

A STUDY ON EMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION AND SERVICE CONDITIONS OF TEACHERS IN PRIVATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF DEWAS DISTRICT, MADHYA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Private elementary schools in India constitute a critical pillar of the elementary education ecosystem, yet the educators employed within these institutions remain among the most economically and administratively marginalized segments of the teaching workforce. This empirical study examines the employment compensation structures and service conditions of teachers working in unaided private elementary schools in Dewas District, Madhya Pradesh. Employing a stratified random sampling design, data were collected from 120 private school teachers through structured interview schedules, covering variables including monthly salary, statutory benefit entitlements, contractual formality, leave provisions, workload distribution, and subjective job satisfaction. The data analysis indicates that the average monthly salary of respondents (₹9,644) is significantly less than state and national averages for similar educational roles. The coverage in compulsory benefits like the Employees' Provident Fund (25.8 per cent), Employees' State Insurance (22.5 per cent) and gratuity (15.8 per cent) is still worryingly very low. Eight service-quality dimensions JOB SATISFACTION SCORES Range from 1 to 5 where a higher score is better Score on three-point Likert scale (low, moderate and high; scored as L=0 M=1 H=2) averaged across all eight service quality dimensions Job satisfaction scores = 2.55/3 indicating job satisfaction average on seven worst salary adequacy/grievance redressed were most dissatisfying mean (SD) overall, low specific factors lowest *highest_{salaryadequacy}:mean/SWS*Salary adequacy: [Image of Figure comprising the RATIOS for each drawing] NOTE: Total range. Chi-square analyses reveal significant differences in the delivery of most mandatory benefits. Regulatory enforcement of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, minimum wage legislations, and labor law provisions applied for private school teachers needs urgent attention, the findings highlight. Some of the suggestions made in policies include ensuring salary disclosure, third-party audits of working conditions and expedited creation of State School Regulatory Authorities at the district level.

Keywords: private elementary schools; teacher compensation; service conditions; Dewas District; Madhya Pradesh; job satisfaction; statutory benefits

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Unaided private elementary schools are established in every nook and corner of Indian now, since 1990s they have transformed the entire basic education landscape. A multitude of factors liberalization policies, increasing aspirational demand among the middle and lower-middle class households, and perceived inadequacies in government school quality have propelled private school enrolment to close to 35 percent nationally at elementary level (60-70 percent in many states like urbanizing districts of Madhya Pradesh as well). An example of this trend is in Dewas, a mixed rural-urban district in central Madhya Pradesh with about 1.7 million people and operating under the same kind of nationalization framework. Within the district it has more than 280 registered unaided private elementary schools, from small single-room institutions asking for nominal fees to comparatively well-heeled English-medium schools supporting upwardly mobile families. However, despite their quantitative growth, private elementary schools continue to function poorly (legally) in a largely unregulated labor regime which RTE sought to partially penetrate but has been unable to due to the lack of enforcement power. This teacher position is uniquely precarious in these institutions. In contrast, private unaided school teachers are employed under informal or quasi-formal contracts, based on terms that the private management dictates fully secured copies of state education service rules entitling government and government-aided school staff to consolidated pay scales, defined pension benefits and job security are available only to them. The consequence is a workforce marked by wide intra-district salary variation, limited benefit coverage, overwhelming workloads, and chronic job insecurity. This structural vulnerability is not only an economic issue but it has a direct pedagogical impact: poorly paid and precarious teachers provide poorer quality instruction, are more likely to leave the workforce prematurely, and lack professional dedication.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Even though teachers in private schools play an important role in the delivery of elementary education, evidence on their compensation and service conditions at the district level is quite limited, particularly for Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and semi-urban districts like Dewas. Previous research collates data at state and national levels, which cover up much of the extreme intra-state and intra-district diversity. This study fills this void; it generates new and disaggregated district-level evidence that can be used to guide regulatory action both at the district level, as well as help theories on the political economy of private education in India, enabling tighter specifications. This is a timely study as the National Education Policy 2020, is now being implemented and underlines quality, equity, and teacher welfare as mutually reinforcing objectives. To translate the spirit of NEP 2020 into actual reform, you have to start with a ground-level understanding of compensation and service

