



# Contractualization and Pay Disparity in Rajasthan's Higher Education: A Policy Analysis of the RAJ-CES Scheme vis-à-vis UGC Regulations

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines the Rajasthan College Education Society scheme and its implications for higher education standards in India. The RAJ-CES model, introduced to expand college access since 2020-21, recruits "Teaching Associates" at ₹28,500 per month on 5-year contracts. This structure conflicts with University Grants Commission norms, which mandate a basic pay of ₹57,700 for Assistant Professors under the 7th Pay Commission. Using policy documents, court judgments, and pay commission data, the study finds that RAJ-CES institutionalizes a three-tier faculty system, undermines National Education Policy 2020 goals, and creates legal and academic risks. The paper argues that dilution of UGC pay scales threatens teaching quality, research capacity, and the long-term credibility of state higher education.

**KEYWORDS:** UGC, 7th Pay Commission, RAJ-CES, Rajasthan, contractual faculty, higher education policy, NEP 2020

## I. INTRODUCTION

The University Grants Commission functions as the statutory body for coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards in Indian higher education. Among its core regulatory mechanisms are minimum qualifications and pay scales for teachers, adopted nationally after each Central Pay Commission. The 7th CPC, implemented by UGC, places an entry-level Assistant Professor at Academic Level 10 with basic pay of ₹57,700. Inclusive of DA, HRA, and other allowances, gross monthly compensation ranges from ₹90,000 to ₹1.1 lakh in central universities. Since 2020-21, the Government of Rajasthan has operationalized 374 new colleges (326 regular + 48 agriculture) under the Raj College Education Society model. With 291 colleges lacking permanent faculty, the state proposes recruiting Teaching Associates on fixed 5-year contracts at ₹28,500 per month. This paper investigates: 1. Whether RAJ-CES pay violates UGC regulations, 2. The systemic discrimination created, and 3. The impact on NEP 2020 implementation and institutional quality.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### UGC Pay Structure

UGC Regulations 2018, aligned with 7th CPC, fix Assistant Professor pay at Level 10, Grade Pay ₹6,000, with entry basic ₹57,700. States adopting UGC scales must apply them uniformly to posts requiring UGC qualifications. Rajasthan Public Service Commission itself recruits Assistant Professors at this scale.

### Precedents of Contractualization in Rajasthan

Judicial intervention has repeatedly addressed pay disparity. The Rajasthan High Court in Shiv Raj Pareek & Ors. v. State of Rajasthan struck down fixed honorarium of ₹400/month for Grade III teachers and mandated regular pay scales. In 2022, the Court restrained summary termination of Assistant Professors in self-financed colleges and directed payment of arrears. These judgments establish that "equal pay for equal work" applies to teaching posts.

Yadav and others have number of studies documented, both theoretically and empirically, the importance of education not only for economic benefits but social too.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This study uses descriptive policy analysis. Primary sources include: UGC Regulations 2018, 7th CPC pay matrices, Rajasthan government notifications on RAJ-CES, and High Court judgments from 1992-2022. Secondary sources include media reports on teacher protests and committee formations. Data is compared across three faculty categories in Rajasthan to assess disparity.

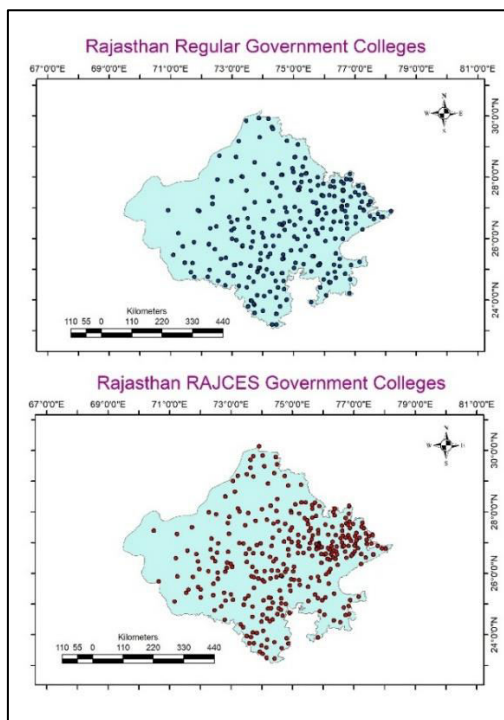
### IV. FINDINGS

Of 374 RAJ-CES colleges, nearly all operate without permanent faculty. The recruitment of Teaching Associates at ₹28,500/month creates a cadre performing Assistant Professor duties at 49.4% of UGC basic pay and nearly 31% of gross UGC salary. Rajasthan now has three parallel systems:

