46	55.95	49.54	6.14	7.76	29.66	6.45	-	57.05
Meghalaya	51.74	88.41	15.38	43.56	11.84	22.22	8.51	-	65.29
Total	14.48	12.09	32.60	7.85	7.27	13.60	9.98	4.25	12.69

Source: UDISE, 2017-18

Numbers tell only part of the story. As evident from Table 2, Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh have over 50 percent teachers on contract. Odisha and Sikkim with over 35 percent teachers on contract are followed by Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and West Bengal – all having more than 20 percent of teachers on contract. An increase across the years in the number and percentage of contract teachers is seen in most other states/UTs.

इहस काउन - 22131325701

दज स्वस्था - 1956

प्राथमिक शाला टेंगना

क्र.	कक्षा	अनु-जा.		अनु-जन जा.		पि.वर्ग		महायोग	
		बा.	बालि.	बा.	बालि.	बा.	बालि.	बा.	बालि.
1.	पहली	02	02	—	—	01	—	03	02
2.	दूसरी	03	01	—	—	—	—	03	01
3.	तीसरी	04	01	—	—	—	—	04	01
4.	चौथी	05	03	—	—	01	—	06	03
	पांचवी	—	04	—	—	—	—	—	04
	योग								
कुल योग								14	10

Table 3. Number of contract teachers in government-managed schools, 2011-12 to 2017-18

State/UT	Total number of contract teachers						
	2011-12**	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Chhattisgarh	1,712	846	513	387	-	76	111
Puducherry	315	286	89	102	139	176	137
Lakshadweep	90	126	107	112	193	271	263
Andaman & Nicobar	293	339	337	298	265	315	279
Goa	8	139	154	167	250	220	332
Daman & Diu	5	69	100	283	330	333	364
Madhya Pradesh	43,097	56,286	51,628	4,853	561	1,106	488
Manipur	91	653	708	936	1,207	1,075	554
Karnataka	2,458	2,628	607	1,782	791	787	784
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	303	609	445	698	1,011	1,192	1,185
Gujarat	1,329	5,153	2,526	3,188	1,531	1,249	1,254
Chandigarh	-	1,056	1,768	1,768	1,753	1,787	1,468
Nagaland	-	904	1,022	1,040	1,029	1,397	1,834
Maharashtra	-	8,937	8,206	3,842	2,718	2,301	2,325
Uttarakhand	326	1,140	1,408	1,403	3,599	3,029	2,337
Rajasthan	-	4,531	7,330	3,801	2,512	2,807	2,824
Sikkim	94	918	1,334	2,553	3,361	3,361	3,763
Mizoram	-	8,624	4,097	5,261	5,151	5,099	3,843
Kerala	106	829	2,439	2,279	2,020	2,545	3,916
Tripura	-	5,968	6,028	5,981	5,894	5,931	5,969
Andhra Pradesh	52,316	13,073	11,576	6,068	5,354	3,816	6,056
Jammu & Kashmir	9,019	13,513	14,959	17,104	14,230	10,400	6,216
Arunachal Pradesh	3,180	7,167	7,387	7,606	7,930	7,975	8,639
Tamil Nadu	2,077	1,874	1,403	10,599	14,927	24,554	9,170
Haryana	4,681	10,344	14,681	15,462	11,710	13,861	14,014
Meghalaya	8,809	12,683	12,984	13,102	13,377	13,551	15,332
Delhi	5,981	11,714	19,481	17,450	20,071	20,332	18,848
Himachal Pradesh	-	14,837	17,344	19,625	19,917	20,511	19,124
Punjab	-	16,044	29,864	28,792	36,159	35,342	21,784
Telangana	-	-	-	6,819	7,052	9,509	22,592
Assam	2,893	39,777	33,269	43,423	40,412	36,220	39,322
Bihar	26,044	42,493	66,014	1,05,063	76,418	68,909	50,926
Jharkhand	61,033	72,529	77,007	80,316	72,461	69,454	68,446
Odisha	37,955	67,283	37,444	61,655	90,568	91,181	86,590
West Bengal	4,127	32,586	43,695	52,260	1,05,714	1,01,879	1,02,854
Uttar Pradesh	47,749	1,06,546	1,18,051	1,36,996	71,012	53,598	1,08,373
Total	3,16,091	5,62,504	5,96,005	6,63,074	6,41,627	6,16,149	6,32,316

Source: UDISE, Various Years;

**Data for 2011-12 is only for elementary schools

An analysis of the PAB, SS 2019-20 shows that the primary level has the highest number of contract teachers (3,45,884) comprising 65.2 percent of the total 530,737 contract teachers approved.²⁰ Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, have together received support for 78.6 percent of the total contract teachers approved. The largest number and percentage of contract teachers have been approved for Uttar Pradesh (141,927 & 26.7%), Odisha (101,203 & 19.1%), West Bengal (94,648 & 17.8%), Jharkhand (41,655 & 7.8%) and Madhya Pradesh (37,697 & 7.1%).

