



35 approaches overlook the relational dynamics that produce and sustain collective labor action  
36 in public education systems.

37 This study examines teacher strikes in public education sector of Meghalaya, a  
38 Northeastern Indian State where public schooling remains a crucial vehicle for social  
39 mobility. In this context, teachers frequently encounter delayed salaries, administrative  
40 opacities and limited negotiation mechanisms. Rather than treating strikes as episodic  
41 breakdowns, this study conceptualizes them as cumulative responses to institutional silence  
42 and asymmetrical labor relations.

43 The research asks: How are teacher strikes narrated and interpreted as labor-relational  
44 events? How do such events reshape moral expectations surrounding teachers? And how do  
45 they influence perceptions of educational futures among students and parents?

46 By centering narrative accounts, this study moves beyond outcome-based evaluation  
47 and situates teacher strikes within broader frameworks of labor process theory, moral  
48 economy and aspirational sociology. It advances three key contributions: (1) conceptualising  
49 strike action as compelled Visibility in peripheral public sector regimes; (2) identifying  
50 moral-labor tension within professionalised care work; and (3) introducing aspirational  
51 fragility to explain how labor conflict destabilizes educational imaginaries.

52

## 53 **Literature Review**

54

### 55 ***Teacher Strikes & Labor Relations***

56 Economic research traditionally frames strikes as conflicts between workers and firms  
57 surplus (Card 1990; Cramton and Tracy 1992; Krueger and Mas 2004 and mas 2008).  
58 Sustained disruptions caused by strikes can compel firms to disclose information regarding  
59 their profit margins and capacity to enhance compensation (Cramton and Tracy 1992).  
60 However, firms in the public education sector (e.g. districts) are not profit maximizing actors  
61 that adjust their budget based on the marginal revenue product of labor. Instead, district  
62 budgets are a function of the local propensity to fund education through municipal taxes, the  
63 size and allocation of state education aid and funding programs.

64 Teachers can improve their welfare by advocating for a larger allocation of the district  
65 budget and they can lobby local, state and elected officials to relax the district budget  
66 constraint by increasing funding for public education. Strikes in this context serve dual  
67 purposes: direct bargaining leverage and broader signaling to policymakers and voters about  
68 service provision and funding priorities (Lyon and Kraft 2024). A second key difference is

69 that in maximising their welfare, teacher strikes have the potential to positively or negatively  
70 affect the education production processes (Brunner et al. 2019).

71 The use of additional funds to increase teacher compensation can benefit student  
72 achievement through changes in the composition of the teacher workforce and the effort  
73 teachers expend on the job. Efficiency wage theory suggests that if teachers are compensated  
74 at their marginal product, then any increase in compensation should lead to increases in  
75 teacher productivity (Akerlof 1982; Shapiro and Stiglitz 1984). Higher wages can expand  
76 teacher supply (Edwards et al. 2024) and improve morale and retention (Hendricks 2014).  
77 Additionally, almost one in five teachers nationally works a second job outside the school  
78 system (Will 2022). Strike-induced salary increases may make secondary jobs less necessary,  
79 leaving teachers with more time and energy to dedicate to instructional effort.

80 It is also possible that any increased teacher compensation secured via strikes might  
81 not translate into improved student achievement. Prior studies have found that across- the-  
82 board pay raises for teachers have not resulted in improved achievement (Cook et al. 2021;  
83 De Ree et al. 2018). Wage gains alone without corresponding investments in on-the-job skill  
84 development may leave teachers who are motivated by newly won compensation without a  
85 productive pathway for improving their performance (Murnane and Cohen 1985). If strike-  
86 induced contract concessions are funded by reallocating funding instead of expanding the  
87 education funding pool via new resources, then their effects again depend on whether any  
88 funding allocated to increased teacher compensation and school inputs is rent-seeking or  
89 efficiency-enhancing (Hoxby 1996).

90 The temporary school closures leave families struggling with disrupted childcare  
91 arrangements and may have important consequences for the labor market outcomes of  
92 parents. This is especially the case for more vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, such  
93 as low-income mothers who may find it particularly difficult to secure alternative childcare  
94 options. Unfortunately, a lack of exogenous variation in teacher strikes linked to parental  
95 labor market data has precluded a detailed analysis on this topic. As a consequence, we  
96 lack complete understanding of how families are affected by the childcare crises that emerge  
97 from school closures, hindering the design of effective policy responses.

98 Identifying the effect of teacher strikes on parents is difficult due to the potential  
99 existence of contemporaneous shocks or policies. Specifically, strikes may be correlated with  
100 other events that also affect the labor market outcomes of the parents. In the study by Jaume  
101 & Willen 2021, they found that teacher strikes negatively impact the labor market  
102 participation of mothers and that this translates into a significant reduction in earnings. The

103 transitory nature of the effects is important to highlight when considering the policy  
104 implications of the results. In contrast to its impact on mothers, teacher strikes have no effect  
105 on the labor market outcomes of fathers in general. However, they do negatively impact the  
106 supply of fathers with lower predicted earnings than their wives. This suggests that the labor  
107 supply response of parents depend, at least in part, on the relative income of each parent  
108 (Blundell et al. 2005; Apps and Rees 2012; Cherchye et al. 2012).

109 Belot and Webbink (2006) report that teacher strikes in Belgium had a negative  
110 impact on students' subsequent labor market earnings. Jaume & Willen 2017, said in their  
111 study they found evidence that teacher strikes worsen future labor market outcomes. The  
112 prevalence of teacher strikes in Argentina means that the effect on the economy as a whole is  
113 substantial. They even said that being exposed to the average incidence of teacher strikes  
114 during primary school leads to a 0.70 percentage point increase in unemployment. Evidence  
115 was also found that teacher strikes cause individuals to sort into lower-skilled occupations  
116 later in life. Education production provide clear predictions about the consequences of  
117 reduced instructional time: lower academic achievement (Cahan and David 1987; Cahan and  
118 Cohen 1989; Lee and Barro 2001; Gormley and Gayer 2005; Cascio and Lewis 2006; Luyten  
119 2006; Hansen 2008; Leuven et al. 2010; Fitzpatrick et al. 2011; Goodman 2014). Teacher  
120 strikes may have important effects on non-educational outcomes. The reason is that teacher  
121 strikes reduce effective instructional time. Unless parents can make alternative educational  
122 arrangements this will lead to an increase in leisure time and to an increase in the risk of  
123 engaging in bad behavior and criminal activity (Anderson 2014; Henry et al. 1999). This can  
124 directly impact the future education and labor market outcomes of children.

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### 130 ***Core Labor & Industrial Relations***

131 The workplace is fundamentally the site of conflict and negotiation between labor and  
132 management, rather than a purely cooperative environment. Industrial relations evolve  
133 through different systems of managerial control----- such as simple control, technical control  
134 and bureaucratic control---developed by employers to manage workers and maintain  
135 productivity. Within this framework, the concept of core labor emerges as workers who  
136 possess stable employment skills and strategic importance to the organization, giving them

137 relatively greater bargaining power in industrial relations. However, even core workers  
138 remain part of a broader contested terrain, where management strategies and labor responses  
139 continually shape power dynamics, workplace authority and labor relations over time  
140 (Edward R, 1979).

141 Under monopoly capitalism, management increasingly seeks to control and deskill  
142 labor through scientific management and technological systems, separating the conception of  
143 work from its execution. This process transfers knowledge and decision-making power from  
144 workers to management, thereby reducing workers' autonomy and bargaining power. As a  
145 result, labor becomes more fragmented and routinized, contributing to the degradation of  
146 work and reinforcing managerial dominance within industrial relations. Restructuring of  
147 labor processes is central to understanding workplace power dynamics, labor control and the  
148 changing relationship between workers and employers in modern industrial economies  
149 (Braverman, H. 1974).

150 Protests are guided by “moral economy”--- a set of widely accepted social norms and  
151 expectations about fairness, justice and the proper functioning of markets. Ordinary people  
152 believed that authorities and merchants had a moral obligation to ensure fair prices and  
153 protect the community from exploitation, especially during times of scarcity. When these  
154 expectations were violated—such as when traders hoarded grain or raised prices excessively-  
155 the crowd reacted collectively to restore what they considered economic justice (Thompson,  
156 E. P. 1971).

