



Teacher administrative workload and classroom effectiveness in government schools

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Abstract

Government school teachers in India are formally protected under Section 27 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which restricts their deployment to non-teaching duties except for decennial census work, disaster relief, and election-related duties. In practice, however, teachers across several states, including Uttar Pradesh, continue to report being pulled into a much wider range of administrative and data-entry tasks, from updating portals such as UDISE Plus and mid-day meal monitoring systems to serving as Booth Level Officers and handling welfare-scheme verification. This study examines the relationship between the administrative workload carried by government secondary school teachers in Uttar Pradesh and their classroom effectiveness, as reported by the teachers themselves and rated by their head teachers. A survey was conducted with 260 government secondary school teachers drawn from three districts of Uttar Pradesh, using a structured Administrative Workload Scale covering data-entry and portal work, election and census duty, mid-day meal and welfare-scheme administration, and miscellaneous clerical tasks, alongside a Classroom Effectiveness Scale covering lesson preparation, student engagement in class, use of teaching aids, and timely completion of syllabus. Results show that a large majority of teachers spend a substantial part of their working day on non-teaching administrative tasks, and that higher administrative workload is significantly and negatively associated with classroom effectiveness ($r = -0.41$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis confirms that administrative workload remains a significant negative predictor of classroom effectiveness even after controlling for teaching experience and pupil-teacher ratio at the school. The paper situates these findings within the wider national conversation on teacher deployment for non-academic duties and offers concrete, low-cost recommendations for protecting instructional time in Uttar Pradesh's government schools.

Keywords: Teacher workload, administrative burden, classroom effectiveness, government schools, Uttar Pradesh, RTE Act, teacher deployment, instructional time

Introduction

A government school teacher in Uttar Pradesh today is rarely just a teacher. Alongside preparing lessons and managing a classroom, the same teacher is frequently expected to update multiple government portals, verify ration cards or scholarship documents, help run the mid-day meal scheme, and step in for civic duties such as election work or the decennial census whenever the state machinery calls upon them. This is not a new complaint, but it has taken on a sharper, more documented shape in recent years as digital monitoring has expanded and as reporting of teacher grievances has become more visible in the national press.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 was meant to settle this question in law. Section 27 of the Act clearly states that teachers should not be deployed for non-educational purposes, with narrowly defined exceptions for the decennial population census, disaster relief operations, and elections to local bodies, state legislatures, or Parliament. Yet recent reporting from across India, including Uttar Pradesh, shows that teachers continue to be assigned tasks well beyond this narrow legal exception, ranging from pesticide-control surveys to pilgrimage-management duty, and that teachers who resist or make small procedural errors while carrying out these unfamiliar assignments have in some cases faced suspension, even when their actual teaching record was not in question. Some states have recently responded with formal directives; Punjab's

Education Minister, for instance, wrote to the state administration in October 2025 instructing that no teacher be assigned non-teaching duties without prior written approval, explicitly citing Section 27 of the RTE Act, while Himachal Pradesh issued a duty roster in 2026 capping non-academic assignments at two per teacher in most schools. Uttar Pradesh, which has the largest number of government school teachers and the largest number of sanctioned teaching posts of any state in the country, has not seen an equivalent state-wide directive, even as its teachers continue to report similar pressures.

A related and increasingly documented burden is what teachers themselves describe as a "data-entry" burden. As digital monitoring systems such as UDISE Plus, DIKSHA, the mid-day meal portal, and various attendance-tracking applications have expanded, teachers are now expected to feed daily data into several of these systems, often after regular school hours, with same-day deadlines and follow-up messages from the education department if entries are missed. A government school teacher from Uttar Pradesh, quoted in recent reporting on this issue, described the frustration directly, saying that teachers did not sign up to become data clerks. This kind of testimony captures something that is easy to miss in aggregate statistics: even when a task appears small on paper, such as filling one daily attendance form, the cumulative daily and weekly load across several such systems can meaningfully eat into the time and mental bandwidth a teacher has left for lesson

planning, remedial teaching, or simply engaging attentively with students during class hours.

This burden falls on a system that is already stretched thin in Uttar Pradesh. National data compiled from Project Approval Board submissions and matched against UDISE+ records showed that, as of the 2025 reporting cycle, Uttar Pradesh alone accounted for close to 1.94 lakh vacant sanctioned teaching posts, by far the largest number of any state in the country. When a smaller number of teachers must cover the same number of students and the same number of administrative obligations, the effective workload per teacher, both academic and non-academic, rises sharply. It is against this backdrop of teacher shortage and expanding administrative demands that the present study examines whether administrative workload is statistically associated with classroom effectiveness among Uttar Pradesh's government secondary school teachers.

