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Motoko Akiba and Gerald K. LeTendre

13 Comparing Contract Teacher Policies in Two States of India

Reception and Translation of the Global Teacher Accountability Reform

Arushi Terway and Gita Steiner-Khamsi

Teachers College, Columbia University, New York

This chapter presents the case of contract teacher policy in two states of India to explore why global education policies resonate and what they mean in a given context. This bifocal perspective is known in policy-borrowing studies as reception and translation research. Typical research questions on reception include: why did local actors select a particular policy? Which problem was it meant, or did it pretend, to resolve? What was the “selling point” of the policy that resonated or appealed to local policy actors? Why, as Antoni Verger has asked, did they “buy” it (Verger, 2011)? Translation research, in turn, focuses on how a borrowed global education policy was locally adapted, recontextualized, or “translated.” It is common for an imported policy to be merely added to, rather than replace, existing practices and policies. However, rather than simply stating that a hybridization, vernacularization, or modification of other sorts has taken place, policy-borrowing researchers are keen to understand how exactly an import was recontextualized, reframed, or reinterpreted in a new context. Researchers that apply a bifocal perspective attempt to expand the horizon in policy studies by introducing a comparative transnational dimension. Many theories on the policy process tend to bracket the global and investigate the local policy context in isolation from wider transnational developments and reform processes. Studying the local encounter with global education policy enables us to understand the power constellations, contested terrains, and conflicting agendas in the local context that are challenged by traveling reforms such as teacher accountability or contract teacher policies.

CONTRACT TEACHER: A PANACEA FOR IMPROVING TEACHER ACCOUNTABILITY?

Others have convincingly shown that teacher accountability reforms need to be considered a global teacher policy because many educational systems have adopted such reforms, either discursively or in actual practice (see Robertson, 2012; Verger, Altinyelken, & de Koning, 2013). It is important to keep in mind that reforms become global by traveling and, as they travel, become broad, decontextualized, and ubiquitous. Robert Cowen (2009) coined the phrase “as it moves, it morphs” to summarize the changing features of global education policies that travel from one country to the next. Eventually, they are elevated to the stature of an “international standard” or a “best practice” that educational systems adopt regardless of where they originated and who the early adopters of the reform were.

Teacher accountability reforms include a wide range of policies, such as teacher licensing schemes to changing teacher evaluation systems to suspending tenure or civil service posts with contractual arrangements or short-term contracts. It is noticeable that one particular

variant of teacher accountability reform is “sold” or disseminated to developing countries: the contract teacher variant, so much so that it is seen as a panacea for curing all shortcomings in terms of teacher effectiveness, teacher absenteeism, or teacher motivation. Publications by the World Bank were, in particular, influential in spreading this particular variant of teacher accountability reform.

Education sector experts at the World Bank have been arguing that the problem with the dominant public sector teacher employment policy in most developing countries is a principal-agent problem (Bruns, Filmer, & Patrinos, 2011). The misalignment of incentives and long route of accountability creates a breakdown in the principal-agent relationship for teacher management, resulting in low-quality education. Drawing on industrial management research, Bruns et al. (2011) argue that the school administrator (principal) needs the teacher (agent) to achieve the organizational objectives (improved student learning outcome). The agent’s interest is in maximizing compensation with minimum effort, whereas the principal wants the opposite. Vegas and Umansky (2005) argue that compensation and other incentives for the teachers, as the agents, can be designed to lead them to operate in the interest of the organizational objectives.

Education experts at the World Bank draw attention to the fact that in most developing countries teachers have a fixed salary scale that is based on seniority rather than performance (Bruns et al., 2011). They point out that “good” results are not rewarded and “poor performance” is not sanctioned in systems where teachers have lifetime tenures. Hence, the solution to the principal-agent problem is to reach an optimal design of the teacher incentive structure. Translated to teacher employment policy, short fixed-term contracts based on teacher performance would achieve the education quality goal because it would bypass the misalignment of incentives that exist in traditional teacher tenure systems. “From an incentive standpoint, the absence of job stability should make contract teachers more accountable for performance” (Bruns et al., 2011, p. 19). Teachers would be rewarded for improved student learning outcome with the renewal of their contract, creating a short route to accountability by bringing the client closer to the provider. In the United States, scholars like Hanushek (2009) have also proposed policy options to identify the most ineffective teachers and “deselecting” them from the education system.