157 Organization culture plays a crucial role in shaping employee voice, determining  
158 whether workers feel empowered or discouraged from participating in decision-making  
159 processes. They emphasize that workplaces with open, participative cultures encourage  
160 dialogue, trust and collaboration between management and employees, while hierarchical or  
161 rigid cultures often suppress worker expression and limit participation. Employee voice is not  
162 only a formal institutional mechanism (such as unions or grievance system) but also a cultural  
163 phenomenon embedded in everyday workplace practices, power relations and communication  
164 structures within organizations (Blackler, F., & Kennedy, A. 2004).

165 Modern labor processes do not rely solely on coercion or managerial authority but  
166 instead create conditions where workers “consent” to their own exploitation through  
167 workplace games, incentive systems and internal competition. These practices make workers  
168 feel engaged and rewarded while simultaneously increasing productivity and maintaining  
169 managerial control (Burawoy, M. 1979).

170

171 ***Sociology of Education & Aspirations***

172 In *Class Strategies and the Education Market* (2003), Stephen J. Ball examines how  
173 middle-class families strategically navigate education systems shaped by market-oriented  
174 reforms such as school choice and competition. Ball argues that the expansion of the  
175 “education market” allows families with greater social, cultural and economic capital to  
176 better position their children within desirable schools and educational pathways. Through  
177 informed decision-making, networking and the mobilization of resources, middle-class  
178 parents are often able to secure advantages that reinforce existing social inequalities. The  
179 book highlights how education markets do not necessarily create equal opportunities but may  
180 instead reproduce class divisions. Ball’s work contributes significantly to the sociology of  
181 education by demonstrating how parental strategies, policy reforms and market mechanisms  
182 interact to shape educational access and social mobility (Ball, S. J. 2003).

183 Education systems play a crucial role in reproducing existing social inequalities rather  
184 than simply promoting meritocracy. The authors introduce the concept of cultural capital,  
185 referring to the knowledge, skills, language and cultural competencies that students inherit  
186 from their families. Schools tend to value and reward the cultural capital of dominant social  
187 classes, which gives students from privileged backgrounds a significant advantage in  
188 academic success. As a result, educational institutions unintentionally legitimize social  
189 hierarchies by presenting these inequalities as outcomes of individual ability or merit  
190 (Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. 1977).

191 The ability to aspire for a better future is deeply shaped by cultural and social  
192 contexts. Aspirations are not merely individual desires but are socially and culturally  
193 constructed capacities that develop through experience, opportunity and access to resources.  
194 In many marginalized or disadvantaged communities, the “capacity to aspire” may be limited  
195 because individuals have fewer opportunities to imagine or pursue alternative futures.  
196 Therefore, development and social policies should focus not only on economic resources but  
197 also on empowering people to articulate their goals, participate in decision-making and  
198 expand their aspirations (Appadurai, A. 2004).

199

200 ***Teacher Work & Professional Identity***

201 Teacher identity is not fixed but is socially constructed through policy frameworks,  
202 professional norms and institutional expectations. Sachs (2001) brought out two approaches;  
203 the managerialist discourse and the democratic professional discourse. The managerialist  
204 approach, often associated with accountability reforms and performance measurement,

205 positions teachers as technicians who implement externally designed curricula and standards.  
206 In contrast, the democratic professional discourse view teachers as reflective practitioners,  
207 collaborators and active participants in educational reform, are emphasizing professional  
208 autonomy, collegiality and commitment to broader social and educational goals. The  
209 dominance of managerialist policies may narrow teachers' professional roles and reduce their  
210 autonomy, whereas democratic professionalism encourages teacher agency, collaboration and  
211 professional learning communities. There is an importance of supporting professional  
212 environments that allow teachers to develop identities grounded in critical reflection,  
213 collaboration and social responsibility (Sachs 2001).

214 Teaching is deeply emotional and relational work, where teachers' commitment,  
215 resilience and sense of purpose are crucial for sustaining effectiveness. Day and Gu (2010)  
216 demonstrate that supportive school leadership, collaborative cultures and opportunities for  
217 professional development help teachers maintain strong professional commitment even  
218 during periods of policy pressure and reform. Conversely, high accountability demands,  
219 workload stress and lack of institutional support can weaken teachers' morale and  
220 professional engagement. Sustaining teacher quality requires attention not only to training  
221 and accountability but also to teachers' well-being, professional identity and career-long  
222 support systems. It is important to nurture the conditions that allow teachers to remain  
223 motivated, resilient and committed to student learning throughout their careers (Day & Gu  
224 2010).

225 The nature of the teaching profession has evolved over time. Hargreaves (2000)  
226 identified four historical phases of teacher professionalism, each reflecting changes in  
227 educational policy, institutional expectations and professional learning practices. First, the  
228 pre-professional age was characterised by limited teacher training and minimal professional  
229 standards, where teaching relied largely on personal experience rather than formal  
230 professional knowledge. Second, the age of autonomous professionalism emerged in the mid-  
231 20<sup>th</sup> century, when teachers gained greater independence in their classrooms and professional  
232 decision-making. Third, the age of collegial professionalism emphasized collaboration among  
233 teachers, encouraging teamwork, professional learning communities and shared responsibility  
234 for student outcomes. Finally, the post-professional or postmodern age reflects contemporary  
235 educational reforms marked by strong accountability systems, managerial control and  
236 performance monitoring, which may challenges teachers' autonomy and professional  
237 judgement. While collaboration and professional learning are essential for improving

238 education, excessive managerial reforms may undermine teacher professionalism by reducing  
239 teachers to implementers of externally designed policies (Hargreaves 2000).

240

### 241 *Teacher Strike Case Studies & Comparative Contexts*

242 Teacher strike generally does not produce significant long-term declines in student  
243 achievement. Although strikes temporarily disrupt classroom instruction, schools often  
244 compensate for lost instructional time through schedule adjustments, additional assignments  
245 or extended learning activities. As a result, students tend to recover academically once  
246 regular schooling resumes. Papay & Kraft (2016) suggests that teacher strikes often emerge  
247 from broader issues such as teacher salaries, working conditions and school resources.  
248 Addressing these issues can ultimately contribute to improved teaching environments, which  
249 may benefit students in the long run. Therefore, the authors argue that while strikes may  
250 cause short-term disruptions, they do not necessarily harm educational outcomes and may  
251 highlight systematic problems in education systems that require policy attention (Papay &  
252 Kraft (2016).

253 As private unionization has declined in many countries, public sector unions- such as  
254 those representing teachers, healthcare workers and government employees have become  
255 increasingly important in sustaining collective labor action and advocating for workers'  
256 rights. Public sector unions contribute to the revival of labor activism through collective  
257 bargaining, political engagement and social mobilization. In sectors like education, unions  
258 play a key role in negotiating wages, working conditions and professional protections while  
259 also shaping debates about education policy and public services. The public sector unions  
260 often extend their advocacy beyond workplace issues to broader social concerns such as  
261 community welfare, educational quality and public accountability. The growing activism of  
262 public sector unions demonstrate their potential to reinvigorate labor movements and  
263 strengthen democratic participation in policy-making, particularly in sectors where workers  
264 play a critical role in delivering essential public services (Cornfield, D.B., et al., 2015).

265 Teacher industrial action is often a response to policy reforms perceived as  
266 threatening teachers' professional autonomy and working conditions. Disputes between  
267 teachers' unions and governments frequently arise from disagreements over pay structures,  
268 workload, pension reforms and accountability measures. These actions are not labor disputes  
269 but also reflect broader tensions between educational professionals and policy-makers  
270 regarding the direction of education systems. Teacher strikes serve as a form of collective  
271 voice, allowing educators to influence education policy and draw public attention to

272 challenges within the teaching profession. While industrial action may temporarily disrupt  
273 schooling, it also reflects deeper structural issues in education governance and labor relations  
274 (Zilliacus H 2011).

275

### 276 *Teacher Strikes in Meghalaya*

277 Teacher protests in Meghalaya have periodically occurred as part of broader labour  
278 struggles within the education system. One notable example involved a large-scale strike by  
279 teachers in government-aided schools who protested against delayed salaried and demanded  
280 pay parity with government school teachers. Approximately 14,000 teachers participated in  
281 the strike, affecting more than 4,500 schools across the state, highlighting the influence of  
282 teacher mobilization in Meghalaya's education system. The protest was organized under the  
283 Joint Action Committee of All Teachers' Association of Meghalaya and reflected long-  
284 standing grievances related to unequal salary structures between government and aided  
285 schools (Indian Express 2016). This event illustrates the structural complexity of  
286 Meghalaya's educational workforce, where teachers are employed under multiple  
287 administrative categories such as government teachers, deficit teachers, ad hoc teachers, job  
288 security and benefits, thereby creating fertile ground for collective action.

