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TEACHER WELFARE IN 3T REGIONS: A SOCIO-LEGAL ANALYSIS OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN NORTH LOMBOK, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of government policies in improving the welfare of non-permanent teachers in disadvantaged (3T) regions, with a focus on North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Despite the legal mandate under Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, which guarantees teachers the right to adequate income and social welfare protection, significant gaps persist between regulatory provisions and their implementation, particularly in remote areas. This research employs a socio-legal approach, combining normative juridical analysis with empirical data collected through interviews and document review. The findings reveal that local governments face structural and financial constraints in fulfilling teachers' welfare rights, including limited regional budgets, weak policy coordination between central and local authorities, and the absence of standardized regulations for non-permanent teacher compensation. As a result, many teachers continue to receive salaries below the minimum living standard without adequate social protection. Furthermore, the recruitment and management of non-permanent teachers are often not based on systematic workforce planning, exacerbating disparities in teacher welfare. This study contributes to the discourse on education policy and decentralization by highlighting the disconnect between national legal frameworks and local implementation capacities in 3T regions. It suggests the need for integrated policy reform, including stronger fiscal support, clearer regulatory frameworks, and improved governance mechanisms to ensure equitable and sustainable teacher welfare.

Keyword: teacher welfare, 3T regions, government policy, socio-legal study, education decentralization

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1 Introduction

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping human capital and advancing national development. In this regard, teachers serve as key actors whose professionalism, motivation, and well-being significantly influence the quality of education. In Indonesia, the government has introduced various policies to improve educational quality, including expanding access, enhancing curriculum relevance, and

strengthening teacher competencies. However, one persistent issue that continues to undermine these efforts is the inadequate welfare of teachers, particularly those serving in disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T) regions.

The welfare of teachers is not merely a matter of economic compensation but also reflects the state's commitment to ensuring sustainable and high-quality education. Legally, the rights of teachers in Indonesia are clearly stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, which guarantees teachers the right to earn an income above the minimum living standard and to receive social welfare protection. Previous studies emphasize that adequate welfare is closely linked to teacher motivation and performance, which ultimately affects educational outcomes (Hidayati & Quddus, 2024; Iswathoni et al., 2022). However, in practice, the implementation of these rights remains uneven, especially for non-permanent (honorary) teachers who often experience low and unstable income, limited access to professional development, and inadequate social security (Shodiqin, 2021).

These challenges are more pronounced in 3T regions, where structural limitations such as inadequate infrastructure, unequal distribution of educational resources, and limited access to quality education persist (Putri & Eriyanti, 2025; Rira, 2023). Studies have shown that teachers in these regions face multiple disadvantages, including low welfare, limited career progression, and poor working conditions (Luthfia et al., 2023). Although government initiatives such as teacher certification and professional allowances have been introduced to improve teacher welfare, their benefits are not equally distributed, particularly for non-permanent teachers (Latiana, 2019; Shodiqin, 2021).

From a governance perspective, Indonesia's decentralized system places significant responsibility on local governments in managing education, including teacher welfare. Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government classifies education as a concurrent governmental affair shared between central and local authorities. However, this distribution of authority often leads to coordination challenges, disparities in policy implementation, and uneven resource allocation across regions (Mukhlis & Siraj, 2022; Budijaya et al., 2025). As a result, the gap between national regulatory frameworks and local implementation remains a critical issue, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Despite the growing body of literature on teacher welfare and education policy in Indonesia, there is still limited research that integrates legal analysis with empirical realities in 3T regions. Most studies tend to focus either on normative legal frameworks or on general educational challenges without examining how policies are implemented at the local level. This creates a gap in understanding the effectiveness of government policies in ensuring teacher welfare in disadvantaged regions.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of government in improving the welfare of non-permanent teachers in 3T regions by employing a socio-legal approach that combines normative and empirical analysis. Focusing on North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, this research seeks to: (1) examine the implementation of teacher welfare policies based on Law No. 14 of 2005, and (2) identify the challenges faced by local governments in ensuring the fulfillment of teachers' rights. This study is expected to contribute to the discourse on education policy, decentralization, and social welfare by providing a more comprehensive understanding of policy implementation in disadvantaged regions.