Several scholars have focused on finding a causal link between the fixed-term contract and improved student learning outcome to support the teacher accountability theory. In an experimental intervention in Kenya, Duflo, Dupas, and Kremer (2015) found that students of contract teachers had better learning outcomes as opposed to civil service teachers. Bourdon, Frölich, and Michaelowa (2009) in their multi-country study in West Africa, however, found mixed results for student learning outcome in relation to teacher contract status. Several studies in India have found either positive or no difference between teacher contract status and student-learning outcome (Atherton & Kingdon, 2010; Banerjee, Cole, Duflo, & Linden, 2007; Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2013). Kingdon et al. (2013) and Chudgar (2015), in their review of these experiments and pilot programs, have concluded that student learning outcome is generally higher for contract teachers as compared to civil service teachers; however, there is also considerable variation across contexts.

While citing the above evidence along with other World Bank studies in India (Goyal and Pandey, 2011) and in line with teacher accountability reforms, Bruns et al. (2011) have proposed policy reforms to create parallel teacher employment systems in developing countries that use contract teachers. However, very few studies (Nkengne, 2010) have been conducted to understand how the policy has been implemented in reality, in varied contexts, especially within the Indian government primary school system. In India, several states have adopted system-wide contract teacher employment policy, despite considerable opposition (Govinda &

Josephine, 2005; Pandey, 2006; Ramachandran, 2009). Very little is known about the process of this system-wide adoption of contract teacher policy and why policymakers and other education sector stakeholders get attracted to it. There is a need to explore what local problems they believe this policy solves within the system.

Contract teacher policy as a teacher accountability measure has two most important elements, a) performance evaluation based on student learning outcome, i.e., *teacher evaluation*, and b) fixed-term contract renewal as a reward for good performance, i.e., *absence of job stability*. The contract teacher policy implementation process in the two states of India, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, demonstrates that this global policy is borrowed selectively within the local context. In fact, the policy translation process in the local context loses the two essential elements that are, supposedly, required for the efficacy of the policy. This is because "policy borrowing and lending has more to do with what is occurring in the local policy context, than with best practices, or effective policies, that await transfer from somewhere else" (Steiner-Khamisi, 2012, p. 15). Global education policy is adopted locally in a context of multiple stakeholders with divergent interests and goals. These stakeholders negotiate various aspects of the internationally promoted policy to serve their own specific interest and solve specific problems that exist in the local context. Wholesale policy borrowing from global to local context does not take place, but local actors selectively implement aspects that support their local reform agenda.

CONTRACT TEACHER CONTEXT IN INDIA

The first instances of fixed-term contract employment of teachers in India were observed in the 1980s under a Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)-funded project meant to recruit educators in remote and hard-to-reach regions of the desert state of Rajasthan (Govinda & Josephine, 2005; Pandey, 2006). The practice spread to most of the states of India in the 1990s when two major central government efforts to meet the Education for All goals were implemented. The first program, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), was partially funded by international donors, World Bank IDA, DFID, EC, UNICEF, and the Government of the Netherlands. The second, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), i.e., the Education for All campaign, was also partially funded by World Bank IDA, DFID, and EC (Colclough & De, 2010). The National District Information System on Education (DISE) estimated that contract teachers made up 16 percent of all teachers in the primary school system in India by 2008 (Mehta, 2011). The common perception in India is that contract teachers are typically paid only a fraction of the salary that civil service teachers receive and they are not required to have the same high levels of education and professional qualifications.

Under a federal system, policy decisions on standards for hiring teachers, recruitment, and trainings, etc. are made by the state government, but they operate under the broader frameworks developed by the central government. This decentralized system makes the Indian government primary education an optimal context for comparative analysis of contract teacher policy adoption and implementation across states.

The Case of Madhya Pradesh and Kerala

Madhya Pradesh and Kerala sit at the opposite ends of the spectrum of the Indian education context. Historically, Madhya Pradesh has struggled with ensuring access to primary school; in 2006, 9 percent of rural children and 6 percent of urban children were still out of school (Govinda & Bandhyopadhyay, 2010). Madhya Pradesh has an adult literacy rate of 70 percent (GOI, 2011) and in a 2014 survey Grade 3 students from Madhya Pradesh scored 18 points

below the national average in language and 9 points below in mathematics (NCERT, 2014). Kerala, on the other hand, has the highest adult literacy rate in India (93 percent) and has nearly universal access and gender parity in primary schools (GOI, 2011; Mukundan & Bray, 2006). In the same 2014 survey, students in Kerala scored 16 points higher than the national average in language and 12 points higher in mathematics.

Both states employ contract teachers in place of civil service teachers in government primary schools under different teacher recruitment policies, although the proportion of contract teachers differs greatly. In the 2013–14 academic year, approximately 68 percent of primary school teachers in Madhya Pradesh were hired under some form of the contract teacher policy (MP, 2013), whereas in 2011–12, only 3 percent of government primary school teachers in Kerala were contract teachers.

