



GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND TEACHER INEQUALITY: AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW

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Abstract: This research article critically examines the effectiveness of government schemes and policy interventions aimed at addressing the persistent inequality between Niyojit (contractual) and Regular (permanent) teachers in Bihar. Introduced in 2006 as a decentralized solution to rural teacher shortages, the Niyojit teacher recruitment model helped expand access to education but inadvertently institutionalized a dual workforce. Despite reforms following the 7th Pay Commission and initiatives to integrate Niyojit teachers into social security and professional development frameworks, disparities remain in salary structures, job security, promotional avenues and retirement benefits. Using secondary data, government reports and academic studies, this paper evaluates the outcomes of major schemes such as pay parity adjustments, partial regularization efforts and pension enrollments. Findings reveal that while wage gaps have narrowed modestly, systemic challenges like bureaucratic delays, lack of awareness and uneven implementation continue to undermine progress. Legal directives in favor of parity have not been uniformly applied and many Niyojit teachers remain excluded from basic entitlements. The study concludes that achieving meaningful equity in teacher employment requires not only administrative reforms but also a rights-based, inclusive policy approach. Bridging this gap is vital not only for teacher welfare but also for enhancing the overall quality of education in Bihar.

Keywords: Niyojit Teachers, Regular Teachers, Wage Disparity, Teacher Regularization, Bihar Education Policy, Social Security, Pay Parity, Education Reforms, Contractual Employment, Teacher Welfare.

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, the Indian education sector has witnessed a significant transformation, particularly in terms of teacher recruitment models and governance. In the early 2000s, states like Bihar introduced the concept of Niyojit teachers - a cadre of contractual or Panchayat-appointed educators - as a fiscal response to the growing demand for universal elementary education and rapid teacher shortages, especially in rural and underdeveloped districts. This system aimed to decentralize recruitment, reduce costs and fill teacher vacancies in mission-mode schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). However, while effective in expanding access to teachers, this strategy introduced a dual employment structure that has resulted in systemic inequality between Niyojit (contractual) and Regular (permanent) teachers in terms of salary, service benefits, social security and institutional recognition. (Sharma, 2018)

In Bihar alone, more than 3.5 lakh Niyojit teachers were appointed between 2006 and 2020, (Government of Bihar, 2020) accounting for nearly 72% of the total government school teaching workforce by 2021. (UDISE+, 2021) These teachers, though performing duties similar to their regular counterparts - often in the same classrooms and under the same curriculum - received significantly lower compensation, had limited or no promotional avenues and were excluded from pension benefits, paid leaves and other service-related protections. A key judicial development in this regard came with the Patna High Court ruling in Arun Kumar v. State of Bihar (2015), where the court recognized the unjust differential in pay and benefits for Niyojit teachers despite "equal work," reinforcing the constitutional principle of 'equal pay for equal work'. However, despite such legal acknowledgment, uniform implementation remains elusive.

Table 1: Comparative Overview – Niyojit vs. Regular Teachers in Bihar (As of 2023)

Category	Niyojit Teachers	Regular Teachers
Appointment Authority	Panchayat/Municipality	Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC)
Average Monthly Pay (2023)	₹39,000	₹55,000
Pension and Social Security	Limited (APY, optional)	Full Pension (NPS/Old Scheme)
Promotion & Seniority	Rarely applicable	Structured promotional path
Maternity Leave	Available (only post-2021)*	Available (paid leave)
Job Security	Conditional (Contractual)	Permanent

Source: Bihar Education Department Reports (2020–2023); Singh, R. (2022); NIEPA (2022).

***Note:** Maternity leave for Niyojit teachers was formalized under state circulars only in specific districts after 2021, with limited application. (Bihar Education Department, 2021)

The dual cadre system has generated considerable dissatisfaction among Niyojit teachers. According to a 2022 survey by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA, 2022), over 64% of Niyojit teachers in Bihar reported low job

satisfaction and psychological stress due to wage discrimination and uncertain career growth. Furthermore, a study by Kumar (2021) indicated that such disparities often translate into diminished teacher motivation and classroom engagement, ultimately impacting student learning outcomes and contributing to inequity in educational quality across rural schools.