2 Method

This study employs a socio-legal research approach, integrating normative juridical analysis with empirical investigation to examine the implementation of teacher welfare policies in disadvantaged (3T) regions. The normative component focuses on analyzing relevant legal frameworks, particularly Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, and Law No. 11 of 2009 on Social Welfare, to assess the extent to which teachers' welfare rights are formally guaranteed within the Indonesian legal system, while the empirical component explores how these legal provisions are implemented in practice at the local level. The research adopts a descriptive-analytical design aimed at providing a systematic and accurate depiction of the gap between regulatory frameworks and their implementation in the field (Martias, 2021). The study was conducted in North Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara, as a representative 3T area characterized by structural limitations in educational resources and governance capacity.

This research utilizes three categories of legal materials alongside empirical data, namely primary legal materials (including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 14 of 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers, Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, Law No. 11 of 2009 on Social Welfare, and Presidential Regulation No. 63 of 2020 on Disadvantaged Regions), secondary legal materials (such as academic literature, journal articles, books, theses, and previous studies), and tertiary legal materials (including legal dictionaries and supporting references that clarify legal concepts). In addition, empirical data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants, including officials from the local Education Office and non-permanent teachers in North Lombok Regency, selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in policy implementation. Data collection was conducted through document study to establish the normative framework and semi-structured interviews to capture in-depth insights into field realities. The data were analyzed using a qualitative analytical approach, where normative materials were examined through statutory and conceptual analysis, and empirical data were analyzed using thematic analysis involving data reduction, categorization, and interpretation to identify patterns related to policy implementation, governance challenges, and teacher welfare conditions. By integrating normative and empirical findings, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the gap between legal mandates and their practical implementation within the context of decentralized education governance in disadvantaged regions.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 The Gap Between Legal Guarantees and Policy

Although Law No. 14 of 2005 guarantees teachers the right to adequate income and social welfare protection, the findings of this study reveal a persistent implementation gap in 3T regions, particularly in North Lombok. From a policy implementation perspective, this condition can be explained using the framework of Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, which emphasizes that successful policy implementation depends on the clarity of policy objectives, availability of resources, and the capacity of implementing institutions (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1983). In this case, although policy objectives are clearly defined in legal provisions, the lack of financial resources and weak institutional coordination hinder effective implementation.

Empirical findings indicate that many non-permanent teachers receive salaries below the minimum living standard and lack access to social protection schemes. This condition reflects a discrepancy between law in books and law in action, a key concern in socio-legal studies, where legal norms are not always effectively translated into practice (Iswathoni et al., 2022) . Furthermore, inadequate welfare has been shown to negatively affect teacher motivation and performance, which in turn impacts the quality of education (Hidayati & Quddus, 2024) .

3.2 Decentralization, Fiscal Constraints, and Fragmented Governance

The decentralization framework under Law No. 23 of 2014 assigns education as a concurrent responsibility between central and local governments. While decentralization is theoretically intended to enhance policy responsiveness and efficiency, this study finds that it has instead contributed to fragmented governance in the implementation of teacher welfare policies. The lack of synchronization between national policy directives and local implementation capacity results in inconsistent welfare standards across regions. This finding is consistent with previous studies highlighting that decentralization in Indonesia often faces coordination challenges and disparities in policy implementation (Mukhlis & Siraj, 2022; Budijaya et al., 2025) . As a consequence, teacher welfare becomes highly dependent on regional fiscal capacity rather than being treated as a guaranteed right under national law, thereby undermining the principle of equity in public service delivery, particularly in disadvantaged regions.

A central dimension of this governance fragmentation lies in fiscal constraints faced by local governments. Empirical findings indicate that limited regional budgets significantly restrict the ability of local authorities to provide adequate salaries and social protection for non-permanent teachers. This condition reflects a structural imbalance within Indonesia's decentralization system, where responsibilities are devolved without sufficient fiscal support. From a theoretical perspective, this issue can be examined through the welfare state framework proposed by Gøsta Esping-Andersen, which emphasizes the state's obligation to ensure social protection and reduce inequality (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In this context, Indonesia demonstrates characteristics of a partial welfare regime, where social protection mechanisms are unevenly distributed across different categories of workers.