This chapter is informed by two bodies of scholarship: the case study draws from data collected in 2013–14 in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala (Terway, 2016) and the interpretive framework is based on policy-borrowing and lending research presented in detail in other publications (see, for example, Steiner-Khamisi & Waldow, 2012). The majority of the data comprises of policy documents and interviews with 72 individuals in the two states at five levels—international, national, state, district/block, and school. Interview participants brought varied perspectives from several stakeholder groups including teachers, headmasters, parents, union leaders, state and local officials, national policymakers and advisors, and international donor representatives. These perspectives help us understand the policy implementation process that took place in the two very distinct contexts within India. A detailed description and analysis of the multi-level data can be found in the full case study (Terway, 2016). This chapter presents some of the findings on policy reception and translation of global education policies.

Contract Teacher Policy Context in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala

The specific policy on the use of contract teachers in government primary schools differs substantially in the two states. In Madhya Pradesh, all government teachers start their employment on a fixed-term contract, while in Kerala, contract teachers are only recruited as a stopgap measure to fill gaps in civil service teacher presence.

In Madhya Pradesh, the policy has evolved over the last two decades. It was first adopted in the mid-1990s under the central government program, DPEP, and a state government program called the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS). The primary aim of contract teacher recruitment was to rapidly expand primary school access in remote and rural areas where no government schools existed. Community leaders were permitted to recruit a local educated youth to teach primary school grades for a small honorarium (Rs. 500 per month). These contract teachers were not required to have any teacher education or professional qualification that the civil service teachers were required to meet.

In 1998, with the implementation of nationwide Local Self Government (LSG) decentralization policy, Madhya Pradesh stopped recruiting regular civil service teachers altogether. Instead, all new teachers in government schools were recruited on fixed-term contracts under the jurisdiction of the LSG institutions at the district or block level rather than by the state Department of School Education. Subsequent policy changes increased the educational and professional requirements and salaries for contract teachers, and they were also required to take a Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) managed by the state Department of School Education. In 2008, Madhya Pradesh introduced a pathway to permanent tenured positions for contract teachers who successfully completed their first three-year contract. In 2013, contract teachers in the first three years of their employment earned Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 7,500 per month and Rs. 10,509 to Rs. 17,131 per month once they were made permanent, while the civil service

Table 13.1 Summary of differences in contract teacher policies in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala.

Policy element	Madhya Pradesh	Kerala
Coverage	All new teachers Government school. Total: 68% Centralized recruitment at the state level	Temporary placement in government schools. Total: 3% Decentralized recruitment at the school level
Recruitment	3-year probationary period before permanent employment Headmaster is the direct supervisor, but LSG institutional authorities review headmaster generated performance data and make employment decisions.	Maximum 1-year contract term with eligibility to re-apply Headmaster directly supervises and manages the contract teacher. No state level policy on performance evaluation.
Term of Contract		
Management and Performance Review		
Compensation as a proportion of civil service teacher minimum base salary	1st 3-year term: 14%–21% Permanent position: 30%–50%	50%–58%

Note. All data are from academic year 2013–14.

Source: Adapted from Terway, 2015.

teachers earned over Rs. 30,000 per month.¹ Although, LSG institutions are supposed to take headmaster's evaluation of contract teacher performance into consideration before granting them permanent employment, in reality this does not take place and almost all teachers are made permanent.

In Kerala, contract teacher policy has taken hold only in the last ten years. Under the policy, the state government has approved recruitment of fixed-term contract teachers, known as Daily Wage Teachers, as a stopgap measure in some very specific circumstances. Primary school headmasters are allowed to recruit a contract teacher when a civil service teacher takes an extended leave of absence or when there is a delay in the appointment of a new civil service teacher against a vacant position. Also, headmasters can recruit contract teachers in instances where the state government does not plan to appoint civil service teachers, i.e. when headmasters need extra academic support for increased enrollment, or to replace civil service teachers who retire or transfer out of "uneconomic" schools. The headmaster has the authority to terminate contract teachers at any time for unsatisfactory performance. However, as soon as a civil service teacher becomes available, contract teachers are always terminated even if they have achieved high student learning outcomes.

The Kerala Department of General Education dictates standard rules for the recruitment process and compensation amount across all schools for contract teachers. These teachers are required to have the same level of school education and professional degree qualifications as the civil service teachers; however, they do not have to pass the common state-level Teacher Eligibility Test. In 2014, contract teacher salary at the primary school level was Rs. 8,800 per month, as compared to over Rs. 17,000 per month for civil service teachers. Table 13.1 provides a summary of the contract teacher policy condition in the two states.

