

Right to Education of Munda Community in Sundarbans Area: A Socio-Legal Study

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Abstract: The Munda, an ethnic minority group residing in and around the Sundarbans area in Bangladesh, encounter severe challenges in their endeavor to exercise the right to education. Although education is a fundamental right under the Constitution of Bangladesh and international human rights law, their level of educational attainment is extremely low. This article employs a mixed-methods approach by blending doctrinal legal research and empirical research to investigate the systemic barriers to the Munda community's access to fair education. Among those obstacles are recognized financial difficulty, lack of state support, cultural and linguistic marginalization, early marriage, discouraging curricula, and lack of job-oriented learning. The argument of the article is that government non-intervention, along with the neglect of society, has caused the educational disadvantage of the Munda. It also suggests some specific interventions, including the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy, mother-tongue-based education, full scholarship program, employment-linked education, mid-day meal programme, and the appointment of Munda teachers as the way forward for inclusion and the realisation of the right to education for the Munda community in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Right to Education, Munda Community, Ethnic Minorities, Educational Inequality, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Sundarban mangrove ecological zone is home to the Munda ethnic group, who arrived in Bangladesh from Ranchi around 220 years ago.¹ This community comprises approximately 6,000 individuals residing in the plains, with 1,200 families located across the six upazilas of Khulna and Satkhira districts within the Sundarban region.² In terms of educational levels of the Munda community, 2.73% have attained

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¹ Md Shaiful Huda, 'The Mundas: An Ethnic Community in the South West Coastal Region of Bangladesh (Buno/Kuli/Sarna/Horoko, Indigenous People during the British Period Coming from Ranchi)' (2021) 12(6) Arts and Social Sciences Journal 1.

² Rafiqul Islam Montu, 'Bangladesh's indigenous Munda community in the Sundarbans faces hunger as livelihoods dry up' (*Gaon Connection*, 11 September 2020) <<https://en.gaonconnection.com/>

higher education, 12.42% have completed secondary education, 24.55% have received primary education, 27.57% possess signature knowledge, and 32.73% are categorized as illiterate.³ The Munda community trails the national average literacy rate by roughly 7 percentage points, as the national average of illiteracy in Bangladesh is 25.34%.⁴ The disparity is particularly evident in higher education, where the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for tertiary education stands at 23.8%.⁵

Bangladesh has legal obligations towards them under various international human rights instruments and national law. The right to non-discrimination, which prohibits discrimination against ethnic groups, among others, is very significant among these obligations. Given the stark difference between the national average and the Munda community's average level of education, it is worth examining whether it is discrimination by the state or there is any other factor at play. This context raises a pivotal question: How do the legal, social, economic, and cultural barriers hinder access to education for the Munda community in Bangladesh? This central research question shall be investigated in this article along with some corollary questions that arises in the course.

This research intends to identify the barriers and cross-cultural engagement issues forbidding access to education. It has used a mixture of doctrinal and qualitative research methods to achieve this research objective. The doctrinal method has been used to discern the existing international and domestic law relating to right to education of ethnic minorities. Qualitative interview method has been applied to determine the factors that deter and discourage the Munda Community from accessing right to education. This qualitative interview followed purposive data sampling, which involves numerous non-probability sampling strategies where the researcher uses their judgment to determine which particular units to study. The researchers facilitated 32 semi-structured interviews with members of the Munda community, covering literate, illiterate, and school-dropout respondents, with proportional male and female representation across these categories. We also interviewed 08 GOs and NGOs running programmes on the right to education in the study area, selected for their direct engagement with the Munda community regardless of national or international nature. Community Based Participatory

reportage/bangladeshs-indigenous-munda-community-in-the-sundarbans-faces-hunger-as-livelihoods-dry-up/> accessed 27 June 2025.

³ Huda (n 1).

⁴ The Daily Star, 'Bangladesh's literacy rate now 74.66%' (27 July 2022) <<https://www.thedailystar.net/youth/education/news/bangladeshs-literacy-rate-now-7466-3080701>> accessed 28 June 2025.

⁵ World Bank, 'School Enrollment, Tertiary (% Gross)' (World Development Indicators) <<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators/Series/SE.TER.ENRR>> accessed 28 June 2025.

Research (CBPR) has been followed as it encompasses collaborative research endeavors that prioritize the needs of the community and ensure active participation.⁶

This article begins by discussing the legal framework that governs the right to education for ethnic minorities, examining international human rights obligations as well as domestic constitutional and policy commitments in Bangladesh. It goes on to discuss the manifold problems faced by the Munda community in schooling (poverty, lack of scholarships, language and cultural discrimination, early marriage, dadon (debt bondage) and mental agony). Then, the article suggests inclusive educational policy should focus for the integration of the Munda community in the national mainstream educational institution.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

This section describes the domestic and international legal context of the right to education of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh. It demonstrates how treaty obligations, constitutional provisions and national legislation influence the state obligations in respect of inclusive and equitable education.