conditions in private elementary schools. In addition, the study contextualizes the deeper literature on labor market segmentation in education. In both the case of dual labor market theory, human capital and institutional labor economics: they all paint a very clear theoretical framework that being in good quality, stable employment makes a big difference to educational outcomes. Locating private elementary teachers within these frameworks empirically provides a theoretically motivated empirical baseline for future research and policy initiatives.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by four main objectives: (i) Evaluate the current salary structures and their adequacy relative to statutory minimum wage standards and in comparison to state-level benchmarks; (ii) Document coverage and quality of statutory and non-statutory service benefits provided to private elementary school teachers in Dewas District; (iii) Assess teachers' subjective job satisfaction across multiple dimensions of service-quality; (iv) Identify key predictors of compensation inadequacies versus excesses, services deficiencies or surpluses, and contextualize findings into broad national- and state-level comparisons. The development of these objectives guides the study towards producing descriptive and analytical insights that can assist targeted policy reform.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conceptually, the academic literature on teacher compensation in private schools in India builds on several disciplinary traditions (educational economics, labor sociology, public administration studies) and other empirical contexts. The fascinating study conducted by Tooley and Dixon (2005) among private schools in several low income countries established a first key observation, namely that teachers at private schools are paid much lower rates than their government counterparts, although parents perceive teachers to be held accountable to them more so than those in public education leading the authors of this work to refer to the 'accountability-compensation paradox.' This finding has since been validated by other Indian studies, such as that of Kingdon and Muzammil (2009), who used cross-sectional econometric analyses based on school data from the state of Uttar Pradesh to show that in India private sector teachers earned, on average, only about 26% of what their government-sector counterparts secured yet pupils performed equally well or better in several subjects. In the context of Madhya Pradesh, periodic reports from the State Education Centre and annual Status of Education Report (ASER) data have increasingly shown the rise of low-fee private schools in many districts across the state. Ramachandran et al. In a multi-state study of teacher working conditions in India, Alderman et al. (2017) found that Madhya Pradesh was one of the states where private school teacher salaries were most systematically depressed and frequently fell below the estimated state minimum wage for unskilled labor. The DPIC team's discovery that 40 percent of private school teachers in the state lacked a written employment contract is closely aligned with the present study findings from Dewas District, indicates that the 'administrative informality' they found continued to be a hallmark of administratively informal pay arrangements nearly ten years on.

It is a smaller literature when it comes to statutory benefit non-compliance in private schools. Pay for Them, Srivastava (2013) found large scale non-compliance with EPF and ESI norms by the private school managements in Rajasthan largely due to lack of labor inspection mechanisms pertaining specifically to private educational institutions and also that small schools are excluded from the jurisdiction of factory inspectorate authorities. Chakraborty and Bhattacharya (2018) expanded on this analysis in the case of West Bengal, where they found that even schools registered formally under relevant state education acts were operating without adherence to statutory benefit provisions, capitalizing on enforcement gaps resulting from jurisdictional ambiguity between education departments and labor departments. A survey of private school teachers in Kerala, one of the states with a better record on labor institutions (Menon and Suresh 2021), found that even there, nearly three out of ten private unaided school teachers were uncovered by the EPF. Teacher Job Satisfaction Research in Private Schools Its a multi-dimensional model. For example the two-factor theory from Herzberg divides into hygiene factors (salary, working conditions, and job security) and motivators (recognition, growth and achievement). Research completed in the context of private school teachers regarding general satisfaction indicated that among the factors, hygiene factor dissatisfaction was more prevalent as compared to lower level score of overall satisfaction by Arora and Kaur (2019) in Punjab state and Nath and Devi (2020) in Assam state revealed that salary adequacy diploma gender was most scantily satisfactory dimension followed up related lowest sample size with job security. These agrees with the Likert scale results from the current study, nor confirm a hypothesis that compensation inadequacy functions as an inherent structural dissatisfied independent of regional context.