Perception of Teacher Accountability and Teacher Quality

According to the global policy recommendation, use of contract teachers, as a teacher accountability policy, has two main elements 1) *absence of job stability* and 2) *teacher evaluation* (Bruns et al., 2011). Contract teacher policy in both states, to an extent, is designed to link performance evaluation and contract renewal. But the enacted policy has a breakdown in this link. In Madhya Pradesh, contracts are *renewed* regardless of teacher performance,

and in Kerala contract teachers are *terminated* regardless of performance. Student learning outcome data, in neither state, is systematically linked to teacher performance evaluation. If the teacher accountability mechanism of contract teacher policy is not functional, why are contract teachers employed in these states?

In Madhya Pradesh, after almost two decades of implementation the contract period has essentially become a probationary period. After the first three-year term of employment, contract teachers become permanent employees and enjoy job security. Contract teacher policy does require an assessment of teacher performance, including a review of student test scores, for conversion to a permanent position. However, state-level officials estimate that 98 to 100 percent of all contract teachers get tenured because no one is removed from the workforce due to non-performance.

In Kerala, improved accountability aspect of contract teachers is perceived more narrowly as "obedience" to education authorities rather than improved teaching quality. State officials, headmasters, and even civil service teachers believe that contract teachers are more prone to following orders from the headmaster (direct supervisor) because they are scared of being fired. However, most do not believe that this results in better teaching quality because teachers working on a contract basis are inherently of lower quality for at least two reasons. First, contract teachers are not selected through a rigorous civil service teacher recruitment process. Second, since they have no job security, they are perceived to be unmotivated or uncommitted toward the students. Almost all stakeholders in Kerala express a preference for civil service teachers who have job stability. As a result, even though headmasters have the power to terminate the contract teacher for poor performance, they are automatically terminated with the appointment of a civil service teacher.

While in neither state the teacher accountability elements are the central focus of the contract teacher policy, an analysis of education sector stakeholder interests is needed to understand what problems the policy is, at the least, perceived to be solving.

GLOBAL SOLUTION FOR WHAT LOCAL PROBLEMS?

Given that teacher accountability mechanism, with two main features *absence of job stability* and *teacher evaluation*, was not the driving forces behind the contract teacher policy in either Madhya Pradesh or Kerala, why then does this global policy resonate with local policy actors? Contract-based teacher employment must solve other problems within the local education context for it to be implemented system-wide. According to the policy-borrowing perspective, translation of global policy takes place in the local context to solve some other problems that exist in the local system. In these two states of India, the design and the implementation of the contract teacher policy is a result of negotiation of divergent interests of local education sector stakeholders. The enacted local policy, therefore, does not resemble the envisioned global policy recommendation. Unpacking the local policy stakeholder interest and the negotiation process sheds light on some of the local problems that are solved by the contract teacher policy. In this section, we explore two local problems that are resolved with the use of contract teachers in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala: *teacher shortage* and *decentralization*.

Teacher Shortage

In the 1990s, in line with the national priority of universal primary education, increasing access to primary schools was a major priority for the Government of Madhya Pradesh. With a scattered population, remote, tribal, and economically disadvantaged areas or hamlets in Madhya

Pradesh did not have any schools. The state also did not have enough civil service teachers to meet the access demand. But more importantly, existing civil service teachers did not want to go to the remote areas. When civil service teachers were appointed to the schools in these areas they often did not report to the post, were chronically absent, or transferred out of the schools. All state-level officials agreed that recruitment of contract teachers under the EGS was important for meeting teacher shortages in the state. Teachers recruited locally by the communities and hired on a short-term contract helped alleviate the problem because local teachers were more likely to show up in the classrooms.

In later years, when the contract teacher policy was scaled up to all government primary schools and the teacher recruitment process was recentralized, measures were taken to encourage the appointment of local teachers and to avoid transfers for these teachers. Headmasters and parents also viewed recruitment of locally based teachers favorably. Headmasters were able to manage administrative tasks better when the school was not understaffed, and they did not have to take up teaching duties. Parents felt that they had more control over supervising teacher attendance because they could go to the teacher's home to check in if the teacher was late to school or absent.

Actors outside the state found the idea of teacher shortage absurd in the context of Kerala because the state has a reputation for having an excess of civil service teachers for the number of students enrolled in government schools. In reality, teacher shortage comes in the form of long delays in civil service teacher recruitment and the constant turnover of civil service teachers in remote and tribal areas with transfer requests. The primary reason for employing contract teachers in Kerala was to fill any gaps in staffing at schools because of the missing civil service teachers.