A. Obligations under International Human Rights Law

When we observe the international obligation of Bangladesh on the right to education for ethnic minorities, we find two foundational principles: the universal right to education and the prohibition on discrimination. These obligations stem from a variety of international treaties, instruments, and customs of international human rights law.

(i) *The Right to Education as a Universal Entitlement*

The right to education is both a substantive human right and a means to the realization of other human rights.⁷ The principal international treaty that guarantees this right is the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).⁸ Article 13 ICESCR provides for the goal of education as “directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity” and “to strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”. Being quite related to the cause of overall minority rights, this provision also aspires that education shall “promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups”. It is evident that the article not only guarantees access to education but also ensures a particular kind of education, inclusive of various segments of society, and encourages harmony between those

⁶ A S Drawson, E Toombs and C J Mushquash, 'Indigenous Research Methods: A Systematic Review' (2017) 8(2) *International Indigenous Policy Journal* 1, 5.

⁷ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 'General Comment No 13: The Right to Education (Art 13 of the Covenant)' (8 December 1999) UN Doc E/C.12/1999/10.

⁸ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 3 January 1976) 993 UNTS 3.

groups. Article 13 also enumerates state obligations such as to make primary education compulsory and available free to all; and to make secondary and higher education equally accessible to all based on merit. Some scholars also argue that right to education has elevated to the status of a general principle of law within the meaning of Article 38(1) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice.⁹

(ii) *The Principle of Non-Discrimination*

The principle of non-discrimination is believed to be one of the main pillars of international human rights law. Under the ICESCR, Article 2(2) stipulates that state parties undertake to guarantee these and related rights, including the right to education. Further, these rights should be enjoyed “without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) defines “racial discrimination” very broadly, to include any distinction, exclusion or preference made based on “race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”.¹⁰ Article 5 of the ICERD requires States to eliminate, and take steps to combat, discrimination on the grounds of race in access to education and training. Article 7 extends beyond education, as it imposes on states to adopt “immediate and effective measures, in particular in the field of teaching, education, culture and information”. It is further the case that the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (CDE) 1960 details discrimination as any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which has the effect of “depriving any person or group of persons of access to education of any type or at any level” or “of limiting any person or group of persons to education of an inferior standard”.¹¹

(iii) *Specific Protections for Minority and Indigenous Children*

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1990 provides a double protection for ethnic minority children. First, it reconfirms the international right to education. Article 28 provides for education: primary education shall be compulsory and available free for all, while secondary education “shall be made available and accessible to every child”. Article 28 stipulates that “primary education shall be compulsory and free education shall be provided for children”. Article 29 provides for the objectives of education: the development of the child’s personality and talent and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential, and the education of the child to live in society and respect “its own and other cultures”. Second, and most significant for our discussion, Article 30 establishes a specific, affirmative right for minority children. It states:

⁹ Jost Delbrück, ‘The Right to Education as an International Human Right’ (1992) <<https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/facpub/2824>> accessed 28 June 2025.

¹⁰ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (adopted 7 March 1966, entered into force 4 January 1969) 660 UNTS 195, arts 1, 5 and 7.

¹¹ Convention against Discrimination in Education (adopted 14 December 1960, entered into force 22 May 1962) 429 UNTS 93, art 1.

“In those States in which there exist ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.”

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities¹² (UNDM) 1992 provides authoritative guidance on how states are required to understand their legally binding obligations under treaties like the CRC and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)¹³, particularly Article 27 of the ICCPR, which guarantees persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, profess and practise their own religion, and use their own language. Specific articles on education are also provided for in the Declaration. Article 4(3) provides for appropriate conditions to be provided where possible to make possible the learning or teaching of the mother tongue. Article 4(4) also specifically provides that, as the case may be, States should introduce educational programmes at primary and secondary levels to make known to all citizens the history, traditions, language, and culture of the minorities living within the territory of that State.

B. Constitutional and Policy Guarantees in Bangladesh

The Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh in 1972 is the primary source of the right to education at domestic level. It includes general aspects relating to education and non-discrimination with specific provisions for the preservation of ethnic minority cultures. However, the phrasing and formulation of these provisions have generated ambiguity in doctrine regarding the operation of minority educational rights. Article 17 mentions that the State shall strive to provide a uniform, mass-oriented, common system of education and provide for compulsory education for children. However, this provision is one of the Fundamental Principles of State Policy which are non-justiciable.