In this context, several government schemes and administrative interventions have been proposed or implemented to address the disparities between Niyojit and Regular teachers. These include partial pay parity schemes, service regularization efforts, pension inclusion and training programs under Samagra Shiksha. Nevertheless, a critical review of these initiatives is necessary to assess their efficacy and to determine whether they have tangibly reduced the structural inequalities entrenched in Bihar's educational governance.

This article, therefore, aims to systematically explore these schemes using secondary data from government sources, court documents, academic studies and national education databases. It evaluates the effectiveness of welfare measures and identifies existing gaps and policy contradictions that continue to perpetuate inequality between two cadres performing the same role in India's public school system.

2. Historical Background of Teacher Appointment in Bihar

The history of teacher appointments in Bihar reflects the state's broader struggle with public sector reforms, decentralization and fiscal constraints. Prior to 2006, most teachers in Bihar's government schools were recruited through formal procedures conducted by the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC). These Regular teachers were offered full government employment benefits - structured salary scales, pensions, leave entitlements, promotion avenues and social security coverage. However, following the implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and other central education initiatives in the early 2000s, the Bihar government faced an acute shortage of teachers, particularly in rural and remote areas. To address this crisis within a constrained budget, the government adopted a new contractual recruitment policy, which led to the institutionalization of the Niyojit teacher system in 2006. Under this policy, teachers were appointed by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Zila Parishads, marking a shift from centralized to decentralized recruitment. These appointments were often made locally, based on minimum eligibility criteria and written assessments. While this model expanded access and improved the pupil-teacher ratio, it also bifurcated the teaching workforce, introducing a dual system where Niyojit (appointed) teachers received fixed honorariums and had no formal employment rights - a stark contrast to their BPSC-appointed counterparts. (Bihar Education Department, 2006)

Table 2: Comparison of Recruitment and Service Conditions – Bihar Pre- and Post-2006

Parameter	Before 2006 (Regular Teachers)	After 2006 (Niyojit Teachers)
Recruitment Authority	BPSC	Panchayat/Urban Local Bodies
Status	Permanent Government Employee	Contractual/Temporary
Salary Structure	Pay Commission Scale + Allowances	Fixed Honorarium (later revised)
Pension/Retirement Benefit	Yes (Old Pension/NPS)	No (Some enrolled under APY)
Medical & Maternity Leave	Full Benefits	Initially none; partial post-2021 reforms
Promotion Eligibility	Yes (Time-bound and Competitive Exams)	Rare or None

Source: Bihar Education Department (2021); Singh (2022); Kumar & Jha (2020)

The introduction of the Niyojit system also reflected broader national trends. A 2018 report by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA, 2018) revealed that Bihar had the highest proportion of contractual teachers in India, with over 3.3 lakh Niyojit teachers - more than 70% of the teaching force in government schools. This reliance on contractual labor created widespread dissatisfaction among teachers, resulting in frequent protests, legal challenges and calls for parity. One of the most pivotal legal developments in this regard was the Patna High Court's judgment in *Arun Kumar & Others v. State of Bihar* (2015). The Court acknowledged that Niyojit and Regular teachers performed the same tasks, followed the same work schedules and were accountable to the same authorities, yet faced drastically different service conditions. Invoking the principle of "equal pay for equal work," the Court ruled that such discriminatory wage practices violated Article 14 of the Constitution (Right to Equality) and called upon the state government to standardize the basic pay structures.

Despite the judicial directive, the implementation of the ruling remained fragmented and inconsistent across districts. Local bodies, constrained by budgetary allocations and a lack of clarity from higher administrative levels, continued to offer substandard pay and benefits to Niyojit teachers. Additionally, administrative loopholes and political hesitation in formalizing these posts stalled any large-scale regularization initiative. A field-based study by Jha & Sinha (2019) reported that in districts such as Gaya, Araria and Bhagalpur, Niyojit teachers had neither received updated pay as per court orders nor had their employment terms changed, even after over a decade of service. This has not only deepened the divide between the two cadres but also raised serious concerns about educational equity, teacher morale and the quality of public education in Bihar's rural belt.

Thus, while the Niyojit recruitment model may have addressed immediate teacher shortages and fiscal limitations, it inadvertently created a class of teachers operating under precarious and unequal employment conditions. The implications of this system, both legal and pedagogical, continue to shape education reform discourse in the state today.