In Kerala, it is common for the civil service teacher recruitment process to take one to three years, from the time a headmaster reports the vacancy to when a civil service teacher is posted at the school. The civil service teacher candidate also experiences considerable procedural delay, it takes up to three years for them to get posted to a school from the time of taking the TET exam. On the other hand, contract teacher recruitment at the school level only takes a month or two. As a consequence, the option of recruiting contract teachers at the school level relieves the pressure on the state government to reduce the lag in teacher placement.

Contract teacher policy in Kerala does not specifically target schools located in hard-to-reach regions, but conventional wisdom among all state policymakers is that most of the contract teachers are located in remote and tribal areas. School appointment of civil service teachers is done at the state or district level, and there is no consideration given to the candidate's preference. Civil service teachers initially do report to the appointed schools in hard-to-reach regions, but they request for transfer to their preferred location as soon as they can. As a result, there is a constant exiting of civil service teachers from remote and tribal schools, where the post is left empty for up to three years at a time. Contract teachers who reside locally end up filling this gap, once again relieving the pressure on the state government to post civil service teachers quickly to these schools. Incidentally, most "uneconomic" schools, where the enrollment numbers are too low to justify high costs of school operation, are often also located in these remote and tribal regions of Kerala. Once a civil service teacher transfers or retires from these "uneconomic" schools, only a contract teacher can be hired to replace that teacher to keep school costs low.

As discussed previously, there is an inherent preference for civil service teachers who are perceived to be of higher quality. Therefore, Kerala has not implemented the policy wholesale as Madhya Pradesh has; instead it uses contract teachers only as a stopgap measure. Contract teacher policy helps the state Department of General Education in working around the problem of teacher shortages caused by either the bureaucratic delays in civil service teacher

recruitment or with civil service teachers not willing to work in hard-to-reach regions. In both states, the contract teacher policy has helped the government maintain access to schools but not necessarily improve education quality.

Decentralization

In 1993, the 73rd constitutional amendment mandated state governments in India to implement the *Panchayati Raj* or Local Self-Government (LSG) system. Under this system, several decision-making authorities are devolved from government bureaucrats to elected members of LSG institutions. The specific policy and the process of devolution of decision-making authority vary across states.

In 1998, Madhya Pradesh devolved teacher recruitment and management responsibilities in all government schools to the LSG institutions under the statewide contract teacher policy. This decentralization effort also ended the recruitment of new civil service teachers all together in Madhya Pradesh. LSG institutions at the local level recruited teachers from the local communities and entered into a contract with these teachers appointed at a specific local school. Complete decentralization of teacher management was, however, in conflict with the state Department of School Education interest, as it is the authority ultimately responsible for education management. The delegation of all teacher recruitment and management decision-making authority to the locally elected bodies reduced the Department's control over teachers. State-level officials believe that contract teacher recruitment at the local level was fraught with corruption and nepotism. Hence, between 2001 and 2005, contract teacher recruitment process was recentralized and automatized in an effort to create transparency. Now, state-level authorities match candidates to their preferred school, using computer algorithms, based on their TET ranking. However, contract teacher supervision and management responsibilities remain with the LSG institution.

The combination of centralized and decentralized contract teacher management has, in general, served most stakeholders' interests. Department of School Education can maintain its control over the selection of teachers entering the system, whereas locally elected members of the LSG institutions can maintain control over teachers within the system. Contract teachers are also satisfied with the recruitment process because they perceive it to be objective and transparent, and it gives them some agency over school posting.

Recent corruption allegations, however, signal that the reduction of corruption may not be the real objective behind the centralization of teacher selection process in Madhya Pradesh. Since 2013, numerous corruption charges have been filed against policymakers and government officials who are in charge of the central testing and selection system; this has turned into a major political scandal with national and international level coverage (Economist, 2015; PTI, 2015; TNN, 2013).

Unlike Madhya Pradesh, in Kerala government teacher recruitment and management has, more or less, remained with Department of General Education despite the implementation of the LSG system. Civil service teachers, who make up about 97 percent of the teaching force, are completely managed by the department officials, whereas contract teachers (3 percent) are managed by the SMC and headmasters. The Kerala *Panchayati Raj* Act, passed in 1994 following the constitutional amendment, made primary education the responsibility of LSG institutions. However, Mukundan and Bray (2006) note that there was a gap in the rhetoric and the reality of education decentralization in Kerala. LSG institutions develop plans for school improvement, but these plans are limited to domains that do not directly impact the teaching and learning process. Activities usually cover the operation of "school noon-feeding programmes, scholarships and uniform distribution, teaching/learning aids production and

distribution, awareness camps for teachers and parents, construction of toilets and cooking sheds, repairs, and drinking water" (Mukundan & Bray, 2006, p. 232). Management of human and physical resources, like teacher appointment, staffing, and salaries, remains under the jurisdiction of Department of General Education bureaucrats. Some efforts were initially made to involve parents and community members in the monitoring of the teaching process. But Mukundan and Bray (2006) observe that civil service teachers resist these efforts questioning parents and community members' qualification for evaluating classroom activities.