Table 1 Three Type of Teachers

Post	Recruitment	Basic Pay/Month	Allowances	Job Security
RPSC/RVRES Assistant Professor	Permanent, UGC norms	₹57,700	DA, HRA, CAS	Yes
Guest/Ad-hoc Faculty	Temporary	₹25,000–₹50,000	Limited/None	No
RAJ-CES Teaching Associate	5-yr contract	₹28,500 fixed	None	No

All three categories teach the UGC syllabus and evaluate university exams. Map 1 shows distribution of colleges under different categories.



Map 1

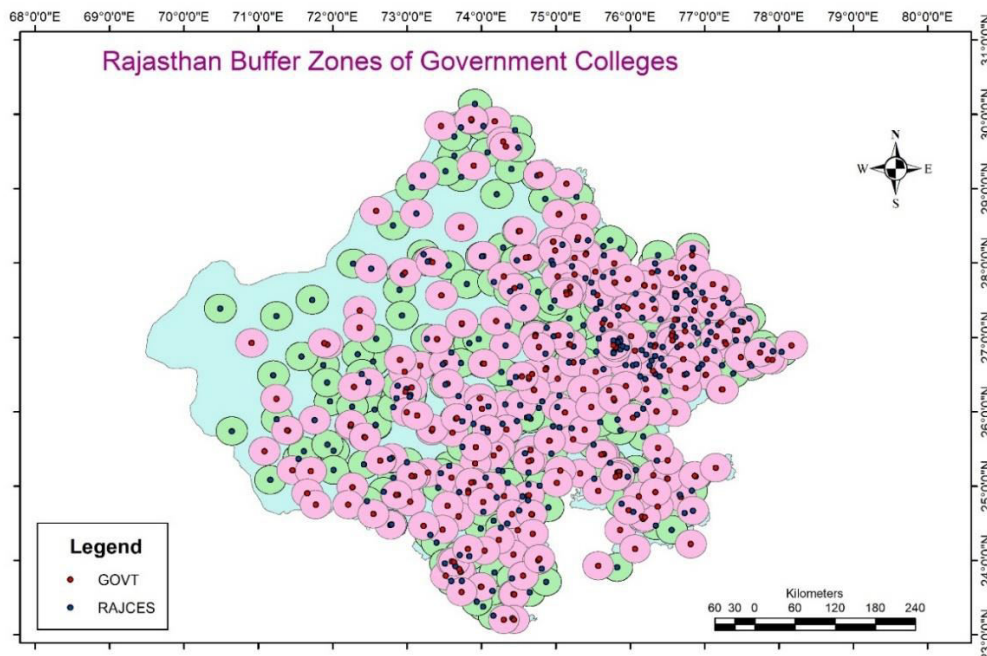
**Conflict with NEP 2020**

NEP 2020 emphasizes multidisciplinary HEIs, research, and mentorship. Teachers’ groups in Jaipur argue RAJ-CES contradicts this spirit due to lack of permanent faculty, research support, and infrastructure. The Sodani Committee, formed post-2023 elections to review RAJ-CES, has not published recommendations.

**Table 2 Year wise number of Government colleges and enrolment in Rajasthan**

Year	Colleges	Enrolment
2019-20	276	428795
2020-21	322	485988
2021-22	356	508628
2022-23	445	507972
2023-24	536	514649
2024-25	569	533787
2025-26	596	542195

If we analyse the table then number of colleges have increased almost 116 percent from 2019 till date but the enrolment has increased only 26 percent. The purpose of the state government has not been fulfilled as the data indicates, instead they are responsible of the deteriorating situation of the college education as well as exploiting the youth of the country by paying them less than a fourth class. Map 2 shows the area covered by the colleges taking a radius of 20 kms and we find that there was no need for majority of raj ces colleges as the circles overlap or shadow each other. Instead, the government should have increased the sections in the regular colleges and recruiting staff to overcome the increased intake. The move could have saved the valuable tax payers money and the students could have hired a room in the college area and the burden of studies and cooking for self would have created much more responsible citizens.



Map 2

## V. DISCUSSION

### Academic Consequences

- Brain Drain: Qualified NET/PhD holders avoid posts paying below national averages of nearly ₹5 lakh/year for Assistant Professors.
- Quality Erosion: 5-year contracts discourage long-term research, PhD guidance, and institutional building.
- Student Impact: Rotating contract staff in 260 colleges weakens mentorship and degree value.