Classroom effectiveness, for the purposes of this study, is understood as the practical, day-to-day quality of teaching: whether a teacher comes prepared with a lesson plan, manages to keep students actively engaged rather than passive, uses available teaching aids or materials, and is able to complete the prescribed syllabus within the academic year. Recent classroom-observation research conducted under the Teaching Learning Practices Survey found that even where print-rich materials were present in classrooms across several states including Uttar Pradesh, they were often not used effectively, and those observed classrooms rarely gave children real opportunities for active participation or discussion. While that study did not set out specifically to measure teacher workload, its findings are consistent with a picture in which teachers, stretched by other demands, may fall back on the least effortful teaching routines available to them, such as whole-class lecturing, rather than more demanding but more effective interactive methods.

Given this context, the present study asks a direct question: is administrative workload significantly associated with classroom effectiveness among government secondary school teachers in Uttar Pradesh, and does this relationship hold once other likely explanations, such as years of teaching experience and the pupil-teacher ratio at the school, are taken into account?

Review of Related Literature

The idea that non-teaching duties reduce the time and energy teachers can devote to their core academic role is not new to Indian education policy discussion, but it has gathered fresh documentation in the last two years. Recent national reporting has traced a pattern of government teachers being assigned tasks entirely unrelated to education, including pesticide-control surveys, pilgrimage-management duty, stray-animal surveys, and Booth Level Officer responsibilities during elections, and has documented cases in which teachers faced suspension over technical lapses committed while carrying out these unfamiliar civic assignments, even where their classroom performance was not the issue at hand. Commentary specifically addressing census-related deployment has argued that repeated assignment of teachers to non-teaching administrative tasks, including census work, surveys, and welfare-scheme implementation, directly reduces the time and energy

available for actual teaching, a concern the commentary frames as particularly serious given India's ongoing foundational learning crisis, and one that is especially severe in schools already facing teacher shortages, a description that fits Uttar Pradesh closely given its large number of vacant sanctioned posts.

A more granular, portal-specific version of this concern has emerged around the expansion of digital monitoring in schools. Reporting based on interviews with government school teachers across several states, including Uttar Pradesh, found that teachers are now expected to regularly update multiple digital systems, covering attendance, mid-day meal records, and general school information, often staying back after school hours to complete same-day entries, with departmental follow-up messages adding a layer of pressure when entries are delayed. This "data-entry burden," as it has come to be described in recent coverage, adds a layer of administrative demand that did not exist in the same form even a decade ago, and it appears to fall on teachers regardless of whether they are also carrying out more traditional non-teaching duties such as election work.

At the level of formal law, the RTE Act's Section 27 already recognises, in principle, that non-teaching work competes with teaching time, which is precisely why the Act narrows permissible non-teaching deployment to census, disaster relief, and election duty alone. That several states have felt the need to issue fresh administrative directives reaffirming this provision, including Punjab's October 2025 directive limiting non-teaching duties without written departmental approval and Himachal Pradesh's 2026 duty-roster reform capping non-academic assignments per teacher, suggests that the underlying legal protection has not, on its own, been sufficient to prevent the practical spread of administrative duties onto teaching staff.

On the classroom side, the Teaching Learning Practices Survey conducted across nine states, including Uttar Pradesh, between late 2024 and early 2025 offers one of the more recent, methodical pictures of what is actually happening inside early-grade government-school classrooms in India. Its findings on limited student participation, underused learning materials, and reliance on whole-class questioning rather than more individualised or interactive methods provide an empirical backdrop against which the effect of teacher workload can be considered, even though the survey's stated focus was broader than workload alone.

Taken together, this body of recent work supports the central premise of this study: that administrative and non-teaching demands on government school teachers in India, and specifically in Uttar Pradesh, have expanded in visible and well-documented ways in recent years, that this expansion is occurring within a system already strained by a very large number of vacant teaching posts, and that there is a plausible, though not yet fully quantified at the state level, link between this administrative burden and the practical quality of classroom teaching that students actually experience.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on a resource-based view of teacher time, in which a teacher's working day is treated as a finite resource that must be divided between instructional tasks (lesson preparation, teaching, assessment, and remedial

support) and non-instructional tasks (administrative reporting, data entry, civic duties, and welfare-scheme work). Under this framework, an increase in non-instructional demand, if not matched by a corresponding reduction in instructional expectations or an increase in support staff, is expected to reduce the time, attention, and energy available for classroom-related work, with a likely downstream effect on classroom effectiveness. The study also draws on the concept of role overload from occupational stress research, which suggests that when the total demands placed on a person in a single role (here, "government school teacher") exceed what can reasonably be accomplished, performance in the role's core function, teaching, is likely to suffer even if the person is diligent and well-intentioned.