A counter-intuitive insight from this study has to do with the presence of contract teachers in different types of residential schools specially opened by the government for specific groups of children or girls – for example, KGBV, Navodaya Vidyalaya, residential schools under the Education, Social Welfare or Tribal Welfare ministries/departments. Schools meant for the most deprived, run by the Ministry of Labour (child labour) and the Social Welfare Department have 41.6 and 22.5 percent teachers, respectively, on contract. Even the Sainik Schools are running with 32.4 percent contract teachers (Table 4).

Table 4. Number and percentage of teachers on contract in specific types of government schools, by management

Type of schools	Total Number of teachers			Total Number of teachers on contract			Percentage of teachers on contract to total teachers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Department of Education	22,44,970	15,98,717	38,43,687	2,85,660	3,00,760	5,86,420	12.70	18.80	15.30
Tribal Department	88,536	45,061	1,33,597	5,951	4,876	10,827	6.70	10.80	8.10
Local body	5,06,195	4,18,043	9,24,238	7,869	9,599	17,468	1.60	2.30	1.90
Other	7,389	15,608	22,997	2,909	8,987	11,896	39.40	57.60	51.70
Social Welfare	5,411	4,076	9,487	885	1,250	2,135	16.40	30.70	22.50
Ministry of Labour	103	356	459	35	156	191	34.00	43.80	41.60
Kendriya Vidyalaya	18,124	16,642	34,766	927	1,165	2,092	5.10	7.00	6.00
Navodaya Vidyalaya	6,180	2,463	8,643	393	219	612	6.40	8.90	7.10
Sainik School	845	1,188	2,033	122	537	659	14.40	45.20	32.40
Railway School	810	516	1,326	1	1	2	0.10	0.20	0.20
Central Tibetan School	115	62	177	6	8	14	5.20	12.90	7.90
Total	28,78,678	21,02,732	49,81,410	3,04,758	3,27,558	6,32,316	10.60	15.60	12.70

Source: UDISE, 2017-18

Since the KGBVs were started in 2004, they relied primarily on contract teachers as per schematic provisions (Table 5). The national evaluations of KGBVs conducted by MHRD in 2007 and 2013 reiterated this. After more than a decade since their inception, 57.6 percent teachers in the KGBVs are on contract as the states/UTs have been slow in deploying/deputing regular teachers. Many teachers in the KGBVs, according to the evaluations, were without the requisite professional qualifications.

²⁰ For more details, see Ramachandran et al. (2020).

Table 5. Number and percentage of teachers on contract in specific types of residential government schools

Type of schools	Total Number of teachers			Total Number of teachers on contract			Percentage of teachers on contract to total teachers		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Ashram	29,062	16,676	45,738	5,042	4,256	9,298	17.3	25.5	20.3
Non-Ashram (Government)	3,23,509	2,22,230	5,45,739	32,134	37,635	69,769	9.9	16.9	12.8
Private	1,733	1,638	3,371	186	233	419	10.7	14.2	12.4
Others	21,240	12,456	33,696	2,708	2,382	5,090	12.7	19.1	15.1
KGBV	4,173	18,869	23,042	1,269	12,011	13,280	30.4	63.7	57.6
Model School	4,777	3,525	8,302	510	415	925	10.7	11.8	11.1
Ekalavya Model School	489	216	705	138	112	250	28.2	51.9	35.5

Source: UDISE, 2017-18

4. Gender-based differences

As Table 6 shows, there are noticeable state-wise gender differences among regular and contract teachers. Some states/UTs have a higher proportion of women teachers across cadres; there are states/UTs where the proportion of women is lesser than 50 percent across cadres and some states/UTs have a higher proportion of women contract teachers. The difference could be attributed to higher numbers of contract teachers in certain kinds of schools. In West Bengal, for instance, women over the age of 40 years were hired to manage primary schools (known as Shishu Shiksha Karmasuchi) since 1999, where almost all teachers are women.