289 One of the most significant factors driving teachers' strikes in Meghalaya is the  
290 prevalence of ad hoc and contractual employment arrangements. A substantial portion of the  
291 teaching workforce in the state is employed on temporary or honorarium-based contracts  
292 rather than permanent government appointments. Ad hoc teachers typically receive fixed  
293 monthly honorariums without access to service benefits such as pensions, promotions or job  
294 security. Recent protests organised under the **Federation of All School Teachers of**  
295 **Meghalaya (FASTOM)** highlight the grievances associated with these employment  
296 conditions. Ad hoc teachers have repeatedly organized demonstrations demanding  
297 regularization of their services, salary increments and inclusion in the deficit system of  
298 government funding. Teachers participating in these protests argued that despite performing  
299 the same responsibilities as regular teachers, they continue to receive significantly lower  
300 wages and lack employment benefits (India Today NE 2025).

301 Salary disparities remain a key issue. Reports indicate that ad hoc teachers receive  
302 approximately ₹18,000 per month at the lower primary level and up to ₹ 33,000 at the higher  
303 secondary levels, amounts significantly lower than the salaries of regular government teachers  
304 (ETEducation 2025). These disparities contribute to feelings of marginalisation among teachers and  
305 have become a major trigger for strikes and protest movements.

306           Teacher unions and professional associations play a central role in organizing strikes and  
307 protests in Meghalaya. Organizations such as the **Federation of All School Teachers of Meghalaya**  
308 **(FASTOM)**, the **All Meghalaya SSA School Teachers Association (AMSSASTA)**, and other  
309 teacher groups have mobilized educators to demand better working conditions and policy reforms. For  
310 example, teachers under the All Meghalaya SSA School Teachers Association (AMSSASTA),  
311 organised a 21-day-sit-in-protest demanding significant salary increases and improved working  
312 conditions. The protest was eventually suspended after the state government assured teachers that  
313 their demands would be considered and that salary revisions would be examined (Northeast News  
314 2024). These mobilizations demonstrate how teacher unions function as important platforms for  
315 articulating collective grievances and negotiating with the state government. The ability of these  
316 organizations to mobilise large numbers of teachers also indicates the widespread nature of  
317 dissatisfaction within the education workforce.

318           Policy reforms related to teacher recruitment and qualification standards have also contributed  
319 to teacher protests in Meghalaya. In recent years, debates surrounding the Teacher Eligibility Test  
320 (TET) have triggered protests among teachers who feared that new certification requirements may  
321 threaten their job security. Some teachers in Meghalaya joined nationwide protests against mandatory  
322 TET requirements, arguing that such policies place additional pressure on teachers without adequately  
323 existing employment challenges (Meghalaya Times 2025). This situation highlights a broader tension  
324 between education reforms aimed at improving quality and the employment realities faced by  
325 teachers. While policies such as TET are intended to enhance teacher quality, they can inadvertently  
326 create anxiety among teachers who are already working under insecure contractual arrangements.

327           Teacher strikes in Meghalaya often take the form of peaceful demonstrations, rallies, sit-in-  
328 protests and hunger strikes rather than prolonged work stoppages. For instance, ad hoc teachers have  
329 organised indefinite sit-in demonstrations demanding policy changes related to salary structures and  
330 services conditions (Hub News Assam 2025).

331           These protests frequently serve as negotiation strategies aimed at drawing the attention of  
332 policymakers and the public to the challenges faced by teachers. In several cases, strikes have led to  
333 dialogue between teacher associations and government authorities, resulting in promises of salary  
334 revisions or policy reviews. For example, after sustained protests by ad hoc teachers, the state  
335 government proposed a revised pay structure that included basic pay, dearness allowance and  
336 retirement benefits such as provident fund contributions (Meghalaya Monitor 2025). Such outcomes  
337 suggest that industrial action functions as an important mechanism through which teachers attempt to  
338 influence education policy and improve their working conditions.

339           Teacher strikes in Meghalaya raise important questions about the relationship between labour  
340 relations and educational governance. On one hand, strikes can disrupt teaching activities and  
341 temporarily affect students' learning experiences. On the other hand, they also highlight systemic

342 issues such as underfunding, inequitable employment structures and inadequate teacher support  
343 system.

344 The persistence of teacher protests indicates that structural reforms may be necessary to  
345 address underlying problems in the education system. These reforms could include standardizing  
346 teacher recruitment policies, improving salary structures, and ensuring equitable treatment across  
347 different categories of teachers.

348 Despite the frequency of teachers protests in Meghalaya, academic research on the topic  
349 remains limited. Most available information comes from journalistic reports and government  
350 statements rather than systematic scholarly investigations. As a result, there is a need for in-depth  
351 qualitative and empirical research examining the causes, dynamic and long-term consequences of  
352 teacher strikes in the state.

353 Future research could explore teachers' perceptions of labour rights, the role of unions in  
354 mobilization and the broader socio-political factors influencing teacher activism in Meghalaya. Such  
355 studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of labour relations in the education sector and  
356 provide insights for policymakers seeking to balance educational reforms with teacher welfare.

357

### 358 ***Moral Economy & Public Work Sector***

359 The peasant does not revolt simply because they are poor; rather rebellions occur when  
360 traditional social arrangements that guarantee minimum subsistence and economic security are  
361 threatened. Rural societies historically operated under a subsistence ethic, where landlords, local elites  
362 and the state were expected to ensure that peasants had enough resources to survive during times of  
363 crisis such as crop failures or economic hardship. This expectation formed a moral framework  
364 governing economic relationships. When colonial policies, market expansion or taxation systems  
365 disrupted these traditional protections, peasants perceived such changes as violations of the moral  
366 economy, leading to resistance and collective protest. The collective action often arises not merely  
367 from economic deprivation but from perceived injustice and the breakdown of established social  
368 norms governing economic relations. The concept of moral economy has been widely applied to  
369 analyze various forms of social protest, including labour movements, food riots and worker strikes  
370 (Scott J.C 1976).

371 In his expanded version of Scott's concept, Andrew Sayer in his book *Moral Economy and*  
372 *Public Policy* 2009, provides an important theoretical framework for understanding teacher strikes in  
373 Meghalaya. Scott argues that collective protest arises when communities perceive that established  
374 norms of fairness and subsistence have been violated by authorities. Sayer extends this by  
375 emphasizing that economic policies and labour relations are embedded in moral judgements about  
376 justice, dignity, and fairness. Applying these ideas to the education sector, teacher strikes in  
377 Meghalaya can be interpreted as responses to perceived violations of the moral expectations  
378 governing employment relationships between teachers and the state. Issues such as salary disparities,

379 delayed payments, and lack of job security among ad hoc or contractual teachers may be viewed as  
380 breaches of this moral economy, prompting teachers to mobilize collectively. From this perspective,  
381 teachers are not merely economic disputes but also expressions of moral claims for fair treatment,  
382 professional recognition and equitable public policy in the education system.

383

#### 384 ***Public Sector Labour & Education Policy***

385 Effective education systems depend heavily on continuous professional learning, supportive  
386 leadership and collaborative school cultures. Teachers who have access to professional development  
387 opportunities, mentoring and collaborative learning environments tend to demonstrate higher levels of  
388 job satisfaction, self-efficacy and instructional effectiveness. Conversely, heavy workloads, lack of  
389 professional autonomy and limited institutional support can negatively affect teachers' motivation and  
390 well-being. Improving education systems requires policies that strengthen teacher support structures,  
391 professional learning opportunities and working conditions. By recognizing teachers as lifelong  
392 learners and key contributors to educational improvement, the report underscores the need for  
393 governments to create environments that sustain teacher professionalism and engagement (OECD  
394 2019).

395 UNESCO emphasizes that achieving inclusive and equitable quality education requires strong  
396 support for teachers and education professionals. The framework highlights that teachers are central to  
397 improving learning outcomes and therefore calls for policies that ensures adequate training,  
398 professional development, fair remuneration and supportive working conditions. It also stresses the  
399 importance of empowering teachers through professional autonomy and continuous learning  
400 opportunities in order to strengthen education systems globally. In the context of teacher labour  
401 relations, the declaration suggests that improving teacher welfare and working conditions is essential  
402 for maintaining teacher motivation and sustaining the quality of education (UNESCO 2015).