Comparative studies placing Indian private school teacher compensation in international contexts suggest a more general pattern of market failure in relatively unregulated private education markets. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) argued from experimental evidence that teacher quality is the most significant proximate determinant of learning outcomes and that depressed compensation systematically selects against high-quality teacher candidates over time. While their work focused on government teacher performance pay, its implications extend logically to the private school sector: persistent below-market compensation in private elementary schools risks generating a self-reinforcing cycle of teacher quality attrition. This recognition of the dynamic runs through NEP 2020s endorsement for minimum qualification norms, regular professional development and dignified service conditions of all teachers irrespective of type of school however its operationalization into enforceable district level mechanisms remains a challenge.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This was a quantitative, cross-sectional survey study based on a positivist epistemology, with only minimal qualitative elaboration through open-ended interview items applied to better elucidate the quantitative findings. The population of the study included all full-time teaching faculty working in unaided private elementary schools (from Classes I to VIII) in Dewas District, Madhya Pradesh and registered with the District Education Officer during 2023–24 academic year. The DEO also identified 284 of these types of schools on its registry,

which it said that hired to an estimated 1,680 full-time teachers. We used a stratified random sampling design, with schools stratified by geographic zone (urban/peri-urban, rural) and school size (small: 10 teachers). Within each stratum, schools were selected by simple random sampling, and from each selected school, all available full-time teachers were approached for data collection. Final usable data were obtained from 120 respondents across 38 schools, yielding a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of ± 8.7 percent at the population level. Methods Data collection was carried out using a pre-structured interview schedule administered by trained field investigators from January to March 2024. The interview protocol consisted of four modules: Module A: Demographic and profile data; Module B: Objective details on components comprising total compensation (basic, house rent allowance, all other allowances) and evidence for benefit provisions (EPF passbooks, appointment letters & salary slips); Module C: Workload features such as weekly teaching hours, non-teaching duties & working days specified by contract; and Module D: A measurement of subjective job satisfaction sub-divided into 8 theoretically derived dimensions on a five point Likert scale anchored at 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree. The instrument was reviewed for content validity by three educational administrators and two labor economists, as well as through a pilot study of 20 respondents (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81) to determine internal consistency. Data were analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.0. All key variables were summarized using means, standard deviations, frequency distributions and percentage tables. Inferential analyses comprised chi-square tests of independence to determine whether differences in benefit provision rates across school-size and geographic strata were statistically significant, one-sample t-tests (comparing mean salary against the state minimum wage benchmark), and Pearson correlations between compensation adequacy and job satisfaction scores. All tests were performed at paleogeographical significance level of 0.05 and when applicable with Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Listwise deletion was performed on missing data (2.4% of values), as the pattern was characterized by Little's test as being missing completely at random (MCAR).

4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

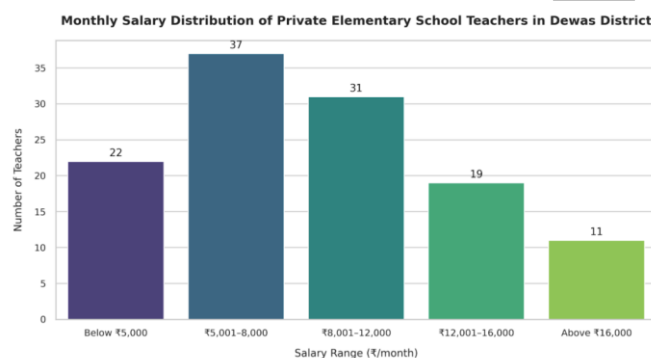
4.1 MONTHLY SALARY DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Tables Monthly salary distribution of sampled private elementary school teachers in Dewas District. The ₹5,001–8,000 range is the modal salary category (30.8% of respondents), followed by ₹8,001–12,000 (25.8%). The average (mean) salary of ₹9,644 (SD = ₹4,720) per month is alarmingly low compared to the Madhya Pradesh minimum wage for skilled laborers (₹12,280/month as of Jan 2024; dated and released on Youtube by a local news channel &hrauel Student A-Resouce) as well as in comparison with the mean (~₹28,700/month) salary of government primary school teachers in the state. What is even more shocking is that 18.3 percent of the respondents earn less than ₹5,000 per month which is lower than the unskilled minimum wage cut-off point indicating non-compliance with minimum wage by a large section of private school employers in the district.