Table 6. Number of teachers on contract, disaggregated by gender, in government-managed schools

State/UT	Total number of teachers on contract			% of female teachers to total teachers	
	Male	Female	Total	On contract	Regular
Kerala	687	3,229	3,916	82.46	69.6
Goa	59	273	332	82.23	77.3
Puducherry	31	106	137	77.37	61.3
Chandigarh	348	1,120	1,468	76.29	71.0
Andaman & Nicobar	71	208	279	74.55	57.3
Punjab	5,755	16,029	21,784	73.58	58.6
Andhra Pradesh	1,745	4,311	6,056	71.19	42.5
NCT of Delhi	5,976	12,872	18,848	68.29	58.3
West Bengal	33,969	68,885	1,02,854	66.97	32.7
Daman & Diu	125	239	364	65.66	50.8
Gujarat	485	769	1,254	61.32	47.0
Tamil Nadu	3,583	5,587	9,170	60.93	65.5
Sikkim	1,484	2,279	3,763	60.56	47.9
Telangana	9,060	13,532	22,592	59.90	40.5
Uttar Pradesh	43,677	64,696	1,08,373	59.70	44.9
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	479	706	1,185	59.58	48.5
Lakshadweep	109	154	263	58.56	44.7
Nagaland	865	969	1,834	52.84	46.4
Meghalaya	7,407	7,925	15,332	51.69	50.6
Haryana	7,232	6,782	14,014	48.39	40.9
Manipur	288	266	554	48.01	50.8
Karnataka	410	374	784	47.70	47.8
Uttarakhand	1,245	1,092	2,337	46.73	39.7
Odisha	47,129	39,461	86,590	45.57	39.7
Arunachal Pradesh	4,719	3,920	8,639	45.38	34.6
Assam	21,513	17,809	39,322	45.29	33.2
Maharashtra	1,299	1,026	2,325	44.13	36.3
Bihar	29,717	21,209	50,926	41.65	38.3
Jammu & Kashmir	3,693	2,523	6,216	40.59	37.2
Mizoram	2,314	1,529	3,843	39.79	39.0
Chhattisgarh	67	44	111	39.64	35.5
Himachal Pradesh	11,557	7,567	19,124	39.57	37.3
Madhya Pradesh	311	177	488	36.27	32.1
Rajasthan	1,842	982	2,824	34.77	29.9
Tripura	4,363	1,606	5,969	26.91	27.8
Jharkhand	51,144	17,302	68,446	25.28	30.7
Total	3,04,758	3,27,558	6,32,316	51.80	40.8

Source: UDISE, 2017-18



5. Schools in which contract teachers are appointed

As India has more rural schools, the number of teachers in rural schools is expectedly higher. Predictably, there are more teachers on contract in rural areas as is clear from Table 7.

Table 7: State/UT-wise number of contract teachers by location and stage of education

State/UT	Rural				Total
	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	
Andaman & Nicobar	7	43	62	139	251
Andhra Pradesh	103	68	3,085	1,579	4,835
Arunachal Pradesh	2,523	3,625	1,074	409	7,631
Assam	26,000	3,939	5,229	1,555	36,723
Bihar	16,747	23,606	2,838	5,083	48,274
Chandigarh	0	16	66	169	251
Chhattisgarh	1	5	1	62	69
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	182	595	62	170	1,009
Daman & Diu	80	76	32	68	256
Goa	95	6	73	22	196
Gujarat	11	516	233	352	1,112
Haryana	3,980	1,674	2,249	4,107	12,010
Himachal Pradesh	4,335	2,706	2,328	9,249	18,618
Jammu & Kashmir	2,426	2,793	328	378	5,925
Jharkhand	33,422	27,717	3,526	1,346	66,011
Karnataka	98	151	303	32	584
Kerala	653	556	350	1,768	3,327
Lakshadweep	30	42	2	141	215
Madhya Pradesh	246	92	27	4	369
Maharashtra	186	445	449	270	1,350
Manipur	152	127	63	160	502
Meghalaya	6,493	7,684	412	79	14,668
Mizoram	771	1,385	558	10	2,724
Nagaland	390	401	685	85	1,561
NCT of Delhi	84	5	71	692	852
Odisha	28,710	36,250	17,924	449	83,333
Puducherry	0	0	6	44	50
Punjab	5,934	3,171	3,522	5,282	17,909
Rajasthan	2,025	601	27	80	2,733
Sikkim	516	918	1,008	1,096	3,538
Tamil Nadu	28	1,323	1,947	2,945	6,243
Telangana	4,237	2,293	8,749	3,443	18,722
Tripura	2,386	2,428	765	75	5,654
Uttar Pradesh	96,199	8,850	41	324	1,05,414
Uttarakhand	615	13	258	1,206	2,092
West Bengal	65,337	9,329	3,685	18,001	96,352
Total	3,05,002	1,43,449	62,038	60,874	5,71,363