Objectives of the Study

To measure the level and composition of administrative workload carried by government secondary school teachers in the selected districts of Uttar Pradesh.

1. To measure the level of classroom effectiveness among the same teachers.
2. To examine the relationship between administrative workload and classroom effectiveness.
3. To determine whether administrative workload significantly predicts classroom effectiveness after controlling for teaching experience and pupil-teacher ratio.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant negative relationship between administrative workload and classroom effectiveness among government secondary school teachers in Uttar Pradesh.

H2: Administrative workload significantly predicts classroom effectiveness even after controlling for teaching experience and pupil-teacher ratio.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional, correlational survey design, suited to examining the strength and direction of the relationship between administrative workload and classroom effectiveness without manipulating either variable.

2. Sample and Setting

Data were collected from 260 government secondary school teachers across three districts of Uttar Pradesh — Lucknow, Barabanki, and Prayagraj — chosen to represent a mix of

urban-adjacent and more rural block-level government schools. Teachers were selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation across gender, subject taught, and years of teaching experience (up to 10 years, 11 to 20 years, and above 20 years).

3. Tools Used

Administrative workload was measured using a researcher-developed Administrative Workload Scale, covering four sub-areas: digital data-entry and portal work (such as UDISE Plus, attendance apps, and mid-day meal monitoring systems), election and census-related duty, welfare-scheme and scholarship verification work, and general clerical or miscellaneous school-office tasks. Teachers rated the frequency and time burden of each sub-area on a 5-point scale, yielding a combined workload score.

Classroom effectiveness was measured using a shortened Classroom Effectiveness Scale, covering lesson preparation, student engagement during class, use of teaching aids and materials, and timely syllabus completion. This scale was completed in two parts: a self-rating by the teacher, and an independent rating by the school head teacher or principal for the same set of items, allowing for a partial cross-check against pure self-report.

4. Data Collection

Data were collected between March and May 2026, using a structured questionnaire administered in person during non-instructional hours, with head-teacher ratings collected separately to reduce the chance that head teachers were influenced by what individual teachers had reported about their own workload.

5. Data Analysis

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression, with statistical significance set at $p < 0.05$.

Results

1. Administrative Workload Profile

Table 1 presents the mean scores for each sub-area of administrative workload, along with the percentage of teachers reporting a "high" workload level (top two points on the 5-point scale) for that sub-area.

Workload Sub-Area (max score 5)	Mean	Standard Deviation	% Reporting High Burden
Digital Data-Entry and Portal Work	3.8	0.9	61.2%
Election and Census Duty	3.1	1.2	38.5%
Welfare-Scheme/Scholarship Verification	3.4	1.0	46.9%
General Clerical/Miscellaneous Tasks	3.0	1.1	35.0%
Combined Administrative Workload Score	3.32	0.78	—

Digital data-entry and portal work emerged as the single heaviest reported burden, with just over three out of five teachers rating it as a high-burden activity, consistent with recent reporting describing teachers' frustration with the growing expectation to feed daily data into systems such as UDISE Plus and mid-day meal monitoring portals outside regular teaching hours.

2. Relationship Between Administrative Workload and Classroom Effectiveness

Table 2 presents the correlation between combined administrative workload and the four dimensions of classroom effectiveness, along with the results of the multiple regression analysis predicting overall classroom effectiveness.

Table 2: Correlation and Regression Results for Administrative Workload and Classroom Effectiveness (N = 260)

Measure	Correlation with Administrative Workload (r)		p-value
Lesson Preparation	-0.36		< 0.01
Student Engagement in Class	-0.39		< 0.01
Use of Teaching Aids	-0.33		< 0.01
Timely Syllabus Completion	-0.44		< 0.01
Overall Classroom Effectiveness	-0.41		< 0.01
Regression Predictor	□ (Standardised) t-value		p-value
Administrative Workload	-0.35	-6.02	< 0.01
Teaching Experience (years)	0.14	2.31	0.02
Pupil-Teacher Ratio	-0.12	-2.05	0.04

$R^2 = 0.24$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.23$; $F(3, 256) = 26.9$, $p < 0.01$

All four dimensions of classroom effectiveness showed a significant negative correlation with administrative workload, supporting Hypothesis 1, with the strongest relationship found for timely syllabus completion, suggesting that administrative demands most visibly disrupt teachers' ability to keep pace with the academic calendar. In the regression model, administrative workload remained the strongest individual predictor of overall classroom effectiveness even after teaching experience and pupil-teacher ratio were included, supporting Hypothesis 2. The model explained about 24 percent of the variation in classroom effectiveness, indicating that while administrative workload is an important factor, a majority of the variation in classroom effectiveness is likely explained by other variables not captured in this particular model, such as teacher motivation, school leadership quality, or subject-specific training.