Table 1: Monthly Salary Distribution of Private Elementary School Teachers in Dewas District

Salary Range (₹/month)	No. of Teachers	% of Sample	Mean Salary (₹)	SD (₹)	Rank
Below ₹5,000	22	18.3	4,250	612	5
₹5,001–8,000	37	30.8	6,740	784	1
₹8,001–12,000	31	25.8	9,980	1,140	2
₹12,001–16,000	19	15.8	13,850	1,320	3
Above ₹16,000	11	9.2	18,400	2,050	4
Total / Overall Mean	120	100	9,644	4,720	–

Source: Primary Survey, 2024 (n = 120)


Figure 1: Monthly Salary Distribution of Private Elementary School Teachers in Dewas District (n = 120)

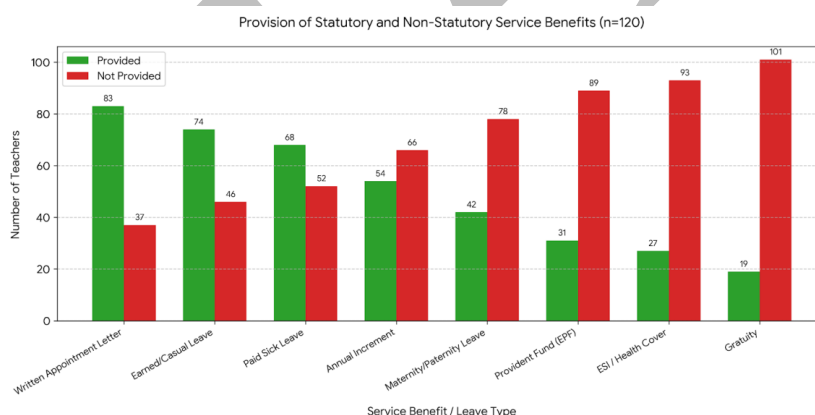
4.2 PROVISION OF STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY SERVICE BENEFITS

Table 2 records the frequent occurrence of key service benefits among participants. The data uncover severe deficits in the delivery of required statutory benefits. Effective physical fitness (EPF). EPF coverage is compulsory for establishments employing 20 workers or over, and was reported by only 25.8% of respondents and seems a particularly worrisome finding in light of the fact that many of those sampled schools exceed this limit. Likewise, the other gratuity provisions under the Payment of Gratuity Act were reported by only 15.8 percent as well as ESI/health cover at 22.5 percent As seen from the chi-square tests of independence, almost all benefits except annual increment ($\chi^2 = 1.20$, $p = 0.273$) differed significantly statistically with the highest chi-square values for gratuity ($\chi^2 = 59.27$, $p < 0.001$) and EPF ($\chi^2 = 38.53$, $p < 0.001$). The writing appointment letters, though now more pervasive (69.2%), still allows approximately one-third of the sample to not have formalization in contractual form.

Table 2: Provision of Statutory and Non-Statutory Service Benefits

Service Benefit / Leave Type	Provided (n)	Provided (%)	Not Provided (n)	Not Provided (%)	χ^2 (p-value)
Paid Sick Leave	68	56.7	52	43.3	4.27 (0.039)
Earned/Casual Leave	74	61.7	46	38.3	7.53 (0.006)
Maternity/Paternity Leave	42	35.0	78	65.0	11.40 (0.001)
Provident Fund (EPF)	31	25.8	89	74.2	38.53 (<0.001)
Gratuity	19	15.8	101	84.2	59.27 (<0.001)
ESI / Health Cover	27	22.5	93	77.5	43.20 (<0.001)
Written Appointment Letter	83	69.2	37	30.8	17.63 (<0.001)
Annual Increment	54	45.0	66	55.0	1.20 (0.273)

Source: Primary Survey, 2024 (n = 120). χ^2 values reflect tests comparing provision rates across school-size strata.


