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## Introduction

The right to education has been denied to millions of people due to poverty, poor and ill-funded services, geographic isolation, conflicts and marginalization to name a few. The most deprived ones are the Tribals throughout the world, more particularly the Tribals in India who suffer from a greater lack of education than their Non-Tribal counterparts. In general, the Tribals are characterised in this way, due to lack of access to education because of their geographical isolation and politically unimportant status. Mostly, the education system and the curricula do not respect the diverse cultures of the Tribals of India. In most of the cases, there are few teachers who speak their languages and their schools also lack basic amenities

The Tribal population in India is 104 million as per 2011 Census and accounts for 8.6 per cent of the total population of India. They suffer from geographical and cultural seclusion, and inadequate physical infrastructure. This results in the low capacity of the tribal economy to meaningfully absorb funds, including institutional finance. Tribal communities have also been found to lag behind the general population in maternal and child mortality, size of agricultural holdings, and access to education and other amenities.

Amenities for the Tribal education that provide accurate and fair information about them and their ways of life are scanty. As per King & Schielmann (2004) it is too common that "...educational programs fail to offer Tribal people the possibility of participating in decision-making, the design of curricula, the selection of teachers and teaching methods and the definition of standards". Outcome being the education gap—Tribal students have lower enrolment rates, higher dropout rates and poorer educational outcomes than Non-Tribal people, especially in the region of North Bengal in particular.

The tribal community of North Bengal (Dooars) is comprised of the tea garden workers or unskilled labourers with a markedly low per capita income. These communities, in spite of denoting a significant population index, are dismally inconspicuous as contributors or beneficiaries in the development scenario of the region. One of the major causes underlying this observation is the long-standing inability to percolate the literate middle or higher income strata and hence, the decision-making section of the society owing to its lack of access to higher education.

The resources available to this community are doubtlessly meager and conditions adverse due to their financial handicap. The children usually attend nearby government schools to receive primary education, but only as a way of life. The need to contribute to the family income, distractions of an unhealthy social environment (alcoholism, gambling, drug, substance abuse, etc.), lack of good colleges in and around tea garden areas, and most importantly, lack of orientation to pursue higher education are the main reasons keeping them back from enrolling for higher studies. One of the main factors responsible for the lack of orientation is the paucity of trained and skilled teachers appointed in primary and secondary schools. Neither there are subject-centric teachers as per requirement nor are the teachers proficient in Hindi or Sadri dialect, which is the only link to communication with the tribal community. Hence, the teaching fraternity is unable to generate a constructive interest towards gaining higher education in the students. Moreover, a lackadaisical attitude to supervision and mentoring, typical of the agents of a shallow education system, fails to install the importance of education and its benefits in the community. It is, therefore, highly impractical to assume that students from this background, lagging far behind in attaining a decent primary education, would be equipped with the skills to compete in an environment that requires at least a remote orientation to the English language in order to pursue higher education. Girls of this community face bigger hurdles fighting an oppressive social system, which does not allow them equal opportunities. As a consequence, they turn out to become assistants in beauty parlours and sales girls in upcoming malls in nearby urban areas for an income. Unfortunately, there have been incidents wherein these girls have become victims of trafficking, etc., through this employment route.