3. Government Schemes and Policy Interventions

Over the last decade, both the Government of Bihar and central government agencies have recognized the structural disparities between Niyojit (contractual) and Regular (permanent) teachers. This recognition has led to a series of policy reforms and welfare initiatives aimed at improving the working conditions, remuneration and professional recognition of Niyojit teachers. While some progress has been made, many of these reforms have faced implementation hurdles, regional inconsistencies and limited outreach, especially in rural districts.

Pay Parity Reforms: One of the most significant interventions came in 2018, following the implementation of the 7th Pay Commission recommendations. The Bihar government revised the pay scale of Niyojit teachers, bringing their basic salary structure closer to that of Regular teachers. However, while the basic pay was adjusted, key financial components like Grade Pay, Provident

Fund contribution, pension eligibility and promotional increments were still denied. According to the Bihar Education Department's Annual Report (2020), this pay revision impacted over 3.5 lakh Niyojit teachers across the state. Still, their employment remained contractual in nature and their service conditions remained vulnerable to political and administrative discretion. A study by Sharma (2021a) observed that the revised salary structure reduced wage disparity from over 60% to approximately 30%, but did not eliminate the perceived inequality in employment status and benefits.

Teacher Regularization Scheme: In a landmark move in 2021, the Bihar State Cabinet approved a resolution to regularize those Niyojit teachers who had completed at least 10 years of continuous service and had qualified the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET). This policy was designed to offer permanent status and full benefits to long-serving contractual educators. However, bureaucratic delays, inconsistent documentation and ongoing legal cases severely impacted the implementation of this scheme. According to Singh (2022), as of December 2022, only 18% of eligible teachers had been successfully regularized and most were from urban or semi-urban districts. The regularization process lacked transparency and uniformity across districts, often resulting in inter-district disparities and legal appeals.

Inclusion in Social Security Schemes: Recognizing the financial vulnerability of contractual teachers, the Bihar government initiated efforts to include Niyojit teachers under central social security programs, such as the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) and the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY). While these schemes offer minimal pension and life insurance coverage, their effectiveness remains limited. According to data released by the Ministry of Labour and Employment (2023), only 12% of Bihar's eligible Niyojit teachers were enrolled in the APY scheme by March 2023. The low enrollment is attributed to lack of awareness, irregular contributions and absence of employer share. Many teachers reported not receiving any formal guidance on these schemes at the time of their appointment or during service. (PRS India, 2022).

Medical and Leave Benefits: Until recently, Niyojit teachers were excluded from medical reimbursement, paid leaves and maternity benefits. In 2022, some progressive steps were taken through departmental circulars, which granted limited maternity leave and partial medical reimbursement, particularly for female Niyojit teachers. However, implementation remained non-uniform across districts, with eligibility and leave approval subject to the discretion of the District Education Officers (DEOs). Field studies conducted in Gaya, Nalanda and Supaul districts in early 2023 found that less than 30% of eligible female Niyojit teachers had received maternity leave benefits and only 12% had claimed partial medical reimbursements. (Jha & Alam, 2023) The absence of legal enforceability and district-level monitoring continues to hinder the full realization of this welfare provision.

Professional Development and Training: Under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), training and professional development of all teachers, including Niyojit and Regular, is a national priority. While annual short-term training programs are routinely conducted, long-term, career-oriented capacity-building workshops often exclude Niyojit teachers, citing their non-permanent status. As per Kumar (2021), this exclusion negatively impacts promotion prospects and teaching quality among Niyojit teachers, especially in rural schools. Regular teachers benefit from Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs) and academic upskilling opportunities - both generally unavailable to their Niyojit counterparts.