Even with this limited role, active community participation and LSG institutions' role in school operation in Kerala is considerably high when compared to other states in India (SSA, 2012). In fact, state and block-level officials remarked in their interviews that if parents have any issues at the school they follow up on their complaints to the highest levels of the state government. Given the civil service teachers' resistance to community involvement in classroom evaluations, the delegation of authority to recruit and manage contract teachers to the School Management Committee and headmaster appears to be an astute compromise by the state government. The Department of General Education has standardized the policy for the contract teacher selection process, however, the actual power to manage the process lies at the community or school level. Block education officers interviewed for this research often did not have any information on the contract teacher who were employed in the schools under their jurisdiction. Headmasters and parents are satisfied with having authority over the contract teachers and do not protest against this *de facto* centralized control over government school teachers because of the general perception that civil service teachers are of superior quality.

Some level of decentralization of authority over teachers has been achieved by the contract teacher policy in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala even when it is not in the best interest of all stakeholders involved. State-level policymakers have been able to negotiate the extent of teacher management decentralization and have retained some control by centralizing certain aspects.

Selective Policy Borrowing

The case of contract teacher policy in India is a good case in point to examine why the global concept of contract teacher policy is selectively borrowed and how it is locally translated.

In one state of India (Madhya Pradesh), the three-year contractual employment has become the standard for induction into the profession. In 2013–14, 14 percent of teachers in Madhya Pradesh worked on a three-year contract waiting to be employed on a permanent basis upon completion of their contract, and 54 percent of the teachers had become permanent after the contract period. In effect, the contract teacher policy in Madhya Pradesh functions very much like a licensing scheme in disguise as the three-year period serves as a probationary period at a pre-licensing stage during which the performance of the new (contract) teachers is evaluated. Upon successful completion of the contract, the contract teachers are eligible for a permanent tenured position. The remuneration more than doubles, from Rs. 5,000 to 10,509 with permanent employment. However, it is important to note that in reality nearly everyone gets permanent employment because teachers do not get fired for performance issues. Drawing on the theory of policy borrowing, we see two complementary functions that the contract teacher policy fulfills in Madhya Pradesh: enhancing teacher supply by employing cheap labor (local agenda) and framing the contract period as a performance-based probationary period (global agenda). Put differently, the Government of Madhya Pradesh managed to frame the unpopular move to hire low-cost contract teachers as a quality improvement measure. Thus, the act of externalization—reference to teacher accountability reforms—helped to legitimize and institutionalize a new type of teacher management system that otherwise would have been heavily contested and rejected: three-year contractual arrangements during which the salary is low, and the performance should be high.

In another state (Kerala), the government did not mandate contractual employments and left it up to school and district-level authorities to hire one-year contract teachers if in need. There is no career path from being a contract teacher to becoming a permanently hired teacher. In 2013–14, only 3 percent of the workforce consisted of contract teachers. As opposed to the situation in Madhya Pradesh, the teacher unions in Kerala are strong, the adult literacy rate is high (93 percent) and the system is decentralized putting schools in charge of hiring and firing contract teachers. The global/local nexus is entirely different in the two contexts (see Schriewer, 2012); the Government of Kerala is neither in a position nor in need to act as a mediator between global and local agendas. Arguably, the act of externalization, which the Government of Madhya Pradesh had carried out to frame its unpopular local policy (underpaid three-year contractual arrangements) in terms of a global "best practice" (teacher accountability and effectiveness), is not an option in the state of Kerala.

It is important to keep in mind that comprehensive reforms, such as teacher accountability reforms, consist of various elements, each of which resonates or encounters resistance among the different stakeholders in the local policy context for different reasons. Policy-borrowing research applies an agency-driven and conflict-sensitive approach to understanding the policy process. Coalition-building is key for new reforms to be embraced. The case study provides a detailed analysis of why different stakeholders in Madhya Pradesh joined forces to support the contract teacher policy (see Terway, 2016). For example, government officials in Madhya Pradesh supported contract teachers because they needed to expand access to primary schools rapidly within a very limited budget. Headmasters supported hiring contract teachers because it eased their academic responsibilities at the school. Parents wanted contract teachers because they wanted teachers to show up at the school and liked having a local community member in the classroom. Teachers themselves agreed to work in such contractual arrangements because they found employment close to their home where there were very little employment opportunities for educated youth. In contrast, coalition-building in Kerala was a non-issue because they had achieved access to primary schools while having highly qualified and highly paid civil service teachers employed within the system.