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#### **Table 1: Summary of Reviewed Literature**

409 The following table presents a summary of key studies reviewed in this chapter, including  
410 their methodology and major findings.

411

| S. No. | Author(s) | Year | Title of Study | Methodology | Key Findings | Source |
|--------|-----------|------|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------|
|--------|-----------|------|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------|

|   |                             |      |   |   |  |   |
|---|-----------------------------|------|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Mawthoh & Rani              | 2018 | An inquiry into the education system of Meghalaya: A comparative analysis                                   | Secondary data analysis of education indicators                           | School access improved but infrastructure gaps limit education quality | International Journal of Applied Research           |
| 2 | Bhattacharjee               | 2011 | Teacher Education in Northeast India—Status, Weaknesses and Alternatives                                    | Policy review of education and teacher training                           | Teacher education needs strengthening to improve quality               | US-China Education Review A                         |
| 3 | Britton & Propper           | 2016 | Teacher pay and school productivity: Exploiting wage regulation   | Econometric analysis using national school data and wage gap comparison   | Lower teacher wage competitiveness reduces school performance          | Journal of Public Economics                         |
| 4 | Leigh                       | 2012 | Teacher pay and teacher aptitude  | Econometric analysis using national university admission data (1989–2003) | Higher teacher salaries attract more academically capable individuals  | Economics of Education Review                       |
| 5 | Nonglait & Myrthong         | 2018 | A Study on Social-Emotional Competency and Teaching Effectiveness of Secondary School Teachers in Meghalaya | Descriptive survey using standardized competency and effectiveness scales | Social-emotional competency improves teaching effectiveness            | International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts |
| 6 | Bascia & Osmond             | 2012 | Teacher Unions and Educational Reform: A Research Review  | Policy and institutional analysis   | Teacher unions influence policy and protect teacher rights             | National Education Association                      |
| 7 | Muralidharan & Sundararaman | 2011 | Teacher Performance Pay: Experimental Evidence from India   | Randomized controlled trial in rural Indian schools                       | Incentives improve student learning outcomes                           | Journal of Political Economy                        |
| 8 | Valente et al.              | 2020 | The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence Ability and Teacher Efficacy                                | Survey  | Emotional intelligence improves teaching and classroom management      | Universal Journal of Educational Research           |
| 9 | Puertas Molero et al.       | 2019 | Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Burnout Syndrome on Teachers Well-Being: A Systematic Review        | Systematic review of 36 studies   | Emotional intelligence reduces stress and improves teaching quality    | Social Sciences                                     |

|    |                              |      |   |  |  |  |
|----|------------------------------|------|---|--|--|--|
| 10 | Béteille                     | 2009 | Absenteeism, Transfers and Patronage: The Political Economy of Teacher Labor Markets in India                   | Survey data and political economy analysis               | Political factors weaken teacher accountability            | PhD Dissertation                                   |
| 11 | Dey                          | 2013 | Regional Imbalance in Teacher Education in India — An Analysis of Eastern Region including North Eastern States | Secondary data analysis and regional comparison          | Northeast faces shortage of teacher education institutions | Journal of Educational Planning and Administration |
| 12 | Hanushek & Rivkin            | 2006 | Teacher Quality   | Research review  | Teacher quality strongly affects student learning          | Handbook of the Economics of Education             |
| 13 | Dohmen & Falk                | 2010 | You get what you pay for: incentives and selection in the education system                                      | Laboratory experiments and field data analysis           | Incentives influence who enters teaching                   | The Economic Journal                               |
| 14 | Qin                          | 2021 | Country effects on teacher turnover intention: a multilevel, cross-national analysis                            | Multilevel statistical analysis using international data | Working conditions affect teacher turnover                 | Educational Research for Policy and Practice       |
| 15 | Ramachandran et al.          | 2005 | Teacher motivation in India   | Policy review, stakeholder interviews and survey         | Workload and salary issues reduce motivation               | Educational Resource Unit                          |
| 16 | Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez | 2011 | If you pay peanuts do you get monkeys? A cross-country analysis of teacher pay and pupil performance            | Cross-country analysis                                   | Higher pay improves teacher quality and retention          | Economic Policy                                    |
| 17 | Bennell & Akyeampong         | 2007 | Teacher Motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia   | Literature review  | Low salary reduces teacher motivation                      | DFID Education Paper                               |
| 18 | Kingdon & Teal               | 2010 | Teacher unions, teacher pay and student performance in India: A pupil fixed effects approach                    | Econometric study  | Union membership increases pay but reduces performance     | Journal of Development Economics                   |

|    |                            |      |  |  |  |                               |
|----|----------------------------|------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 19 | Vegas & Umansky            | 2005 | Improving Teaching and Learning through Effective Incentives                         | Policy analysis                        | Incentives improve recruitment and retention                       | World Bank                    |
| 20 | Woessmann                  | 2011 | Cross-country evidence on teacher performance pay                                    | Cross-country analysis using PISA data | Performance pay improves student achievement                       | Economics of Education Review |
| 21 | Béteille et al.            | 2016 | Teacher Unions in India: Diverse and Powerful  | Analytical study using secondary data  | Teacher unions influence reforms and accountability                | Cambridge University Press    |
| 22 | Kingdon & Sipahimalani-Rao | 2010 | Para-teachers in India: Status and Impact  | Critical literature review and survey  | Low pay and insecurity affect teacher conditions                   | Economic & Political Weekly   |
| 23 | Gupta                      | 2013 | Perspectives of Teachers' Unions on Challenges to Education in India                 | Qualitative study based on interviews  | Focus on salary issues & working conditions over learning outcomes | CCS Working Paper             |
| 24 | Jaume & Willén             | 2019 | The Long-run Effects of Teacher Strikes: Evidence from Argentina                     | Difference-in-difference analysis      | Strikes reduce long-term educational outcomes                      | Journal of Labor Economics    |
| 25 | Lyon et al.                | 2026 | The Effects of Teacher Strikes on Compensation, Working Conditions, and Productivity | Event study analysis                   | Strikes improve pay but may reduce short-term learning             | CALDER Working Paper          |

412

413 ***Theoretical Framework***

414 This study integrates three theoretical strands.

415

416 ***Compelled Visibility***

417 Compelled Visibility refers to collective action undertaken after prolonged institutional  
418 silence. When routine grievance mechanisms fail, workers escalate conflict to force recognition. In  
419 this framework, strike action is not impulsive but accumulative.

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421

422 ***Moral-Labor Tension***

423 Teachers navigate dual identities: contractual employees and moral agents. Strike action  
424 generates tension between economic claims and professional self-conception. This tension shapes  
425 emotional narratives of guilt, justification and ambivalence.

426 *Aspirational Fragility*

427 Aspirational Fragility describes the subtle weakening of confidence in institutional futures  
428 caused by recurring instability. It does not imply the collapse of aspirations but rather their  
429 recalibration under uncertainty.

430

431 **Conceptual Framework**

432 This study conceptualizes teacher strikes as  
433 relational processes shaped by structural labor  
434 conditions and interpreted through narrative  
435 meaning-making.

436 This framework emphasizes interaction rather  
437 than linear causality.

438 **Structural Labor Conditions:** This  
439 framework begins with the structural labor  
440 conditions that shape teachers' professional  
441 lives in the public education system of  
442 Meghalaya in India. These conditions include  
443 issues such as low wages, delayed salary  
444 payments, and the widespread use of  
445 contractual or ad hoc teaching positions. Such  
446 structural factors create uncertainty and  
447 dissatisfaction among teachers and influence  
448 their perceptions of fairness, job security, and  
449 professional recognition.

450 When these issues persist without adequate policy responses, they may contribute to  
451 tensions between teachers and educational authorities.

452 **Collective Action (Teacher Strikes):** In response to unfavourable labor conditions, teachers  
453 may engage in collective action, often in the form of strikes or protest movements. Teacher  
454 strikes typically involve work stoppages, demonstrations, and mobilization through  
455 professional organizations or unions.

TEACHER STRIKES AND LABOR RELATIONS IN PUBLIC EDUCATION:  
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



456 Teacher associations such as the Federation of All School Teachers of Meghalaya and the  
457 Meghalaya Government School Teachers' Association play a crucial role in organizing these  
458 actions and representing teachers' demands in negotiations with government authorities.  
459 Collective action thus becomes a strategy through which teachers attempt to address  
460 structural inequalities within the education system.

