Name of the Scholar:	**MD. JAWAID HUSSAIN**
Name of the Supervisor:	**Prof. Aejaz Masih**
Name of the Co-Supervisor:	**Prof. Najma Amin**
Department:	**Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education**
	Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
Title of the Study:	**CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE OF REGULAR TEACHERS AND** *PRARAMBHIK SHIKSHAKS* **OF BIHAR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

Abstract

Since the early 1990s, most governments of the educationally backward states, who had remained non-committal to the recruitment of professionally qualified regular teachers on permanent basis, employed emergency strategies of recruiting less qualified or unqualified candidates (referred to as 'Para-teachers' in the academic literature) with little or no pre-service teacher education on a short-term contract basis. Following the example of other states, the State Government of Bihar initiated the recruitment of *Shiksha Mitras* in 2002 on contract basis and a substantial number of untrained local youth were recruited to work as (para) teachers in formal primary schools of the state. Since then the scheme has witnessed great expansion. In 2006, the recruitment scheme was thoroughly revised and 2.6 lakh unemployed candidates, not all possessing the requisite academic and professional qualifications, were again recruited on *Niyojan* basis at all levels of schooling. With certain modifications in the recruitment scheme and service conditions, another drive of *Niyojit Shikshak* recruitment was initiated in 2008. Undeterred by the notification of the RTE Act-2009, the State further appointed a good number of candidates who had qualified the Bihar Teachers Eligibility Test (BTET) initiated by the State from 2011 on '*niyojan*' basis during 2012-2015. Even in the short period of its existence the employment of para teachers in elementary education has become a highly contentious issue and serious concerns have been expressed about this phenomenon.

The works of authors like Sood (2002), Prasad (2007), Sankar (2008), Muralidharan & Sundararaman (2009), EdCIL (2009), Goyal & Pandey (2009), and Atherton & Kingdon, 2009) try to justify the use of para-teachers as a cost effective way citing findings that para-teachers are more regular, accountable, motivated and 'high on-task' than the regular teachers who are frequently absent, 'low on-task' and unionized despite receiving good salaries.

On the other hand, theoretical as well as empirical studies by researchers like Kumar et. al. (2001$_b$), Govinda & Josephine (2004), Sadgopal (2006), Saxena (2006), Fyfe (2007), Reddy (2008), and Pandey (2009) oppose the use of academically less qualified, professionally unprepared or underprepared, and ill-paid, insecure, and de-motivated teachers to replace the full-time regular teachers and express concerns about the de-professionalization of the teaching cadre, and thus, see the practice as detrimental in the long run. Very few comparative studies, however, exist on the classroom practices of Para-teachers and Regular Teachers in different setups.

The present study sought to address the following research questions: What are the political, organizational, and social contexts of teaching in elementary schools of Bihar? What do these contexts of teaching say about the ethos of the elementary schools in which teachers of Bihar

work? What are the various pedagogical and social beliefs of sample Regular Teachers and *Prarambhik Shikshaks*? What perspectives do the sample Regular Teachers and *Prarambhik Shikshaks* have regarding various aspects of their work? How do the sample Regular Teachers and *Prarambhik Shikshak*s perform in their classroom teaching? What explains their performance or non-performance?

The present study was set in the Darbhanga district of Bihar. 30 Schools (representing 20 Villages and 10 Municipal areas) from 3 CD Blocks of Darbhanga district were selected. Out of these 30 schools, 78 Regular Teachers and 111 Prarambhik Shiksshaks were further selected for classroom observation. Research tools and techniques like *Document Analysis, School Observation Questionnaire,* and Observation *of Classroom Performance* were employed for data collection.

Findings & Conclusions

In majority of instances both RTs and PSs were found engaged in low-level, teacher-centric tasks that promote rote learning. The overall percentage of instances in which teachers engage in low-level teacher centric tasks were high for PSs than RTs. Likewise, while teachers involvement in high-level, student-centric tasks such as initiation of discussions, providing remedial teaching and supervising students' work and providing help was generally low for both categories of teachers, it was very low for PSs when compared with RTs. Overall, the pedagogic practices of both types of teachers was dominated with traditional teacher-centric activities that encourage rote memorization.

The above analysis presents an image of a routinised monotonous teacher whose pedagogic practices revolve around repeated drill like practices which require the students to mechanically engage with tasks such as reading aloud, reciting multiplication tables in chorus and struggling with lessons on their own for most part of the learning. This is in sharp contrast to the curricular policy visions envisaged in the BCF-2008 and the NCF-2005. The visions of the BCF-2008 and the NCF-2005 are not translating into reality perhaps because the "capacities, skills, knowledge, and attitudes of the teachers and the school environment", which the NCF-2005 deems as "prerequisites for the transformation of an enlightened curriculum" (NCERT, 2006, p. 26) have not been transformed.

The whole ethos of the scheme is very telling of the deep fissures in the system. It is very suggestive of the habit of the policy makers to think, plan, and execute in the binaries of 'now' and 'later' or 'basic access' and 'later quality improvement'. Clearly, the system has not learnt from the experiences of other countries where free and compulsory quality education has been universalized without doing any 'now' and 'later'. The system continues to overlook the 'satisfaction quotient' for teachers. Dissatisfied, unmotivated teachers cannot deliver quality teaching in classrooms. There is also huge disparity in defining teacher's qualifications and instability in the processes of teacher certification and capacity building.