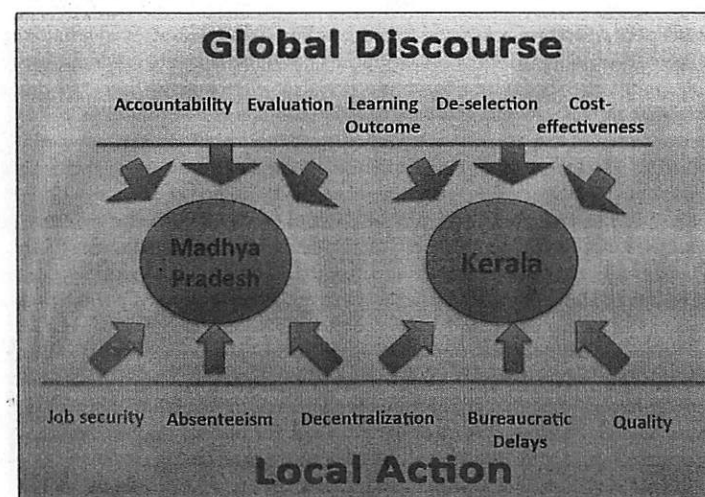


Figure 13.1 Global and local pressures on the contract teacher policy process.

Figure 13.1 shows the most common reasons why the global teacher accountability reform tends to be adopted. It also highlights the different reasons why it resonated in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh, respectively. Although the global “best practices” or reasoning for utilization of contract teachers was the same for both the states, the local problems that existed in the two systems were very different. While Madhya Pradesh was dealing with chronic teacher shortages due to high absenteeism in hard-to-reach regions, Kerala’s problem was long bureaucratic delays in the teacher recruitment process. Pressures for giving teachers job security resulted in providing a pathway to permanent position for contract teachers in Madhya Pradesh; whereas perception of low quality of contract teachers in Kerala has prevented the state from expanding to policy further.

Contract teacher policy in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala demonstrates not only that the reasons differ for why global “best practice,” an “international standard” broadly defined, or “lessons from elsewhere” are adopted, but unsurprisingly also how a reform is implemented. The concept has been only partially implemented, or the implementation has been modified given the political process of policy negotiation and bargaining in the public education system. In Madhya Pradesh, the *absence of job stability and teacher evaluation* have both been removed from the enacted policy. In Kerala, there is no *job stability* for contract teachers regardless of *teacher performance*.

CONCLUSION

Arguably, teacher accountability reform packages or, more narrowly, the pressure in developing countries to hire contract teachers, rather than teachers with a (semi-)permanent work arrangement, represent merely an example of teacher policy reforms that went global. Other global reforms preceded, or depending on the context, coincide with the teacher accountability reform package. It is important to bear in mind that the global is not an external force that overshadows local developments. According to the theory of policy borrowing, the inverse applies: at particular moments, local stakeholders externalize, that is, resort, to global “best practices,” “international standards,” or experiences from other countries to attain additional authority and leverage to push through their local agendas. As shown in this chapter, the global is locally induced at critical moments when there is a need for a quasi-external or international stamp of approval for unpopular local policies.

Strikingly, some of these older reforms are now being reframed in terms of the global teacher accountability reform. The example of linking contract teacher policy (initially used to reduce teacher shortage) to a quasi-licensing scheme and make it sail under the flag of “teacher accountability” is a good case in point to show how local practices are semantically “globalized.” The same applies to performance-based bonuses (see Chapter 36 on the 2011 teacher salary reform in Kyrgyzstan); they have been in existence for a long time in former communist systems of Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Mongolia but are nowadays being reframed as part and parcel of the global teacher accountability reform. In fact, the local reforms remain the same, but they are being “updated,” reframed, and “globalized.” In an earlier study, Iveta Silova showed the salutary effect of externalization in Latvia. The contested policy of segregated schooling in Latvia (for Latvian and Russian/non-Latvian speaking population) was rubber-stamped by globalizing the practice and framing it as the (positively connoted) practice of bilingual education (Silova, 2006). Several studies on policy borrowing demonstrated how externalization and references to global education policy are effective policy instruments for coalition-building in the local context.