### Legal and Financial Risk

The Supreme Court recently ordered PCMC to pay ₹10 crore arrears to 81 teachers denied proper scales. Rajasthan faces similar liability for deviating from adopted UGC norms. Pay anomalies also violate Article 14 and 16 when identical work is compensated unequally. The state government is giving one time 5 to 6 crores to each of these colleges for infrastructure development and is spending 62.5crores to the part time faculty. If the government had acted wisely, they could have saved 1630 crores of infrastructure which could have been used to provide complete makeover of the existing colleges to compete with the best colleges of India.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A larger national and international trend toward the contractualization of academic labour is reflected in Rajasthan's change in higher education governance. This study has shown that the growing reliance on contractual faculty is a structural change in the way academic work is organized rather than just an administrative response to staffing shortages through an analysis of the Rajasthan College Education Society (RAJ-CES) Scheme in relation to UGC regulations. The RAJ-CES model has entrenched differences in compensation, job security, and professional prospects while also making a substantial contribution to alleviating faculty shortages and maintaining teaching in government colleges.

The results show that two different faculty categories coexist within the same institutional framework, indicating the existence of a divided academic labour market. While regular faculty members have access to UGC-mandated pay scales, tenure security, pensionary benefits, and opportunities for academic advancement, contractual faculty members are not eligible for many of these benefits, even though their qualifications and academic responsibilities are comparable. An academic precariat, a class of highly qualified professionals whose employment conditions are characterized by insecurity, limited bargaining power, and unpredictable career trajectories, is reflected in this situation.

From a policy standpoint, this dual structure poses serious questions about distributive fairness and the constitutional guarantee of equality in public institutions. When contractual and regular teachers do essentially equivalent teaching, assessment, and administrative tasks, the idea of "equal pay for equal work" becomes more pertinent. Contractual appointments may provide the state with short-term financial flexibility, but their continued usage runs the risk of standardizing unfair hiring practices in organizations that are supposed to respect social responsibility, merit, and fairness.

Additionally, the study indicates that the effects of contractualization go beyond the well-being of academics. Research productivity, institutional dedication, professional drive, and ultimately the quality of higher education provided to students can all be impacted by persistent pay discrepancies and job insecurity. In this situation, contractualization should be considered from the perspectives of academic excellence, institutional sustainability, and educational quality in addition to administrative efficiency.

The conflicts between state-level governance innovations and national regulatory standards are further demonstrated by the RAJ-CES experience. Higher education policies must be in line with the more general goals stated by the UGC, such as the advancement of high-quality education, academic professionalism, and fair working conditions, even though states have valid concerns about budgetary management and resource limitations. Therefore, the task is not to completely reject contractual processes but rather to create them within a framework that protects educators' professional rights and dignity.

As a result, the study promotes a paradigm for policy that blends justice and flexibility. Periodic regular recruitment against approved positions, open and merit-based selection processes, rationalized compensation based on workload and qualifications, social security benefits, professional development opportunities, and well-defined career

advancement pathways should all be part of this framework. These actions would improve institutional efficacy while assisting in the reduction of structural disparities.

RAJ-CES represents contractualization of core academic posts in violation of UGC's minimum standards. If unaddressed, Rajasthan's 374 new colleges risk becoming symbols of policy failure rather than access expansion.

Policy Recommendations:

- Discontinue ₹28,500 contract model for posts requiring UGC qualifications.
- Publish and implement Sodani Committee report with stakeholder consultation.
- Regularize RAJ-CES faculty through RPSC at Academic Level 10 with Career Advancement Scheme.
- Ensure parity: All state-funded colleges must follow uniform UGC service conditions.

Higher education expansion without funding UGC norms creates substandard institutions. The choice before Rajasthan will determine whether it upholds or undermines India's regulatory framework for academic quality. The RAJ-CES model ultimately raises the question of whether public higher education can maintain a system where academic employment is increasingly split into secure and insecure categories of instructors, rather than only whether contractual faculty should be paid more. The future nature of higher education in Rajasthan will be greatly influenced by the response to this question. A system that aims to advance knowledge, creativity, and social change must guarantee that individuals who are given these tasks are treated fairly, with respect, and with dignity. Therefore, the ability of higher education policy to balance economic efficiency with the values of social justice and intellectual citizenship will be crucial to its long-term success.

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