This uneven distribution is evident in the dualistic structure of the teaching profession. Civil servant teachers benefit from stable income, institutional protection, and structured welfare programs, whereas non-permanent teachers remain in a vulnerable position with limited access to similar benefits. Such disparities reflect structural inequality within the education sector and are consistent with findings that compensation gaps significantly influence teacher performance and welfare (Arifin, 2024) . Furthermore, social welfare theory posits that welfare is achieved when individuals' material and social needs are adequately fulfilled (Jewed et al., 2025) . The inability of current policies to meet these minimum standards indicates that teacher welfare in 3T regions remains inadequately addressed.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the challenges of teacher welfare in disadvantaged regions cannot be understood solely as a matter of policy design, but rather as the result of an interaction between decentralization, fiscal limitations, and incomplete welfare state development. Without stronger fiscal alignment and integrated governance mechanisms, the gap between legal guarantees and actual welfare conditions will likely persist.

3.3 Workforce Planning, Policy Inconsistency, and the Need for Integrated Reform

This study finds that the recruitment and management of non-permanent teachers are not based on systematic workforce planning, but rather driven by immediate institutional needs without long-term projections or standardized criteria. Such practices result in inefficiencies in teacher distribution, inconsistencies in quality, and an oversupply of teachers in certain areas while shortages persist in others. This condition reflects a fundamental weakness in policy design and implementation, particularly in aligning teacher recruitment with national education standards and workforce planning mechanisms. Previous studies similarly indicate that educational challenges in 3T regions include unequal teacher distribution, low welfare levels, and limited access to professional development (Ayudhia Nur Luthfia et al., 2023). Furthermore, restricted access to certification programs continues to marginalize non-permanent teachers, limiting their career advancement and reinforcing structural inequality within the education system (Latiana, 2019) .

These findings highlight that weaknesses in workforce planning are not isolated technical issues, but are closely linked to broader governance and policy fragmentation. The absence of standardized regulatory frameworks governing non-permanent teachers contributes to uncertainty in recruitment, compensation, and professional development, ultimately undermining the effectiveness of teacher welfare policies. Therefore, improving teacher welfare in 3T regions requires not only addressing financial and institutional constraints but also reforming the governance structure that shapes teacher management.

In this context, the study underscores the need for integrated and systemic policy reform. Stronger coordination between central and local governments is essential to ensure that legal mandates are supported by adequate fiscal transfers and administrative capacity. Additionally, the establishment of standardized national regulations for the recruitment, compensation, and protection of non-permanent teachers is crucial to reduce disparities and ensure equitable treatment across regions. Integrating teacher welfare into a broader social protection framework can further enhance policy sustainability, including ensuring access to health insurance, social security, and continuous professional development opportunities for all teachers regardless of employment status. Finally, strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms, such as policy monitoring and evaluation systems, will be critical to ensuring that welfare policies are implemented effectively and reach their intended beneficiaries.

4 Conclusion

This study reveals that the problem of teacher welfare in 3T regions is not primarily due to the absence of legal frameworks, but rather the failure of policy implementation within a decentralized governance system. Despite clear guarantees under Law No. 14 of 2005, significant gaps persist between legal provisions and actual conditions, particularly for non-permanent teachers who continue to experience low income, limited social protection, and restricted professional opportunities. The findings further indicate that decentralization has produced uneven outcomes due to weak coordination and limited fiscal capacity at the local level, while the absence of standardized regulations reinforces inequality within the teaching workforce.

Therefore, improving teacher welfare requires integrated and systemic reform. Strengthening coordination between central and local governments, establishing standardized national policies for non-permanent teachers, and integrating teacher welfare into a broader social protection framework are essential steps toward ensuring equitable

and sustainable outcomes. Without addressing these structural constraints, efforts to improve educational quality in disadvantaged regions will remain limited.

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Ethical Considerations

Not Applicable

Conflict of Interest

The Authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

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