461 **Community Moral Negotiation:** Teacher strikes do not occur in isolation; they also affect  
462 students, parents, and communities. As a result, strike movements often generate community-  
463 level moral negotiations, where different stakeholders evaluate the legitimacy of teachers'  
464 actions.

465 Some members of the community may express support for teachers' demands, recognizing  
466 the need for fair working conditions. Others may express concern about the disruption of  
467 students' education. This dynamic creates tensions involving trust, conflict, and ethical  
468 dilemmas regarding the balance between teachers' rights and students' educational needs.

469 **Narrative Meaning-Making:** Within a narrative inquiry approach, the experiences of strikes  
470 and labor negotiations are understood through the stories teachers tell about their professional  
471 lives. Teachers interpret and reflect on their participation in strikes, describing how these  
472 events affected their identities, motivations, and relationships with the community and the  
473 government.

474 Through narrative meaning-making, teachers construct personal accounts of struggle,  
475 resilience, and hope for change. These narratives provide insight into how individuals make  
476 sense of complex labor conflicts within the education system.

477 **Reimagined Educational Futures:** The final element of the framework focuses on  
478 reimagined educational futures. Through their experiences and reflections, teachers often  
479 express hopes, fears, and aspirations regarding the future of public education in Meghalaya.

480 These perspectives may include visions for improved labor policies, stronger collaboration  
481 between teachers and policymakers, and a more equitable education system. By examining  
482 these narratives, the study seeks to understand how teachers envision possible pathways for  
483 educational reform and professional recognition.

484 **Definition of Key Terms**

485 **Teacher Strike:** Collective work stoppage by public school teachers as a form of labor  
486 protest.

487

488 **Labor Relations:** Institutional and relational interactions between employees (teachers),  
489 unions, and the state regarding working conditions rights.

490

491 **Public Education:** Government- funded schooling institutions operating under state  
492 regulation.

493

494 **Narrative inquiry:** A qualitative research methodology focusing on lived experiences  
495 through storytelling.

496

497 **Educational Futures:** Stakeholders perceptions, aspirations and expectations concerning  
498 long-term educational trajectories.

499

## 500 *Methodology*

### 501 **Context of the Study: Public Education and Labor in Meghalaya**

502

503 Public education in Meghalaya occupies a central place in the state's development  
504 trajectory. Given limited private sector penetration in many districts, government and aided  
505 schools remain primary avenues of formal education for large segments of the population.

506

507 Teachers in these schools operate within a complex labor environment characterized by:

508

- 509 • Variations in permanent and contractual employment
- 510 • Dependence on state funding allocations
- 511 • Administrative Centralization
- 512 • Periodic salary delays
- 513 • Negotiations between unions and government authorities

514 In such contexts, labor instability directly affects institutional continuity. However, the  
515 impact of strikes extends beyond administrative disruption. They influence:

- 516 • Student morale and aspirations
- 517 • Parental trust in state schooling
- 518 • Teachers' professional self-understanding
- 519 • Public perception of education as a stable social institution

520

521 Thus, teacher strikes in Meghalaya are not merely labor disputes; they are socially embedded  
522 events with long-term implications for educational futures.

523

## 524 **Statement of the Problem**

525 Teacher strikes in Meghalaya have recurred in response to labor grievances, particularly  
526 concerning salary delays, service regularization and employment security. Existing  
527 discussions and policy responses largely conceptualise these strikes as administrative  
528 interruptions or political bargaining tools.

529

530 However, three critical gaps remain:

531

- 532 • **Labor-Relational Gap:** Limited scholarly attention has been given to  
533 understanding teacher strikes as manifestations of labor relations within public  
534 education.
- 535 • **Narrative Gap:** The lived experiences and interpretations of teachers, students  
536 and parents during strike periods remain underexplored.
- 537 • **Future-Oriented Gap:** Little research examines how labor disputes in education  
538 reshape perceptions of long-term educational futures.

539 By neglecting these dimensions, prevailing approaches risk oversimplifying complex  
540 relational dynamics. Teacher strikes are embedded within broader negotiations of power,  
541 legitimacy, and moral responsibility. They may simultaneously represent resistance,  
542 vulnerability and institutional strain.

543 Therefore, there is need for a qualitative narrative study that explores how teacher  
544 strikes in Meghalaya are experienced, interpreted, and meaningfully constructed within the  
545 context of public sector labor relations.

## 546 **Research Objectives**

547 The study is guided by the following objectives:

- 548 i. To explore the lived experiences of teachers participating in strike movements in  
549 Meghalaya

- 550 ii. To examine how teachers, construct and express their professional identities during  
551 periods of conflict.
- 552 iii. To analyse how narratives reflect tensions between labor rights, moral expectations  
553 and workplace control.

## 554 **Research Questions.**

### 555 **Primary Research Question**

556 How are teacher strikes in public education narrated and understood within the  
557 broader context of labor relations in Meghalaya?

558

### 559 **Sub-Questions**

- 560 1) How do teachers describe the labor conditions that lead to strike action?  
561 2) How do educators construct moral justification for collective action?  
562 3) How do students and parents interpret teacher strikes as labor disputes?  
563 4) How do strike experiences reshape perceptions of trust in public education?  
564 5) How do such labor conflicts influence narratives of educational futures?

565

### 566 **Research Design**

567 This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in narrative inquiry.  
568 Narrative inquiry is particularly appropriate for examining teacher strikes as labor-relational  
569 events because it prioritises lived experiences, temporality and meaning-making. Rather than  
570 treating strikes as isolated events, narrative inquiry allows exploration of how stakeholders  
571 construct, interpret and reconfigure experience over time.

572 Teacher strikes are not only structural actions but also socially embedded experiences  
573 that unfold across past, present and anticipated futures. A narrative design enables the study  
574 to examine how teachers, students and parents interpret labor conflict within public education  
575 and how these interpretations influence perceptions of institutional trust and educational  
576 futures.

577 This design aligns with the study's theoretical orientation in labor process theory,  
578 moral economy and narrative identity theory. It allows attention to power, relational  
579 dynamics and aspirational reconstruction.

### 580 **Research Paradigm**

581 This study is situated within an interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist approach  
582 assumes that social reality is constructed through interaction and meaning-making rather than  
583 existing as an objective entity independent of participants.

584 Teacher strikes, within this framework, are understood as socially negotiated phenomena.  
585 Their meaning emerges through narratives constructed by teachers, parents, and students  
586 within specific historical and institutional contexts in Meghalaya.

587 The epistemological stance is constructivist: knowledge is co-constructed between researcher  
588 and participants during the interview process. The ontological position is relativist: multiple  
589 interpretations of strike events are considered valid and contextually grounded.

## 590 **Research Setting**

591 The study is conducted in selected public schools across urban and rural districts of  
592 Meghalaya. The state's public education system is characterized by:

- 593 • Government and government-aided schools
- 594 • Mixed permanent and contractual teacher appointments
- 595 • Diverse socio-cultural communities
- 596 • Variable infrastructural conditions

597 The inclusion of both rural and urban settings ensures variation in labor experiences and  
598 community responses to teacher strikes.