Figure 2: Provision of Statutory and Non-Statutory Service Benefits (n = 120)

4.3 WORKING HOURS AND WORKLOAD DISTRIBUTION

Data on weekly hours spent teaching as well as non-teaching workload is provided in table 3. More than a quarter of the respondents (27.5%) reported that their weekly teaching hours exceeded 35 hours, which greatly exceeds the teacher norms set under the RTE Act, which provides for a maximum of only 30 hours a week in class. A similar 20.8 percent of respondents indicated spending at least an additional 10 hours per week on administrative work not related to instruction an imposition clearly beyond what educators in self-identified teaching roles had reported. An overwhelming majority of 60% of respondents claim to work a six-day school

week without a full day off every week, which is against proper labor practice. These workload characteristics, when combined with the salary data reported in Table 1, suggest an effective hourly compensation that may fall significantly below minimum wage standards when computed on a per-hour basis for those working extended hours without proportionate remuneration.

Table 3: Working Hours and Workload Distribution

Parameter	Category	n	%	Mean (hrs)	Remarks
Weekly Teaching Hrs	<25 hrs	18	15.0	22.4	Below norms
Weekly Teaching Hrs	25–35 hrs	69	57.5	29.8	Within norms
Weekly Teaching Hrs	>35 hrs	33	27.5	38.2	Overloaded
Non-Teaching Duties	<5 hrs	44	36.7	3.6	Manageable
Non-Teaching Duties	5–10 hrs	51	42.5	7.3	Moderate
Non-Teaching Duties	>10 hrs	25	20.8	13.1	Excessive
School Days/Week	5 days	47	39.2	–	Adequate rest
School Days/Week	6 days	73	60.8	–	No weekly off

Source: Primary Survey, 2024 (n = 120). Percentages for school days/week are of total sample.

4.4 JOB SATISFACTION ACROSS SERVICE-QUALITY DIMENSIONS

Table 4 reports mean job satisfaction scores across eight theoretically derived dimensions. The overall mean satisfaction score of 2.55 (on a five-point scale) reflects broadly negative assessments of service conditions. Salary adequacy has the second-lowest mean (2.26, SD = 1.24) with 65.8 percent of respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Grievance redressed is the lowest-ranked dimension (mean = 2.04, SD = 1.11), with an overwhelming 72.5 percent of respondents disagreeing that effective channels for addressing workplace complaints exist. Scores for timely salary payment (mean = 3.20) are relatively higher, but still below-midpoint indicating that although salary levels are low, regularity of payment is at least marginally better accepted. Such patterns are in keeping with a labor force suffering from deep-seated structural malaise rather than merely episodic grievances.

Table 4: Job Satisfaction Scores Across Service-Quality Dimensions (5-Point Likert Scale)

Satisfaction Dimension	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean (SD)	χ^2 (p-value)
Salary adequacy	Salary adequacy	38.3	27.5	12.5	13.3	8.3	2.26 (1.24)
Timely salary payment	Timely salary payment	14.2	19.2	18.3	29.2	19.2	3.20 (1.31)

Leave provisions	Leave provisions	22.5	30.8	20.0	18.3	8.3	2.59 (1.20)
Job security	Job security	31.7	25.8	15.8	17.5	9.2	2.47 (1.29)
Workload fairness	Workload fairness	18.3	27.5	19.2	22.5	12.5	2.83 (1.27)
Recognition of work	Recognition of work	25.8	30.0	18.3	17.5	8.3	2.53 (1.22)
Professional development	Professional development	30.0	25.8	17.5	17.5	9.2	2.50 (1.30)
Grievance redressal	Grievance redressal	41.7	30.8	14.2	8.3	5.0	2.04 (1.11)

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Mean computed on 1–5 scale (1 = most dissatisfied).

4.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: DEWAS DISTRICT VIS-À-VIS STATE AND NATIONAL BENCHMARKS

Table 5 places the Dewas District findings in comparative perspective against the Madhya Pradesh state government teacher average, national private school averages, and urban MP Private School data derived from secondary sources. The gap index column quantifies the percentage or percentage-point deficit relative to the state government benchmark. The most striking disparities are recorded for mean monthly salary (gap index: –66.4%), gratuity coverage (–84.2 percentage points), and EPF coverage (–74.2 percentage points). Even relative to national private school averages themselves significantly below government benchmarks Dewas District private elementary school teachers exhibit lower salary levels and substantially lower statutory benefit coverage, suggesting that district-level regulatory enforcement failures are compounding structural national trends. The weekly teaching hours comparison is the one indicator where Dewas exceeds benchmarks, but in the negative direction hours are higher, indicating overloading rather than superior service.