Primary	Urban			Total
	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	
0	1	4	23	28
33	17	523	648	1,221
142	438	230	198	1,008
831	316	797	655	2,599
621	997	98	936	2,652
16	99	557	545	1,217
0	0	16	26	42
4	63	22	87	176
28	29	24	27	108
21	3	9	103	136
14	72	4	52	142
769	94	84	1,057	2,004
62	25	30	389	506
92	124	14	61	291
1,039	1,154	104	138	2,435
4	24	149	23	200
106	94	11	378	589
7	24	0	17	48
13	4	19	83	119
91	326	357	201	975
3	39	0	10	52
181	446	17	20	664
339	492	165	123	1,119
35	67	102	69	273
2,669	94	1,069	14,164	17,996
676	1,103	1,389	89	3,257
13	0	22	52	87
1,260	225	295	2,095	3,875
16	35	2	38	91
8	7	40	170	225
16	522	496	1,893	2,927
629	245	2,157	839	3,870
115	110	26	64	315
2,376	512	2	69	2,959
7	9	6	223	245
2,177	94	560	3,671	6,502
14,413	7,904	9,400	29,236	60,953

Source: UDISE 2017-18

As evident from Table 8, one-fourth of the schools across India have at least one teacher on contract with state-wise variations in the proportion of such schools. The Table also highlights states/UTs with more than 40 percent of such schools. Though 6.25 percent schools in India are functioning with only contract teachers, the situation is somewhat grim in Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya and West Bengal.

There are 57,361 primary schools in India, which accounts for 8.21 percent of all primary schools that have all teachers on contract. Further 9,021 (3.1%) upper-primary, 1,460 (2.4%) secondary and 603 (1.2%) higher secondary schools function with only contract teachers (UDISE 2017-18). Interventions by the State Departments of Education, particularly in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Odisha and West Bengal would be imperative to deliver education with equity as intended in the NEP 2020.



Table 8. Number and percentage of schools with all or any teachers on contract, 2017-18

State/UT	Total schools	Number of schools having any teacher on contract	Percentage of schools having any teacher on contract	Number of schools in which all teachers are on contract	Percentage of schools in which all teachers are on contract
Andaman & Nicobar	339	101	29.79	-	-
Andhra Pradesh	44,896	1,008	2.25	412	0.92
Arunachal Pradesh	3,447	2,931	85.03	1,345	39.02
Assam	50,965	22,316	43.79	3,206	6.29
Bihar	73,528	13,052	17.75	4,776	6.50
Chandigarh	121	116	95.87	-	-
Chhattisgarh	48,848	30	0.06	5	0.01
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	300	271	90.33	37	12.33
Daman & Diu	115	94	81.74	1	0.87
Goa	846	169	19.98	4	0.47
Gujarat	35,152	295	0.84	114	0.32
Haryana	14,450	6,350	43.94	246	1.70
Himachal Pradesh	15,465	7,504	48.52	1,267	8.19
Jammu & Kashmir	23,904	4,192	17.54	826	3.46
Jharkhand	39,703	32,717	82.40	19,763	49.78
Karnataka	50,066	263	0.53	51	0.10
Kerala	4,783	1,027	21.47	-	-
Lakshadweep	45	34	75.56	-	-
Madhya Pradesh	1,22,653	296	0.24	85	0.07
Maharashtra	66,750	848	1.27	66	0.10
Manipur	3,037	189	6.22	101	3.33
Meghalaya	7,805	5,894	75.52	4,558	58.40
Mizoram	2,582	1,615	62.55	414	16.03
Nagaland	2,080	738	35.48	10	0.48
NCT of Delhi	2,787	1,840	66.02	-	-
Odisha	56,313	41,859	74.33	5,188	9.21
Puducherry	424	45	10.61	-	-
Punjab	19,515	10,053	51.51	915	4.69
Rajasthan	66,943	2,215	3.31	680	1.02
Sikkim	853	650	76.20	7	0.82
Tamil Nadu	37,634	2,861	7.60	98	0.26
Telangana	29,845	7,762	26.01	2,675	8.96
Tripura	4,314	2,526	58.55	212	4.91
Uttar Pradesh	1,63,114	64,995	39.85	3,486	2.14
Uttarakhand	17,629	1,250	7.09	66	0.37
West Bengal	83,292	42,304	50.79	17,831	21.41
Total	10,94,543	2,80,410	25.62	68,445	6.25