The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth under Art. 28(1). Article 28(3) contains an express and perhaps even, a more potent, guarantee, that “no citizen shall... on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth... be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to... access to any educational institution”. This establishes the judicially enforceable right of access of all citizens, irrespective of ethnic minority status, to an educational establishment. Article 28(4) of the Constitution also permits affirmative action, permitting the State to make special provisions relating to the advancement of backward classes of citizens.

¹² UN General Assembly, *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*, A/RES/47/135 (adopted 18 December 1992), arts 4(3) and 4(4).

¹³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171.

Article 23A deals with cultural rights of the ethnic communities. It mandates that the State “protect and preserve the culture of tribes, minor races, ethnic sects and communities”. Although this is a powerful constitutional admission of cultural diversity, it is focused on culture and tradition. It does not specifically promise education in minority languages or require types of education, such as teaching in the mother tongue. But the language is couched in terms of “culture and tradition.” This does not include a specific right to education in that culture or language, nor does it require any particular form of education, such as mother-tongue education.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2010 is one of the most comprehensive and clear-cut commitments Bangladesh has made to the education of ethnic minorities. It talks more concretely than the constitutional platitudes about what to do. The policy explicitly acknowledges the right of all children to receive education through their mother language and providing special assistance to underprivileged indigenous children.

The NEP’s principal commitments to ethnic-minority education can be grouped under three heads. On language of instruction, it sets as a main objective “to facilitate learning in the mother languages of the indigenous peoples and small ethnic groups at the primary level of education”. On teacher recruitment and learning materials, it commits to ensuring representation of teachers drawn from ethnic communities and to preparing textbooks in their first languages so that ethnic-minority children can learn in their native tongue. On infrastructure, it undertakes to establish primary schools in remote hilly and plain-land regions and to build residential facilities for teachers and students in those areas.

III. THE EDUCATION OF THE MUNDA COMMUNITY: ISSUES AND INSIGHTS

This section discusses the educational impediments of the Munda community as disclosed in the qualitative interviews and examines the challenges against the applicable legal standards discussed above.

A. Economic Hardship and Financial Instability

- (i) *Land Dispossession and Livelihood Challenges:* Munda households suffer from persistent poverty caused by land loss, lack of occupational diversification, and climate change. With no money for transportation or related expenses, many of these parents cannot send their children to school. The state is required to institute compulsory and free primary education under Article 13(2)(a) of the ICESCR. This is reiterated in Article 28 of the CRC. But these assurances fall apart when the indirect costs are not covered (transport, books, and uniforms). Further, non-discriminatory access, guaranteed under ICESCR Art 2 (2), is compromised when ethnical groups are excluded. As Article 28(3) of the Constitution of Bangladesh bans discrimination concerning access to education, the omission of poverty-based exclusion amounts to *de facto* discrimination according to international norms.

- (ii) *Inadequate Financial Assistance and Scholarship Programs*: In theory, ethnic students can be on government scholarships, but in practice nearly no Munda students receive scholarships. The majority rely on NGO or missionary assistance, which is inconsistent and nonviable. Retention is impaired by one-off payments and insufficient payments. The CESCR, General Comment No. 13, enjoins the state parties to take “deliberate, concrete and targeted” steps to fulfill the right to education. Failure to guarantee effective access to the scholarships already established by each State is a breach of this obligation. Article 28(1) of the CRC requires that secondary education be made accessible to every child. According to the NEP 2010, the “special assistance” to be given to indigenous children is not fulfilled, thus causing a policy failure.
- (iii) *The "Dadon" System of Debt Bondage*: Families in Munda are caught in informal cycles of debt that force children out of school to work. Such practices are uncontrolled and abusive. Such a practice is against CRC Article 32, which prohibits children from economic exploitation. Article 13 of the ICESCR doesn't allow economic pressures impacting educational access. Bangladesh's Labour Act 2006, ILO Convention No 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (ratified by Bangladesh on 22 March 2022) and ILO Convention No 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ratified on 12 March 2001) prohibit child labour in hazardous conditions. State inaction in fighting rights violations: As for non-official debt bondage relations, the failure of the State to put an end to non-official debt bondage is state inaction in protecting rights.