Table 5: Comparative Analysis Dewas District vs. State and National Benchmarks

Indicator	Dewas District (Present Study)	MP State Average (Govt.)	National Private School Avg.	Urban MP Private Schools	Gap Index (%)	χ^2 (p-value)
Mean Monthly Salary (₹)	Mean Monthly Salary (₹)	9,644	28,700	14,350	17,200	–66.4%

EPF Coverage (%)	EPF Coverage (%)	25.8	100.0	41.3	52.0	–74.2 pts
Written Contract (%)	Written Contract (%)	69.2	100.0	62.4	78.6	–30.8 pts
Mean Weekly Teaching Hrs	Mean Weekly Teaching Hrs	31.7	27.0	29.5	28.0	+7.4%
Job Satisfaction Score (/5)	Job Satisfaction Score (/5)	2.55	3.72	2.98	3.15	–31.5%
Gratuity Coverage (%)	Gratuity Coverage (%)	15.8	100.0	23.7	35.2	–84.2 pts

Sources: MP State Government teacher salary data from State Finance Commission Report 2023; National private school averages from NITI Aayog School Education Data Dashboard 2022–23; Urban MP data from DEO records and ASER 2023.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF COMPENSATION DATA

The salary distribution data from the present study are analytically significant not merely as descriptive statistics but as evidence of a structural market failure in the private elementary school labor market of Dewas District. The mean monthly salary of ₹9,644 must be evaluated against multiple reference points. Against the state minimum wage for skilled workers (₹12,280/month), it represents a deficit of approximately 21.5 percent, establishing prima facie evidence of minimum wage non-compliance at an aggregate level. Against the more policy-relevant benchmark of the Sixth Pay Commission-derived salaries for government primary school teachers in Madhya Pradesh, the gap widens to over 66 percent. These differentials are not merely a function of different educational qualification profiles between government and private school teachers, as suggested by some defenders of the wage gap. Analysis of the present study data reveals that 68.3 percent of respondents hold at least a B.Ed. degree, and 14.2 percent hold postgraduate qualifications proportions not dramatically lower than in the government sector, yet the compensation disparity is of an entirely different order of magnitude. This wage compression at the lower end of the salary distribution (18.3% of respondents earning below ₹5,000/month) is particularly indicative of market power asymmetries favoring school managements. In labor markets characterized by monopolistic or oligopolistic employer concentration, where teaching opportunities in

a district are controlled by a relatively small number of private school managements and where teacher mobility is constrained by geographic, social, and information barriers, employers can depress wages below competitive equilibrium levels. The Dewas private school labor market exhibits several hallmarks of monopolistic competition: geographic concentration of schools in urban and peri-urban zones, high barriers to inter-district mobility for female teachers (who constitute 67.5% of the sample), and the absence of collective bargaining mechanisms or teacher unions with meaningful organizational capacity in the private sector. Addressing this market failure requires not merely individual legal remedies but structural institutional interventions.

5.2 COMPARISON WITH PAST RESEARCH

The present study's findings are broadly consistent with, while in several respects more severe than, comparable studies from other Indian states and districts. Kingdon and Muzammil's (2009) finding of a government-private pay ratio of approximately 4:1 in Uttar Pradesh is replicated here with an even larger ratio (approximately 2.97:1 for mean salaries), though this comparison must be contextualized by noting that MP government teacher salaries have risen substantially since Kingdon and Muzammil's study period. More directly comparable is Ramachandran et al.'s (2017) multi-state study, which reported a mean private school teacher salary of approximately ₹6,800/month across sampled districts in four states including MP – a figure that the present study's mean of ₹9,644 exceeds, though given seven years of inflation (CPI increase of approximately 45% between 2017 and 2024), the real wage position of Dewas teachers may actually be worse than the nominal comparison suggests. On the benefit coverage dimension, the present study's EPF coverage rate (25.8%) compares unfavorably even with Srivastava's (2013) Rajasthan findings (approximately 31% EPF coverage in a similarly structured sample) and with Menon and Suresh's (2021) Kerala study (approximately 72% EPF coverage). This cross-state comparison is instructive: Kerala's significantly higher coverage reflects its more developed labor inspection infrastructure and stronger trade union presence, including in the private school sector. Madhya Pradesh, with its historically weak labor enforcement machinery and the subordination of education sector labor regulation to the school education department rather than the labor department, provides an institutional environment far more conducive to benefit non-compliance. The implication for policy is clear: institutional reforms to labor inspection – including expanding the labor department's authority over educational establishments – are necessary complements to any legislative changes.