Table 3: Summary of Key Government Initiatives and Their Effectiveness (2018–2023)

Policy Area	Initiative	Target Group	Implementation Status	Coverage (%)
Pay Parity	7th Pay Commission Scale (2018)	Niyojit Teachers	Partial (Basic Pay only)	~100% (basic only)
Regularization	10+ Years + TET Clause (2021)	Eligible Niyojit	Delayed, Litigated	18%
Social Security	APY, PMJJBY	All Niyojit	Poor Awareness	12%
Maternity/Medical Leave	Circular-based Benefits (2022)	Female Niyojit	District-wise variation	~30% (urban), <15% (rural)
Professional Development	SSA Trainings	All Teachers	Exclusion in long-term PD	Partial

Source: Bihar Education Department Reports (2020–23); Labour Ministry APY Data (2023); Singh (2022); Kumar (2021)

4. Effectiveness Analysis of Schemes

Although the Government of Bihar and central authorities have implemented several schemes and welfare initiatives aimed at reducing the disparities between Niyojit and Regular teachers, ground-level evidence reflects mixed success. While certain policy changes have improved compensation and eligibility for social benefits, deep-rooted structural inequalities remain. This section provides a multi-dimensional assessment of the effectiveness of such interventions across key parameters including wage parity, job satisfaction, institutional implementation and social security coverage.

Wage Gap Reduction: One of the measurable outcomes of the post-2018 reforms is the partial narrowing of the wage gap between Niyojit and Regular teachers. The implementation of the 7th Pay Commission in Bihar led to an upward revision in the honorarium of Niyojit teachers, especially those with graduate and trained graduate qualifications. While the reforms improved the basic pay, they did not equalize allowances, Grade Pay, or retirement benefits, resulting in a continued economic disparity.

Table 4: Wage Gap between Niyojit and Regular Teachers (2016–2023)

Year	Regular Teachers Avg. Pay	Niyojit Teachers Avg. Pay	Wage Gap (%)
2016	₹45,000	₹18,000	60%
2020	₹52,000	₹35,000	32%
2023	₹55,000	₹39,000	29%

Source: Bihar Education Department, Finance Audit Reports (2016–2023)

A 2022 study by Kumar and Sinha confirmed that while the wage difference has declined nominally, Niyojit teachers still earn 25–30% less in real terms when total emoluments are compared, including leave benefits, travel allowances and pension coverage.

Job Satisfaction and Retention: Compensation, however, is only one dimension of teacher well-being. A NIEPA report (2022) found that job satisfaction among Niyojit teachers remains critically low, primarily due to job insecurity, limited career progression and lack of institutional respect. Based on responses from over 1,200 Niyojit teachers in Bihar, the survey noted that:

- 62% reported anxiety due to contract-based employment.
- 41% cited discrimination from school principals or headmasters.
- 33% considered leaving the teaching profession altogether.

These findings align with the observations of Sharma (2021b), who concluded that morale, performance and community engagement are significantly lower among Niyojit teachers, especially in marginalized rural and SC/ST-dominated districts.

Legal and Institutional Implementation: Judicial pronouncements have strongly supported the principle of “equal pay for equal work.” The Patna High Court’s ruling in Arun Kumar v. State of Bihar (2015) clearly articulated that denying pay parity to teachers performing identical roles violates Article 14 (Right to Equality) and Article 39(d) (Directive Principles) of the Constitution. Yet, the implementation of such rulings is far from consistent. A district-level review conducted in 2023 across Muzaffarpur, Purnea and Buxar revealed that while some district education offices issued compliance circulars, others failed to disburse arrears or revise pay scales for eligible Niyojit teachers due to unclear instructions and budget constraints. Panchayati Raj Institutions, which are primarily responsible for Niyojit appointments, often lack the legal clarity or financial authority to fully implement pay parity directives. Moreover, no centralized grievance redressal mechanism exists for contractual teachers, leading to delays and frustrations in processing complaints or appeals regarding discriminatory treatment.

Social Security Penetration: Social security schemes like the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Employee Provident Fund (EPF) have been theoretically extended to Niyojit teachers. However, awareness levels remain abysmally low. According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment (2023), only 12% of Bihar’s eligible Niyojit teachers had active APY accounts and less than 7% had enrolled in PMJJBY. A field study conducted by Jha and Alam (2023) in six districts found that:

- Teachers lacked understanding of long-term pension benefits.
- Enrollment forms were often never distributed.
- District officials did not track compliance or follow-ups.

Additionally, absence of digital employment records, inconsistent salary accounts and no employer contribution to pension schemes further undermined the reach of social security benefits.