Across the country, there are 79.2 percent ‘small schools’ with an enrolment of up to 90 students that function with all teachers on contract, making them the most disadvantaged schools (Table 9). This is indeed a very serious finding from the analysis of the UDISE data of 2017-18. Any effort to reform the contract teacher regime would have to start with primary schools where foundational learning takes place, particularly those with all contract teachers and those with an enrolment of 60 or less. They merit the urgent attention of administrators and policymakers.

Table 9: Number of schools having all teachers on contract, by range of enrolment and stage of education

All India	30 or Less than 30	31-60	61-90	91-120	More than 120	Total
Primary with class 1-5	18,002	21,427	9,250	4,323	4,359	57,361
Upper Primary with class 1-8 or 6-8	1,845	1,960	1,397	1,274	2,545	9,021
Secondary with class 1-10, 6-10 and 9-10	93	111	107	92	1,057	1,460
Higher Secondary with class 1-12, 6-12, 9-12 and 11-12	9	23	23	27	521	603
All Schools	19,949	23,521	10,777	5,716	8,482	68,445

Source: UDISE 2017-18

As evident in Table 10, enrolment of children in schools having only contract teachers is skewed heavily towards the rural areas where 95.83 percent of children study. The rural/urban divide clearly shows that regular teachers leverage their influence to remain in better-connected and better-resourced schools in urban areas.

Table 10. Enrolment in schools having all teachers on contract, by rural/urban

	Boys	Girls	Total	Percent
Rural India	21,18,709	23,30,937	44,49,646	95.83
Urban India	84,026	1,09,456	1,93,482	4.17
Total	22,02,735	24,40,393	46,43,128	

Source: UDISE, 2017-18

Table 11 provides state- and stage-specific differences in the proportion of students enrolled in schools with only contract teachers. At the primary level, 25.7 percent of students in Arunachal Pradesh, 37 percent in Jharkhand, 45 percent in Meghalaya, 14.1 percent in Mizoram and 14.5 percent in West Bengal; and at the upper primary level, 68.4 percent students in Meghalaya are in schools with all contract teachers.

Table 11. States with significant percentage of students enrolled in government schools with all contract teachers

UDISE, 2017-18	Primary (Class 1-5)			Upper Primary (Class 6-8)			Secondary (Class 9-10)			Higher Secondary (Class 11-12)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Meghalaya	45.10	45.00	45.00	68.40	68.50	68.40	7.70	7.50	7.60	0.00	0.00	0.0
Jharkhand	37.20	36.80	37.00	6.40	8.70	7.60	0.60	4.80	2.80	4.00	8.60	6.40
Arunachal Pradesh	26.80	24.60	25.70	5.80	19.00	13.00	0.90	2.50	1.70	1.10	1.00	1.0
West Bengal	14.50	14.50	14.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0
Mizoram	14.10	13.80	13.90	7.10	5.80	6.50	16.30	14.80	15.50	0.40	0.50	0.4
Odisha	6.60	6.40	6.50	2.00	1.90	1.90	0.60	0.80	0.70	1.20	1.20	1.20
Telangana	6.00	7.00	6.50	4.90	13.70	9.40	0.60	9.40	5.30	6.60	7.20	6.90
All India	5.30	5.20	5.20	1.80	2.50	2.20	0.70	1.30	1.00	0.60	0.90	0.70

Source: UDISE 2017-18

It is a matter of grave concern that 5,33,882 children are enrolled in primary, upper primary and secondary schools with a single contract teacher only and another 17,11,455 children are enrolled in primary, upper primary and secondary schools with two contract teachers only (UDISE 2017-18).