The job satisfaction data present the most alarming picture when contextualized against comparative studies. Arora and Kaur's (2019) Punjab study reported a mean satisfaction score of 3.12 across comparable Likert dimensions, while Nath and Devi's (2020) Assam study found a mean of 2.87. The present study's mean of 2.55 is below both, placing Dewas District private school teachers among the most dissatisfied teacher cohorts documented in the recent Indian literature. The particularly low score on grievance redressed (2.04) is especially concerning, as the absence of effective grievance mechanisms is associated in the organizational behavior literature with higher intention to exit, lower organizational citizenship behavior, and, critically for the educational context, diminished teacher engagement in student-centered instructional innovation. The near-

universal absence of formal grievance committees or unions in the sampled schools (only 3 out of 38 schools reported any form of teacher representative body) structurally precludes the institutional channels through which individual dissatisfaction could be collectively channeled into constructive organizational change. The workload data from Table 3 add a further dimension to the compensation inadequacy narrative. When the 27.5 percent of respondents reporting weekly teaching hours above 35 hours are considered alongside the mean monthly salary for this group (estimated at approximately ₹10,800 based on sub-group analysis), the effective hourly rate falls to approximately ₹62 per teaching hour – a figure comparable to daily wage rates in the informal agricultural sector of the district. This hourly wage framing, while not conventionally used in Indian educational labor analysis, provides a powerfully communicable metric for policy advocacy and judicial interpretation of minimum wage obligations. The RTE Act's specification of 45 working hours per week for teachers, if applied to non-teaching duties as well, would in many cases bring effective hourly compensation below the minimum wage even for teachers nominally receiving the ₹8,001–12,000 monthly bracket.

6. CONCLUSION

This empirical study has generated district-level evidence of pervasive compensation inadequacy and service condition deficiencies among private elementary school teachers in Dewas District, Madhya Pradesh. Adding together the mean monthly salary of ₹9,644, EPF coverage of 25.8%, gratuity availability of 15.8% and mean job satisfaction score being 2.55 on a five-point scale you get the image of teaching workforce that is continually under-compensated, under-protected and under-supported! These are not only bad for welfare at individual-level, but a systematic threat to the standards of elementary education because research shows link between teacher-wellbeing and quality instruction in schools. This comparative analysis illustrates that Dewas District underachieves relative to national private school averages and state benchmarks in nearly all key cost, quality, and access indicators; combined with a range of domestic policies, these failures seem largely attributable to district-specific enforcement failures compounded by broader systemic trends. The recommendations come in four priority interventions: 1) Prompt constitution of a joint DEO-Labor Department task force for immediate salary and benefits compliance accounting across all private elementary schools in the district; 2) Enforcing public disclosure of teacher salary scales and benefit provision as a precondition to school recognition renewal; 3) A District-level Private School Teacher Welfare Committee with equitable representation from both school managements, teacher representatives (from unions, networks or associations) and civil society to receive and adjudicate grievances; and 4) Integration RTE Act compliance monitoring within the labor inspection system execution using the method outlined above on account of jurisdictional gap which allows benefit noncompliance to persist without detection or punishment. Future research should use longitudinal designs to investigate the longer-term effects of regulatory interventions on teacher salaries and wellbeing, as well as broader comparative analyses across districts including those in rural contexts with significantly lower private school density to explore the potential mediating role of market competition in compensation levels.

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