



## **SALARY TOP - UPS IN EDUCATION SECTOR AND ITS IMPACT ON CORRUPTION ACTIVITIES**

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### **Abstract**

Corruption distorts access to education and affects the quality of education and the reliability of academic research findings.

The risk of corruption in education is magnified by the sheer scale of educational expenditures, both public and private. In most countries, education is the largest or second largest recipient of public funds, and employs the greatest number of public servants.

Salary top-ups are a way to increase salaries in various sectors, including in the education sector. They can be used by governments to compensate for hardship jobs or increased workloads.

Salary top-ups could be provided in the form of cash payments or in-kind benefits that a person receives over and above what colleagues and pay scale receive.

The extent to which salary top-ups can be used as an anti-corruption strategy has to be seen in the context of how salaries can reduce or increase incentives for corruption.

**Keywords:** Corruption, education, salary, top-up.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Increasingly, teachers are required to perform additional duties, which require a broad range of skills. Besides their responsibility for transferring knowledge, they now have to be able to perform a variety of tasks, such as using information technology, working in teams, assisting in integrating children with special educational needs, and contributing to school management.

The amount of the basic statutory salary for teacher at the different levels of education is decided by the top-level authority for education in almost all countries, that is so the central government. Private grant-aided schools usually receive the majority of their funding from public authorities and the salary arrangements for teachers in these schools are usually based on the same calculation methods and basic statutory salary references as in the public sector.

Private independent schools often determine their own basic salaries, considering as a starting point relevant national labour legislation/codes of practice, while the actual salaries of teachers at the public sector are result of negotiations between the employers' organisations and the teachers' unions. Salaries of teachers at public sector appear yearly in revised salary tables for the relevant collective agreement. In some countries, private independent schools determine their teachers' salaries according to a pay scale, which is different from that used in public schools, but statutory salaries in public schools are used as non-binding guidelines.

Corrupt practices of many kinds take place so that teachers can supplement inadequate salaries. Sometimes teachers can demand bribes to help with admissions, to raise exam grades, or to permit



student cheating. It is difficult to determine the causes of corruption at the education sector, but in some societies, ingrained corrupt practices at all levels influence the primary and higher education system, and inadequate salaries may be part of the problem.

## **DISCUSSION**

Corruption in the public and private spheres in any country, irrespective of its economic and political system or level of development, poses a critical threat to the enjoyment of human rights. It weakens institutions, erodes public trust in government and impairs the ability of states to fulfill their human rights obligations. Corruption and its proceeds are not confined within national borders, nor is its impact on human rights. It typically diverts funding from state budgets that should be dedicated to the advancement of human rights, including the right to education.

The public education system in most countries is largely left to the discretion of the central government. Even when education is decentralised, the state usually controls key areas such as the recruitment and deployment of teachers, payrolls and budget oversight. In some countries, wages and working conditions in general, or for particular groups of teachers, are set by collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is the process whereby workers organize together to meet, converse, and compromise upon the work environment with their employers. It is the practice in which union and company representatives meet to negotiate a new labor contract. In various national labour and employment law contexts, collective bargaining takes on a more specific legal meaning. In a broad sense, however, it is the coming together of workers to negotiate their employment.

Each country is responsible for developing its own education and training policies. It is up to the national governments to decide on the content of teaching and the organisation of education. Each government, is free to allow education matters to be dealt with at the regional or local level. Many decisions are also further delegated to universities, schools, and training establishments.

Corruption not only distorts access to education but also affects the quality of education and the reliability of academic research findings. Corruption risks can be found at every level of education and research systems, from the procurement of school resources to nepotism in the hiring of teachers or the skewing of research results for personal gain. Conversely, education serves as a means to strengthen personal integrity, and is essential for addressing corruption effectively.

The risk of corruption in education is magnified by the sheer scale of educational expenditures, both public and private. In most countries, education is the largest or second largest recipient of public funds, and employs the greatest number of servants.

Countries with high levels of corruption invest less in public services, leaving the education sector under-funded. Salary top-ups are a way to increase civil servant salaries. They can be used by governments to compensate for hardship jobs or increased workloads. The extent to which salary top-ups can be used as an anti-corruption strategy must be seen in the context of how salaries can reduce or increase incentives for corruption. Evidence in this regard remains largely inconclusive. There is, however, an emerging consensus that increasing salary may not be sufficient for reducing corruption, in the absence of effective controls and management of staff and resources.

Salary funds are better monitored when teachers know their wages and expect them to be paid (teacher salaries can represent an average of 80 to 90 % of the total education budget).

In low-income countries, public expenditures on education are especially significant compared to other public budget items. That is the reason why salary top-ups can generate warranted and unwarranted perceptions of corruption due to differences in payment, and could undermine accountability and management.



Due to perceptions of unfair payment, lower compensation level in the public sector as compared to that of the private sector is recognised as key factor in the spread of corruption.

Salary top-ups are official cash payments or in-kind benefits that teachers receive over and above what colleagues in the same grade and pay scale receive. Often, the original purpose of salary top-ups is to persuade some teachers to move to positions that the person would normally not want to accept. Employees directly involved in education sector have been motivated by financial and non-financial considerations, which have direct influence on effort, productivity and service quality. Non-financial initiatives reduce the financial compensation of workers who are posted to otherwise to non-preferred locations. For that reason, when solving emerging beneficial problems in educational sector, interdisciplinary approach needs to be introduced, due to the fact that interdisciplinary learning can help improve the problem-solving abilities of all of the professions.

Recognizing the essential role of teachers in educational advancement and the importance of their contribution to the development of man and modern society, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization adopted a recommendation concerning the status of teachers. The recommendation applies to all teachers in both public and private schools up to the completion of the secondary stage of education. The organization and structure of an education service, including that of individual schools, should provide adequate opportunities for and recognition of additional responsibilities to be exercised by individual teachers, on condition that those responsibilities are not detrimental to the quality or regularity of their teaching work.

The recommendation emphasises the various factors, which affect the status of teachers, and pays particular importance to salary. Teachers' salaries should reflect the importance to society of the teaching function and the importance of teachers as well as the responsibilities, which fall upon them from the time of their entry into the service.

## **CONCLUSION**

The basic wage or pay is the main component of compensation. Fringe benefits, cash and non-cash benefits influence the level of wages or pay. By providing a higher level of overall earnings, top-ups may provide teachers with means to ensure a reasonable standard of living for themselves and their families.

Teachers' salaries should provide teachers opportunities to invest in further education or in the pursuit of cultural activities, as well as to enhancing their professional qualification. Teachers should be paid on the basis of salary scales established in agreement with the teachers' organizations and in no circumstances should qualified teachers during a probationary period or if employed on a temporary basis, be paid on a lower salary scale than that laid down for established teachers.

It is especially important that the salary structure is planned so as not to give rise to injustices or anomalies tending to lead to friction between different groups of teachers. Whenever salary differentials are established, they should be based on objective criteria such as levels of qualification, years of experience or degrees of responsibility and the relationship between the lowest and the highest salary has to be of a reasonable order.

Salary scales for teachers need to be reviewed periodically, so it can be taken into consideration factors such as rise in the cost of living, increased productivity leading to higher standards of living in the country, or general upward movement in wage or salary levels.

Providing better payment, high level of working conditions and adopting appropriate measures regulating salary top-ups in the education sector could ensure sustainability, efficiency and productivity when delivering educational services.



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