Thus, while the Bihar government has introduced significant reforms to address inequities in its teaching cadre, the effectiveness of these interventions remains patchy and unevenly distributed. Though the wage gap has narrowed, job insecurity, weak legal enforcement and poor access to social protection continue to disadvantage Niyojit teachers. These systemic barriers must be addressed through coordinated policy execution, administrative accountability and legislative reforms.

5. Challenges and Bottlenecks

Despite several policy reforms and judicial interventions aimed at reducing the disparities between Niyojit and Regular teachers in Bihar, numerous systemic challenges continue to hinder full equality. One of the primary bottlenecks is administrative inconsistency at the district and block levels. Many local authorities lack clear instructions or the financial autonomy to implement parity measures, leading to uneven application of benefits such as revised pay scales, maternity leave, or pension scheme enrollment.

Another significant challenge is the contractual nature of employment for Niyojit teachers, which inherently restricts their access to long-term job security, promotional opportunities and institutional recognition. While schemes have been proposed to regularize these teachers, bureaucratic delays, litigation and political indecision have slowed the process. As of 2023, only a fraction of eligible Niyojit teachers had been regularized, highlighting the gap between policy intent and ground-level execution.

Additionally, low awareness and poor digital record-keeping further obstruct access to welfare schemes such as the Atal Pension Yojana and life insurance programs. Many Niyojit teachers, particularly in rural areas, are unaware of the benefits available to them or lack the financial literacy to complete enrollment.

Lastly, lack of a centralized grievance redressal mechanism prevents timely resolution of issues related to discrimination, delayed payments and service disputes. Without institutional accountability and coordinated oversight, many reforms remain superficial or symbolic in nature, rather than transformative.

6. Policy Recommendations

To address the longstanding inequality between Niyojit and Regular teachers in Bihar, a comprehensive and inclusive policy framework is essential. First, the immediate need is to institutionalize a time-bound regularization policy for eligible Niyojit teachers. Those who have served for over 10 years and have qualified Teacher Eligibility Tests (TET) should be granted permanent status, ensuring parity in pay, promotion and retirement benefits.

Secondly, uniform implementation of pay parity must be ensured across all districts through centralized monitoring. While the 7th Pay Commission scale has been partially implemented, disparities still exist due to bureaucratic inertia. The creation of a state-level digital portal for salary records, service details and benefit tracking could enhance transparency and accountability.

Third, targeted efforts should be made to increase awareness and enrollment in social security schemes such as the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY). Capacity-building workshops and financial literacy sessions should be organized, especially in rural districts, to improve scheme uptake.

Fourth, a dedicated grievance redressal system at the district level should be established for Niyojit teachers, with clear timelines for issue resolution related to payment delays, leave disputes, or discrimination.

Finally, Niyojit teachers must be fully integrated into professional development programs. Exclusion from long-term training impacts educational quality and morale. Equitable access to promotions and skill enhancement must be a cornerstone of teacher welfare policy in Bihar.

Together, these recommendations can help move beyond symbolic reforms and ensure structural justice within the state's educational workforce.

7. Conclusion

The recruitment of Niyojit teachers in Bihar emerged as a pragmatic response to the urgent need for expanding access to education in underserved regions. While this policy helped bridge the quantitative gap in teacher availability, it inadvertently created a dual employment structure that continues to foster deep-seated inequality. Despite performing the same duties as their Regular counterparts, Niyojit teachers remain disadvantaged in terms of salary, service conditions, career advancement and social security. Government interventions, including revised pay scales, regularization schemes and social welfare enrollments, reflect an acknowledgment of this disparity. However, ground-level implementation has been uneven, often delayed by administrative bottlenecks, poor awareness and lack of institutional support. Judicial directives supporting pay parity have also failed to translate into uniform action across districts. To truly ensure equity and uphold constitutional principles like "equal pay for equal work," Bihar must adopt a rights-based approach to teacher welfare. This includes timely regularization, transparent service records, equal training opportunities and access to comprehensive social protection schemes. Ultimately, the quality of public education is directly linked to the dignity and well-being of its educators. Bridging the gap between Niyojit and Regular teachers is not just a matter of justice for teachers - it is an essential step toward building an inclusive and effective education system for Bihar's future generations.

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