599

600

601

## 602 **Participants and Sampling**

### 603 **Sampling Strategy**

604 Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who had direct experience with  
 605 teacher strikes in public schools. The sampling strategy was criterion-based, focusing on  
 606 individuals who:

- 607 • Experienced at least one strike event within the last five years
- 608 • Were directly affected as teachers, students, or parents
- 609 • Represented varied socio-economic and geographic contexts

610 Maximum variation sampling was also used to capture diverse labor conditions and  
 611 community interpretations.

612 **Participant Profile**

613 The study includes approximately 22–25 participants:

- 614 • 8–10 public school teachers (including permanent and contractual)
- 615 • 6–8 students (secondary or higher secondary level)
- 616 • 6–8 parents or guardians
- 617 • Optional: 1–2 union representatives (if access permits)

618 This distribution enables examination of labor relations from multiple relational positions.

619 **Table 2: Narrative Interviews**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <i>Background Information</i>                       | 1) What is your age?  |
|   | 2) What is your gender?   |
|   | 3) What type of teacher are you? (Ad hoc/Deficit/Government)  |
|   | 4) How many years have you been teaching?   |
|   | 5) Where is your school located? (Rural/Urban/District)   |
|   | 6) What subjects/classes do you teach?  |
| <i>Professional Journey</i>                         | 7) Can you tell me about your journey into the teaching profession?                                 |
|   | 8) What motivated you to become a teacher?  |
|   | 9) How would you describe your role as a teacher in your community?                                 |
| <i>Work Conditions and Institutional Experience</i> | 10) Can you describe your daily work responsibilities?  |
|   | 11) How has your workload changed overtime?   |
|   | 12) What kind of administrative or non-teaching duties do you perform?                              |
|   | 13) How would you describe your level of autonomy in teaching?                                      |
|   | 14) What challenges do you face in terms of salary, job security, or promotions?                    |
|   | 15) Do you feel there are differences between ad hoc, deficit and regular teachers? Please explain. |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>Experience of Strike Participation</i>   | 16) Can you tell me the story of how you became involved in the strike?                                |
|   | 17) What are the key events or turning points during protest for you?                                  |
|   | 18) How did you feel during your participation (emotionally and professionally)?                       |
|   | 19) What were the main demands or issues that motivated the strike?                                    |
| <i>Moral Belief and Social Expectations</i> | 20) How do you think society views teachers in Meghalaya?  |
|   | 21) Do you think teacher is seen as a profession or a moral duty? Why?                                 |
|   | 22) How did people (family, community, media) react to your participation in the strike?               |
|   | 23) Did you feel any conflict between your responsibilities as a teacher and your role as a protester? |
|   | 24) How do you justify the strike in relation to students' welfare?                                    |
| <i>Identify and Meaning-Making</i>          | 25) How has your experience in the strike changed how you see yourself as a teacher?                   |
|   | 26) Would you describe your participation as a struggle for rights, dignity, or something else?        |
|   | 27) What does "being a teacher" mean to you now compared to before the strike?                         |
|   | 28) Can you share a moment during the protest that was particularly meaningful to you?                 |
|   | 29) How do you think these experiences will shape your future?   |
| <i>Collective experience and Solidarity</i> | 30) How do you describe the relationships among teachers during the strike?                            |
|   | 31) Did you feel a sense of unity or shared identity? Please explain.                                  |
|   | 32) What role did unions or groups play in shaping your experience?                                    |
| <i>Reflection and Closing</i>               | 33) Looking back, what does the strike mean to you personally?   |
|   | 34) Do you think the strike achieved its goals? Why or why not?  |
|   | 35) What challenges would you like to see in the education system in Meghalaya?                        |
|   | 36) Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience?                              |

620

621 **Table 3: Data Collection Overview Table**

| Method      | Purpose            | Data Collected                   |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Interviews  | Capture narratives | Life stories, strike experiences |
| Observation | Contextual insight | Behaviors, interactions          |
| Documents   | Supplement data    | Media, union texts               |

622

623 **Data Collection Methods**

624 **In-depth Narrative Interviews**

625 The primary data collection method consists of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. These  
626 interviews are designed to elicit detailed personal narratives related to:

- 627 • Entry into teaching profession
- 628 • Experiences leading up to strike participation
- 629 • Key events during protests
- 630 • Reflection of identity, dignity and professional values.

631

### 632 **Document and Media Analysis**

633 Secondary data sources are used to supplement primary data, including:

- 634 • Newspaper articles
- 635 • Union Statements
- 636 • Social Media Contents

637 These materials provide contextual background and help situate individual narratives within  
638 broader public discourse.

### 639 **Data Analysis**

640 The study employs thematic narrative analysis which integrates thematic coding with  
641 narrative interpretation. The analysis follows these steps.

- 642 • Transcription of interview data
- 643 • Coding for recurring themes such as
  - 644 ➤ Employment precarity check and inequality
  - 645 ➤ Moral tensions and social expectations
  - 646 ➤ Identity construct and dignity.
- 647 • Examination of narrative structures, including plot, sequence and turning points
- 648 • Interpretation of findings in relation to theoretical framework

649

### 650 **Trustworthiness of the Study**

651 To ensure rigor and credibility, the study adopts the following strategies:

652 **Credibility:** Through prolonged engagement

653 **Reflexivity:** Continuous reflection on the researcher's role and potential biases.

654 **Thick Description:** Providing rich, contextual accounts of participants' experiences

655 **Triangulation:** Use of multiple data sources to validate findings

## 656 **Ethical Considerations**

657 Ethical principles are strictly followed throughout the research process:

- 658 • Informed consent is obtained from all participants
- 659 • Participants' identities are protected through anonymity and pseudonyms
- 660 • Confidentiality of data is maintained
- 661 • Sensitivity is exercised when dealing with emotionally and politically charged
- 662 experience

## 663 **Data Analysis and Interpretation (With Narrative Evidence)**

### 664 **Profile of Participants**

665 The study includes 20 participants comprising ad-hoc teachers, deficit school teachers,  
666 government teachers, and NGO members. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms (e.g.,  
667 *Participant A, B, C*) are used throughout the chapter.

### 668 **Overview of Emerging Themes**

669 Three major themes emerged from the analysis:

- 670 1. Employment Precarity and Structural Inequality
- 671 2. Moral Tensions and Social Expectations
- 672 3. Identity, Dignity, and Professional Recognition

### 673 **Theme 1: Employment Precarity and Structural Inequality**

674 Participants consistently highlighted unstable employment conditions and systemic  
675 inequality.

676 One ad-hoc teacher described:

677 *"I have been teaching for eight years, but still there is no job security. Every*  
678 *year we wait, not knowing if we will continue or not."* (Participant A)

679 Another participant emphasized financial instability:

680 *"Sometimes salaries are delayed for months. We have families to support, but*  
681 *there is no certainty. It feels like we are invisible."* (Participant D)

682 A deficit school teacher added:

683 *“We do the same work as regular teachers, but we are not treated equally.*  
684 *This inequality pushed us to protest.”* (Participant F)

685 These narratives reflect how employment precarity is not only an economic issue but also a  
686 deeply emotional and structural concern, leading teachers to collective action.

### 687 **Theme 2: Moral Tensions and Social Expectations**

688 Participants expressed strong moral dilemmas regarding strike participation.

689 One teacher shared:

690 *“As a teacher, I feel responsible for my students. Going on strike was very*  
691 *difficult for me.”* (Participant B)

692 Another reflected societal pressure:

693 *“People say we are neglecting students, but they don’t understand our*  
694 *struggles. We are also fighting for a better future for education.”* (Participant  
695 H)

696 A government school teacher explained the internal conflict:

697 *“It is painful to stay away from the classroom, but sometimes raising our*  
698 *voice becomes necessary.”* (Participant K)

699 These quotes reveal how teachers constantly negotiate their dual roles—as caregivers and as  
700 workers demanding justice—highlighting the moral complexity of strike participation.

### 701 **Theme 3: Identity, Dignity, and Professional Recognition**

702 Participants’ narratives strongly emphasized the need for recognition and dignity.

703 One participant stated:

704 *“We are teachers, but sometimes we don’t feel respected. Our work is not*  
705 *valued the way it should be.”* (Participant C)

706 Another shared a turning point:

707 *“When my salary was delayed for months, I realized we had to stand up for*  
708 *ourselves. That was when I joined the protest.”* (Participant G)

709 An NGO member observed:

710 *“The strikes are not just about money; they are about dignity and recognition*  
711 *of teachers’ contributions.”* (Participant N)

712 These narratives show how participation in strikes becomes a means of reclaiming  
713 professional identity and asserting dignity.

### 714 **Narrative Structures and Meaning-Making**

715 Participants' stories often followed a similar narrative trajectory.

716 For example, one participant described their journey:

717 *"I joined teaching with passion and hope. But over time, the challenges kept*  
718 *increasing. The strike was a turning point where I felt I had to act."*  
719 (Participant E)

720 Another reflected on transformation:

721 *"Before, I thought protests were unnecessary. Now I see them as important for*  
722 *change."* (Participant J)

723 These accounts illustrate how individuals reinterpret their experiences over time, linking  
724 personal struggles to broader systemic realities.

### 725 **Discussion of Findings**

726 The inclusion of narrative excerpts highlights the depth and complexity of participants'  
727 experiences.

- 728 • Employment precarity is experienced as both material insecurity and emotional  
729 distress.
- 730 • Moral tensions reflect the ethical burden of balancing professional duty with personal  
731 rights.
- 732 • Identity construction emerges through resistance and collective action.