Discussion

The findings of this study add a specific, statistically grounded dimension to a concern that has been widely reported but less often measured directly: that non-teaching administrative demands on government school teachers in Uttar Pradesh are associated with a measurable decline in classroom effectiveness, and that this association persists even when teaching experience and class-size pressures are taken into account. This fits closely with recent first-hand teacher testimony describing the frustration of being expected to function as data clerks across multiple government portals, and with broader national reporting describing teachers being pulled into duties, from pesticide surveys to pilgrimage management, that fall well outside the narrow legal exceptions set out in Section 27 of the RTE Act.

The particularly strong negative relationship found between administrative workload and timely syllabus completion is worth reflecting on. Syllabus completion is one of the more visible, calendar-bound measures of classroom effectiveness, and it appears to be the aspect most directly squeezed when a teacher's available working hours are repeatedly diverted toward portal updates, verification exercises, or civic duty. This is consistent with the concern raised in recent commentary on census-related teacher deployment, which specifically warned that repeated administrative deployment reduces the time and energy teachers have left for actual teaching, a warning that takes on added weight in Uttar Pradesh given the state's very large number of vacant sanctioned teaching posts, which already stretches the available teaching workforce before any additional administrative task is layered on top.

The fact that digital data-entry and portal work emerged as the single largest reported burden, ahead of even election and census duty, suggests that the nature of the administrative burden facing Indian government teachers may be shifting. Where earlier debates on teacher non-teaching duty focused mainly on episodic civic obligations such as elections, the present findings suggest that routine, recurring digital reporting requirements, arising from the expansion of systems such as UDISE Plus and mid-day meal monitoring platforms, may now represent an even more persistent drain on teacher time, precisely because they recur daily or weekly rather than occasionally.

It is worth noting that some states have already begun responding to this broader concern with concrete administrative directives, including Punjab's 2025 instruction limiting non-teaching duty assignments without written departmental approval and Himachal Pradesh's 2026 duty-roster reform. Uttar Pradesh's very large teaching workforce and correspondingly large number of vacant posts make a similar, clearly worded, state-wide administrative directive a particularly relevant policy option worth serious consideration, based on the pattern observed in this study.

Limitations

This study has some limitations worth noting. The cross-sectional design means that while a significant relationship was found, the direction of causation cannot be established with full certainty; it remains possible, for instance, that teachers who are already less effective in the classroom for other reasons are also assigned more administrative work by school heads seeking to keep them occupied, rather than administrative work causing lower effectiveness. The sample was limited to three districts of Uttar Pradesh and may not fully represent conditions in more remote or resource-poor districts of the state. Finally, classroom effectiveness was measured through teacher self-report and head-teacher rating rather than direct classroom observation, which, while practical for a survey of this scale, is a less precise measure than structured, in-class observation would provide.

Conclusion

This study examined whether administrative workload predicts classroom effectiveness among government secondary school teachers in Uttar Pradesh, at a time when national reporting has increasingly documented teachers being pulled into administrative, data-entry, and civic duties well beyond the narrow non-teaching exceptions permitted under Section 27 of the RTE Act. The findings show a clear, statistically significant negative relationship between

administrative workload and classroom effectiveness, most pronounced for timely syllabus completion, and this relationship holds even after accounting for teaching experience and pupil-teacher ratio. Given that Uttar Pradesh already carries the largest number of vacant sanctioned teaching posts of any state in India, the administrative burden documented in this study is being absorbed by a workforce that is already stretched thin, which strengthens the case for treating this issue as a genuine, addressable barrier to classroom quality rather than a minor administrative inconvenience.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, a few practical, low-cost steps are suggested. Uttar Pradesh's Basic and Secondary Education Departments could consider issuing a clear, state-wide administrative directive, similar to those already adopted in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, explicitly limiting non-teaching duty assignments and requiring written departmental approval for any exception beyond the narrow categories already permitted under Section 27 of the RTE Act. Given that digital data-entry and portal work emerged as the single largest reported burden in this study, simplifying and consolidating overlapping digital reporting systems, so that a teacher is not required to enter closely related information separately into multiple portals such as UDISE Plus and mid-day meal monitoring systems, could meaningfully reduce recurring administrative load without requiring any change in law. Schools, especially larger ones, could also consider appointing or designating a non-teaching administrative or data-entry assistant, even on a shared, cluster-level basis across a small group of nearby schools, to absorb routine portal and verification work that does not require a trained teacher to perform it. Finally, given the very large number of vacant teaching posts already documented in Uttar Pradesh, continued and accelerated efforts to fill these vacancies would directly reduce the per-teacher administrative and instructional load across the system, addressing the workload problem from the staffing side as well as the task-assignment side.

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