Finally, this chapter attempted to contribute to the larger theory discussion on globalization in comparative education in three particular ways. First, different from neoinstitutionalist theory,

world polity, or world culture theory (e.g., John Meyer, Francisco Ramirez, David Baker, Gerald K. LeTendre, and others) that apply a macro perspective to discern global patterns that emerge over time, our group of researchers—associated with policy-borrowing research and system theory—attempt to understand which local policy context is likely to produce externalization, that is, receptiveness to global forces. Both strands of theory acknowledge the existence of institutionalized international scripts, global education policy, or international standards that international organizations advocate for, disseminate, and, we would like to add, fund. Our approach, however, is more agency-driven and conflict sensitive in that it acknowledges that local actors actively use such global scripts at particular moments to advance their own local agendas. Thus, they are not helpless victims that adopt global education policies but they selectively and creatively adopt them to shift power relations in the local context to their own benefit, often for purposes of garnering support or coalition-building for new reforms.

Second, for world culture theorists, the questions of why and how nation-states adopt the global institutionalized script is irrelevant, and they dismiss them as a matter of loose coupling between envisioned and implemented policy. As discussed in another publication (Steiner-Khamisi, 2012), our group of researchers argues that there is a “socio-logic” of loose coupling that is worth exploring and interpreting in terms of reception and translation. Ultimately, for neoinstitutionalist theory, loose coupling is the explanation rather than the issue that begs explanation. An analysis of the global/local nexus requires that loose coupling is not only acknowledged, but also analyzed in great detail and interpreted. In effect, scholars of policy-borrowing research criticize the bird’s-eye perspective of neoinstitutionalist theorists and their disregard for what is happening on the ground, that is, how and why global education policy is adopted, resisted, or modified. To be fair, the research interests diverge considerably: neoinstitutionalist theorists are devoted to understanding the existence of world culture and system theorists have made it their intellectual project to explore local policy culture, contexts, or systems.

Finally, perhaps more explicit than what world culture theorists assert, policy-borrowing research acknowledges the existence of unequal world systems (plural) or multiple frames. Whose reform packages are scaled up globally and become, for a while, an institutionalized international script that matters a great deal to policy-borrowing research. Development scholars like Easterly (see Easterly & Pfitze, 2008) have examined how, or if, international institutions use the feedback loop from the implementation of international “best practices.” Do they learn from the new evidence that emerges from the implementation, or are they more influenced by the dominant political pressures and organizational incentives at the global level? Even though international donors, for example, advocate at a given moment for one particular script (in this case, teacher accountability reforms), the scripts change over time and they co-exist with other solutions, remedies, or policies that, due to unequal multiple frames, are temporarily shelved. Not all institutionalized scripts, which international organizations advocate for, disseminate, and fund, are universally accepted and popular. For example, performance-based payments or contract teachers are not new reforms. They have existed since the 1970s and changed their meaning. They are policy ghosts that periodically re-emerge and are latched onto newly emerging global education policies in an attempt to make these unpopular reforms more attractive. The World Bank and other international donors have for the past 20 years advocated for contract teacher policy as a panacea to resolve a host of problems, ranging from teachers that do not show up (teacher absenteeism) to teachers who show up but teach poorly (teacher effectiveness).

As shown in the teacher contract study in India (Terway, 2016), governments adopt teacher accountability for entirely different reasons and implement it differently to what the architects in the global North or West had in mind. Research on policy diffusion and policy borrowing

suggests that global education policy become at the explosive growth stage empty vessels into which local stakeholders can project any "solution" that they deem useful for their own purposes. Global institutions, especially the World Bank, have used empirical research from pilot programs and experiments that use contract teachers in India, to support the teacher effectiveness argument (Bruns et al., 2011). National and state policymakers also use this evidence to garner support for the adoption of contract teacher policy. Implementation of a system-wide contract teacher policy could serve as evidence of convergence of world system theorists, but the translation of the global policy to solve local problems shows that the enacted policy does not truly resemble the rationale and the concept of the international "best practice."

This chapter contributes to policy borrowing by exploring *how* global contract teacher policy is imported and recontextualized in a local context. The study acknowledges the discursive power associated with global education policy and uses this assertion to dig deeper into understanding the policy process in the local context: at what particular moment, for what purpose, and with which outcome have local stakeholders adopted teacher accountability reforms? The bifocal perspective on reception and translation allows us to understand how local stakeholders externalize, resort to, creatively use, or selectively borrow global education policy. However, once the policy is adopted within a system, like in Madhya Pradesh, there is no reflection by the global actors on whether the teacher effectiveness hypothesis held true. The question, therefore, arises: is there no feedback loop from the local to the global, that is, between why a reform resonates in a given context (reception) and how it is subsequently implemented (translation)?

NOTE

1. In 2013, the state government also announced a gradual increase in salary for permanent teachers to make it equal to civil service teachers by the year 2017.

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