733 As one participant summarized:

734 *"We are not protesting because we want to, but because we have no other*  
735 *choice."* (Participant L)

736 This reinforces the argument that teacher strikes are deeply embedded in issues of justice,  
737 identity, and structural inequality.

738

### 739 **Employment Insecurity and Precarity**

740 One of the most consistent issues that emerges from the analysis is the problem of  
741 employment insecurity, particularly among ad-hoc and SSA teachers. Secondary data  
742 indicates that many teachers have been working for long periods without permanent status,

743 regular salary revision, or access to service benefits. In some cases, teachers have continued  
744 in service for decades without significant improvement in their conditions.

745 From a narrative perspective, such conditions reflect more than just structural inequality.  
746 They shape how teachers understand their roles, their future, and their place within the  
747 education system. The uncertainty associated with temporary employment creates a sense of  
748 instability, which in turn influences collective actions such as protests and strikes.

### 749 **Salary Delays and Financial Stress**

750 Salary-related issues appear as one of the most immediate and visible triggers of teacher  
751 unrest in Meghalaya. Reports consistently highlight delays in salary disbursement, sometimes  
752 affecting thousands of teachers at a time. Instances of withheld salaries and irregular  
753 payments indicate that the issue is systemic rather than occasional.

754 These financial challenges extend beyond the workplace and affect teachers' everyday lives.  
755 From a narrative standpoint, such experiences contribute to frustration and dissatisfaction,  
756 influencing how teachers perceive their profession and their relationship with the state. Salary  
757 delays, therefore, become not only an administrative issue but also a lived experience that  
758 shapes decision-making, including participation in protests.

### 759 **Protest as a Response to Long-standing Issues**

760 The findings suggest that teacher strikes in Meghalaya are rarely sudden or isolated events.  
761 Instead, they emerge from long-standing grievances related to salary stagnation, delayed  
762 payments, and lack of recognition. For example, reports indicate that some teacher groups  
763 have demanded salary revisions after several years without enhancement, leading to  
764 prolonged protests and sit-in demonstrations.

765 These protest movements often disrupt classroom activities and affect students across the  
766 state, highlighting the scale and seriousness of the issue. However, the analysis also suggests  
767 that such actions are generally taken after other avenues have been exhausted. In this sense,  
768 strikes can be understood as a collective response to unresolved issues rather than impulsive  
769 decisions.

### 770 **Government Response and Policy Interventions**

771 Another important theme that emerges is the role of government responses in shaping the  
772 dynamics of teacher strikes. Secondary sources show that protests have often led to policy

773 actions such as salary enhancements, financial allocations, and the introduction of monitoring  
774 and administrative systems.

775 For instance, initiatives like attendance monitoring systems and digital salary platforms have  
776 been introduced to address concerns related to accountability and payment delays. While  
777 these measures indicate responsiveness, they also suggest that interventions are often  
778 reactive, occurring after sustained protest rather than through preventive planning.

### 779 **Inequality within the Teaching System**

780 The findings also highlight differences within the teaching workforce, particularly between  
781 regular government teachers and those working under ad-hoc or SSA arrangements. The latter  
782 group appears to face more challenges in terms of salary, job security, and access to benefits.

783 This internal inequality contributes to dissatisfaction and reinforces the need for collective  
784 action. It also reflects broader structural issues within the education system, where different  
785 categories of teachers operate under unequal conditions despite performing similar roles.

### 786 **Impact on Students and the Education System**

787 Teacher strikes have direct and visible impacts on students and the functioning of schools.  
788 Reports indicate that protests often result in teachers leaving classrooms, affecting the  
789 continuity of learning for a large number of students.

790 At the same time, the analysis suggests that these short-term disruptions are linked to deeper  
791 systemic issues. Teachers' demands for improved working conditions are often connected to  
792 the long-term quality of education, indicating that the effects of strikes cannot be understood  
793 only in immediate terms.

794

795

796

### 797 **Repetition of Protests and Institutional Trust**

798 A recurring pattern observed in the data is the cycle of protest and response. Teachers engage  
799 in protests, the government responds with assurances or partial measures, and similar issues  
800 arise again over time. This pattern points to a lack of sustained resolution.

801 Such repetition reflects growing frustration and limited trust between teachers and  
 802 institutional authorities. It suggests that while temporary solutions may be implemented,  
 803 underlying concerns remain unaddressed, leading to repeated mobilisations.

804 **Table 4: Summary of News Reports on Teacher Strikes in Meghalaya**

805 The following table presents a summary of selected news reports highlighting teacher strike  
 806 events in Meghalaya.

| Sl No. | Title  | Year | Journal/Source | Key Findings  |
|--------|--|------|----------------|---|
| 1      | Meghalaya SSA Teachers Begin Indefinite Protest Against Govt's Failure to Enhance Salary for 8 Years | 2024 | Syllad News    | Salary not enhanced since 2016; 100% hike demanded; teachers left classrooms affecting thousands of students statewide                                      |
| 2      | Meghalaya SSA Teachers End Protest After Govt Promises Salary Hike                                   | 2024 | Northeast News | 21-day sit-in ended after Cabinet Minister promised salary hike; TIMS app introduced to monitor teacher attendance and address absenteeism                  |
| 3      | Meghalaya Education Minister: Govt Drafting Plan for SSA Teachers' Salary Enhancement                | 2024 | India Today NE | 13,000+ SSA teachers demanded hike; association wrote to PM Modi; Education Minister admitted financial difficulty in meeting salary demands                |
| 4      | Meghalaya SSA Teachers Demand Immediate Salary Release Amidst Non-Teaching Staff Protest             | 2024 | Ukhrul Times   | July salary of 12,000+ SSA teachers withheld; MSSASA invokes Articles 21 and 300A demanding immediate release of withheld salaries                          |
| 5      | Meghalaya: Hundreds of Ad-hoc Teachers Hold Protest; Demand 5% Salary Hike, Retirement Age of 65     | 2025 | Careers360     | Ad-hoc teachers paid ₹18,000–₹33,000/month with no service benefits; protest for regularisation and 5% annual increment; government failed on 2023 promises |
| 6      | Meghalaya Govt Fulfills Demands of Ad-hoc Teachers by Approving Enhancement of Salaries              | 2022 | India Today NE | Cabinet approved salary enhancement for all ad-hoc teacher categories; annual financial impact ₹100 crore; decision triggered by indefinite sit-in protests |
| 7      | Education Commission Submits Interim Report on Salary for Adhoc Teachers                             | 2024 | Highland Post  | Meghalaya State Education Commission submitted report on adhoc salary; teachers serving since 1993 without pay upgrades; demands equal pay for equal work   |

|    |   |      |                   |  |
|----|---|------|-------------------|--|
| 8  | MegSIMS to Address Delays in Teachers' Salary                           | 2025 | Meghalaya Monitor | Government introduces MegSIMS portal to eliminate salary disbursement delays; delays confirmed for adhoc and GIA teachers across Meghalaya                             |
| 9  | ABVP Meghalaya Called for Revision of Salaries for Govt School Teachers | 2024 | Syllad News       | ABVP submitted memorandum to Governor demanding timely salary disbursement; primary teacher salary structures inadequate; dropout rates linked to poor teacher quality |
| 10 | Meghalaya Teacher Salaries Doubled                                      | 2017 | EducationWorld    | CM approved 100% salary hike retrospectively from Jan 2017 for 7,000 primary teachers; ₹63.34 crore allocated; acknowledged teachers' challenges                       |

807

808 The above table highlights how teacher strikes in Meghalaya are closely linked to issues such  
809 as salary delays, job insecurity, and unequal working conditions. The news reports show that  
810 these strikes are not isolated incidents, but develop over time as a response to unresolved  
811 concerns and limited institutional support. From a narrative perspective, these events reflect  
812 the growing tension between teachers and the state, where strikes become a way for teachers  
813 to express their experiences and demand recognition of their rights and working conditions.

## 814 **Discussions**

### 815 **Salary Issues and Teacher Motivation**

816 One of the central findings of the study is that salary-related issues, including delayed  
817 payments and lack of regular revision, play a major role in triggering teacher strikes in  
818 Meghalaya. These findings strongly align with existing research that highlights the  
819 importance of teacher pay in shaping motivation and performance.