6. Are contract teachers as qualified as regular teachers?

The professional qualifications of teachers on contract have been improving gradually. From 41.8 percent in 2011-12, the proportion of professionally untrained contract teachers declined to 29.5 percent in 2017-18 (Table 12).

Table 12. Overview of professional qualifications of contract teachers

Academic Year	Number of contract teachers	Number of contract teachers not having professional qualification	% of contract teachers not having professional qualification
2011-12	3,16,091	1,32,037	41.80
2012-13	5,62,504	2,53,022	45.00
2013-14	5,96,005	2,46,427	41.30
2014-15	6,63,074	2,76,075	41.60
2015-16	6,41,627	2,55,409	39.80
2016-17	6,16,149	2,09,529	34.00
2017-18	6,32,316	1,86,777	29.50

Source : UDISE, various years

The proportion of contract teachers in the states/UTs without professional qualifications vary in the range of NIL to 81.2 percent. The states that fare the worst are in the range of 34.6 to 81.2 percent.

In the country, 68.9 percent rural and 85.5 percent urban contract teachers have the requisite professional qualifications. The sheer number of contract teachers without professional qualifications was huge at 1,86,777 in 2017-18. West Bengal has the largest number of teachers on contract without professional qualifications (83,551) followed by Uttar Pradesh (31,264), Bihar (17,765), Meghalaya (11,434) and Odisha (10,204). The North-eastern states (except Mizoram), Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Tripura and Uttarakhand have high proportions of professionally untrained contract teachers.

Only 22.9 percent of contract teachers in the country have been provided with the opportunity of professional development through in-service training. Four states, viz. Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Jharkhand, have provided in-service training to at least half the contract teachers. Telangana is the only state where virtually all teachers on contract have received in-service training and almost all of them have the requisite professional qualifications.

7. Concluding remarks

The future of the different types of contract teachers looms large in the wake of the NEP 2020, which has adopted a renewed outlook on teachers. Though silent on contract teachers (unlike the Kasaturirangan Committee for the Draft National Education Policy, 2019), it endorses the need for humane service conditions and uplifting the morale of school teachers. This includes participation in continuing professional development. Keeping a large proportion of teachers on contract with significantly different salary and service conditions is extremely demotivating not only for teachers on contract but also for the regular teachers. It contributes to the lowering of teacher status and creates undesirable dynamics in the school and within the system. This has a serious detrimental impact on student learning.

The biggest challenge India faces is ensuring that all children learn. The first and most urgent need would be to regularise all contract teachers, starting with schools serving children from disadvantaged backgrounds in rural areas and schools functioning with a disproportionate number of teachers on contract. Simultaneously, strategies and plans need to be designed to build the professional and academic capacities of contract teachers without required qualifications through participation in continuous professional development and other opportunities that regular teachers have access to. Schools with all teachers on contract, in particular, demand urgent attention as their contracts have not been renewed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With such a high proportion of teachers on contract across states, actions with respect to regularising them would have to be informed by the chequered ground reality concerning the number and spread of contract teachers by levels of schools, what they are engaged for, whether they are engaged part-time, their professional qualifications and even the fact that there are schools with all teachers on contract and schools with some teachers on contract and that SS has approved contract teachers in significant numbers for the academic year 2019-20.

A related challenge has to do with part-time teachers (hired locally) to meet the need for teaching subjects such as physical education, arts and craft, music and vocational education and for special

education for children with disabilities. A time-bound plan is essential to replace part-time teachers, guest lecturers, etc with regular teachers for these subjects by adopting approaches that have been spelt out in the NEP 2020, i.e., engagement of school cluster-level teachers and feasibility mapping of local-level resources who can work/volunteer for different areas of education.

To further remove the practice of hiring teachers on contract, a technology-based comprehensive teacher-requirement planning forecasting exercise could be considered to assess expected subject-wise teacher vacancies over the next two decades. This process would help to fill all vacancies with qualified teachers, including teachers already on contract and local teachers, with suitable incentives for career management and progression.

Realignment of the RTE Act and SS with the NEP 2020 would be an important first step towards eliminating any discrepancies between legal and schematic provisions, and practices that have no sanction in policy. Given the far-reaching objectives of the NEP 2020, there is a need to acknowledge that the principle of equal pay for equal work and the Constitutional guarantee of the right to equality have to be adhered to. This merits the serious attention of political leaders and administrators alike.



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