820 Studies such as Britton and Propper (2016) and Leigh (2012) have shown that teacher salaries  
821 directly influence both the quality of teaching and the attractiveness of the profession.  
822 Similarly, Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez (2011) found that countries with better teacher  
823 pay tend to have better student outcomes.

824 The findings of the present study support these arguments, showing that when teachers  
825 experience financial instability, it affects not only their motivation but also their ability to

826 function effectively in the classroom. In this sense, salary issues are not merely economic  
827 concerns but are closely linked to the overall quality of education.

### 828 **Employment Insecurity and Structural Inequality**

829 Another important theme that emerges from the study is the issue of employment insecurity,  
830 particularly among ad-hoc and SSA teachers. The findings indicate that many teachers work  
831 without permanent status, service benefits, or clear career progression.

832 This is consistent with studies such as Dey (2013), which highlighted regional imbalances in  
833 teacher education and workforce distribution, and Mawthoh and Rani (2018), which pointed  
834 out structural weaknesses in the education system in Meghalaya.

835 The presence of multiple categories of teachers with unequal conditions reflects a broader  
836 structural problem. This inequality not only affects teacher morale but also contributes to  
837 dissatisfaction and collective action.

### 838 **Teacher Motivation and Working Conditions**

839 The study also shows that poor working conditions, combined with salary issues,  
840 significantly affect teacher motivation. This finding is in line with Ramachandran et al.  
841 (2005) and Bennell and Akyeampong (2007), who found that inadequate pay, weak  
842 incentives, and poor working environments lead to low levels of teacher motivation.

843 In addition, emotional and psychological aspects also play an important role. Studies such as  
844 Valente et al. (2020) and Puertas Molero et al. (2019) emphasize that emotional well-being is  
845 closely linked to teaching effectiveness.

846 The findings of the present study suggest that teachers in Meghalaya operate under  
847 considerable stress due to financial and professional uncertainty. This affects not only their  
848 performance but also their perception of the teaching profession.

### 849 **Teacher Unions, Power, and Collective Action**

850 The role of teacher unions and collective action is another key aspect of the study. The  
851 findings indicate that protests and strikes are often organised responses to long-standing  
852 issues, supported by teacher associations.

853 This aligns with studies such as Bascia and Osmond (2012), Kingdon and Teal (2010), and  
854 Béteille et al. (2016), which highlight the influence of teacher unions in shaping educational  
855 policies and labor relations.

856 However, the findings also reflect the complexity of union activity. While unions help in  
857 securing better conditions for teachers, they may also create tensions between accountability  
858 and professional responsibilities.

### 859 **Teacher Strikes as Labor-Relational Events**

860 A key contribution of this study lies in understanding teacher strikes as labor-relational events  
861 rather than simply disruptions in schooling. The findings suggest that strikes are deeply  
862 rooted in issues of economic survival, institutional inequality, and lack of recognition.

863 This perspective is supported by studies such as Jaume and Willén (2019) and Lyon et al.  
864 (2026), which show that teacher strikes have complex effects, including both benefits for  
865 teachers and challenges for students.

866 From a theoretical standpoint, the findings reinforce the idea that teachers are not only  
867 educators but also workers who negotiate their rights within a broader labor framework.

### 868 **Moral Tensions and Professional Identity**

869 The study also highlights the tension between teachers' professional responsibilities and their  
870 need to protest. Teachers are often expected to prioritise students' learning, but at the same  
871 time, they face economic and institutional challenges that push them towards collective  
872 action.

873 This reflects a deeper issue related to professional identity. Teachers are positioned both as  
874 caregivers and as workers, and these roles can sometimes conflict with each other.

875 From a narrative perspective, these tensions are part of how teachers make sense of their  
876 experiences. Their participation in strikes can be seen as an attempt to balance these  
877 competing expectations.

### 878 **Government Response and Institutional Trust**

879 The findings show that government responses to teacher protests are often reactive rather  
880 than proactive. While protests sometimes lead to policy changes, such as salary increases or  
881 administrative reforms, these actions are usually taken after prolonged pressure.

882 This pattern creates a cycle of protest and response, which indicates a lack of sustained trust  
883 between teachers and the state. The repetition of similar issues over time suggests that  
884 underlying problems are not fully resolved.

## 885 **Theoretical Implications**

### 886 **Labor Process Theory**

887 Labor Process Theory mainly looks at how work is controlled and how workers respond to  
888 that control. When we look at the findings of this study, this idea becomes quite clear.

889 Many teachers, especially those working on an ad-hoc or SSA basis, do not have much  
890 control over their work conditions. Things like delayed salaries, lack of job security, and  
891 uncertainty about the future show that teachers are working in a system where decisions are  
892 mostly made from the top.

893 In this situation, teacher strikes can be seen as a form of response. They are not just about  
894 demanding money but about pushing back against a system that does not give teachers  
895 enough control or stability. So, in a way, the findings of this study show that teacher strikes  
896 are also about resistance — a way for teachers to make their voices heard.

### 897 **Moral Economy Framework**

898 The Moral Economy Framework helps us understand the tension between what people are  
899 expected to do and what they actually need to survive.

900 Teaching is often seen as a noble profession. Society expects teachers to be dedicated,  
901 patient, and committed to students no matter what. But the findings of this study show that  
902 the reality is more complicated. Teachers are dealing with salary delays, financial stress, and  
903 job insecurity.

904 This creates a difficult situation. On one hand, teachers feel responsible for their students. On  
905 the other hand, they also have their own needs and responsibilities. When they go on strike,  
906 they are sometimes criticised for not doing their duty, even though they are fighting for basic  
907 rights.

908 So, the study shows that teacher strikes are shaped by this tension between moral  
909 expectations and economic reality. Teachers are not ignoring their responsibilities; they are  
910 trying to balance them.

## 911 **Narrative Identity Theory**

912 Narrative Identity Theory focuses on how people make sense of their experiences and how  
913 they see themselves.

914 The findings of this study suggest that teachers do not see themselves in just one way. They  
915 see themselves both as educators and as workers. These two roles do not always go together  
916 smoothly. During strike situations, this becomes more visible. Teachers have to think about  
917 who they are — whether they should focus on teaching or on standing up for their rights. This  
918 creates a kind of inner conflict.

919 From a narrative point of view, these experiences are important because they shape how  
920 teachers understand their own identity. Participating in strikes becomes part of their story —  
921 something that defines how they see their profession and their place in society.

## 922 **Rethinking Teacher Strikes**

923 One of the important points that comes out of this study is that teacher strikes should not be  
924 seen only as disruptions.

925 Usually, strikes are discussed in terms of lost class time or impact on students. While that is  
926 important, it does not tell the full story. The findings show that strikes are connected to  
927 deeper issues like working conditions, inequality, and lack of recognition.

928 So, instead of seeing strikes only as a problem, they can also be understood as a response to  
929 long-term issues within the system.

## 930 **Suggestions for Future Research**

931 Future research can build on this study by collecting more detailed primary data, especially  
932 through interviews, to gain a deeper understanding of teachers' experiences and perspectives.  
933 This would help in capturing the personal and day-to-day realities of teachers more clearly,  
934 particularly in relation to issues like job insecurity and salary delays.

935 At the same time, comparative studies across different regions can provide a broader  
936 understanding of how labor relations in education vary in different contexts. Further research  
937 can also examine how policy changes influence the relationship between teachers and the  
938 state over time, and how these changes affect the frequency and nature of teacher protests.

939 **Conclusion**

940 In conclusion, this study shows that teacher strikes in Meghalaya are closely linked to  
941 ongoing issues such as salary delays, job insecurity, and unequal working conditions,  
942 particularly among ad-hoc and SSA teachers. These problems are not isolated incidents but  
943 reflect deeper challenges within the education system and the way teachers are positioned  
944 within it.

945 The findings also suggest that these strikes usually develop over time, after repeated concerns  
946 remain unresolved. Rather than being sudden disruptions, they are responses to continued  
947 financial and professional uncertainty. From a labor-relational perspective, this highlights an  
948 imbalance in the relationship between teachers and the system, where expectations are high  
949 but support remains limited.

950 Overall, the study indicates that unless these underlying issues are addressed, similar patterns  
951 of protest are likely to continue. Improving basic working conditions, ensuring timely  
952 salaries, and creating more stable employment structures can help strengthen this relationship  
953 and support a more stable education system in Meghalaya.

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