B. Socio-Cultural and Linguistic Obstacles

- (i) *Language Barriers and Cultural Prejudice in Schools*: The biggest problems are exclusion, mockery, and learning problems due to language barriers and cultural prejudices. The language, Sadri, is dying with the younger generations. Prejudice is often continued by teachers and classmates. Article 30 of the CRC provides for the right of children who belong to a minority to enjoy his or her culture, to practice his or her religion, and to use his or her language. UNDM Article 4 (3) stipulates that states shall establish conditions to enable people to learn to read and write in their mother tongue. NEP (2010) in Bangladesh promises that children from indigenous groups receive primary education in their indigenous language. However, the non-availability of qualified teachers for teaching the Munda language and culturally sensitive teaching and learning materials violates this right. The continuing cultural and linguistic estrangement is a violation of the principle of integrated education as stipulated in ICESCR Article 13.
- (ii) *Parental Disinterest and Lack of Awareness*: Most of the Munda parents do not understand the importance of education. Schools and local authorities do little engagement or outreach.

The UNESCO report stresses the role of social conditions in promoting educational inclusion, quoting in particular its Convention against Discrimination in Education. Article 5 CRC emphasizes the parents' part and the state role in assisting their realization of children's rights. Bangladesh's lack of awareness raising and parental counselling constitutes a failure to meet its CRC and NEP obligations, which also aim to involve communities in the delivery of education.

- (iii) *The Challenge of Early Marriage for Girls' Education: Child or early marriage, especially for girls, was one of the barriers to their completing education. The scale of the problem is significant: according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, roughly 51% of women aged 20–24 nationally were married before 18, with the figure rising to about 58% in Khulna Division, the region in which the Munda community is concentrated. While we see some gains after the passage of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017, there is no implementation.*

Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC, CEDAW, and ICESCR also oblige the state to eliminate impediments related to girls' education. Child marriage is a clear breach of girls' right to education, health, and protection from exploitation. In spite of the 2017 Act, loose enforcement in Munda zones amounts to a violation of state due diligence obligations. But Article 28(4) of the Constitution provides for affirmative action in favour of backward groups, which is reason enough for targeted intervention for Munda girls.

C. Psychological and Systemic Factors

- (i) *The Mindset of Munda Parents and Children towards Education: Education is disillusionment due to jobless education. The children seemed to have a choice between work and education, but most dismissed school, arguing that it would not enhance their economic opportunities.*

Education under Article 29(1) (a) of the CRC must be directed to the development of the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential and towards "preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society." The lack of vocational training and job placement denies this objective. Constitutional pledges for "Mass oriented mass productive Education" etc. are yet to be met. According to a rights-based perspective, education must be accessible and meaningful, the latter lacking in the case of the Munda.

- (ii) *Lack of Teacher Representation: In nearby schools, there are barely or no teachers from the Munda community. The Educated Munda people (those who are post-graduates or graduates) have NGO jobs due to lower pay scales as well as no appointments.*

The NEP 2010 has a policy of appointing teachers from the ethnic communities. The lack of this action is a violation of the principle of non-discrimination in access to the profession under Article 6 of ICESCR and

leaves students without culturally and linguually adequate education in violation of Article 30 of CRC and Article 4 of UNDM. Research indicates that matching students and teachers by race and ethnicity increases student performance, so the inability to do so infringes on the right to quality education.

- (iii) *Climate Displacement and Infrastructure Insecurity*: Frequent school dropouts, displacement, and Psychological trauma occur due to natural disasters and climate vulnerability. Students of Munda have no *pucca* shelter, motorable road, or building for school.

According to General Comment No. 13 of the CESCR, schools must be physically accessible and safe. Article 27 of the CRC provides that children are entitled to an adequate standard of living, including housing.¹⁴ The Constitution in Article 23A mandates the State to defend its minorities. The failure to have residential schools or disaster-preparedness planning violates these commitments.

D. STRATEGIES TO INTEGRATE THE MUNDA COMMUNITY INTO MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

This section describes the important policy actions that may help to improve the Munda children's access and learning in Bangladesh, including financial, cultural and structural interventions. It's an example over targeted strategies that can help overcome systemic barriers and promote inclusive and equitable education.

A. Financial and Material Support Systems

- (i) *Enhancing Scholarship Programs and Waiving Fees*: The government should arrange sufficient and separate scholarship programs for each minority group and ethnic sect, with monthly payments instead of one-off disbursements, as lump sums may be diverted for other purposes. The current amount is insufficient, as students need financial assistance for study expenses, clothing, notebooks, guidebooks, and tuition fees. Among the Mundas, when some receive scholarships and others do not, those left out often stop attending school. Waiving registration or examination fees would also increase participation, as large, one-time payments are unaffordable for many parents. In India, schemes like pre- and post-matric scholarships, Maulana Azad National Fellowships, and Naya Savera provide educational support to minorities, with the government conducting evaluations and monitoring through approved institution.¹⁵
- (ii) *The Role of Microcredit in Empowering Families*: Many local and foreign organizations provide small loans to help the Munda financially. Micro credit schemes are given to ordinary Munda women and are specially designed to

¹⁴ CESCR, General Comment No 13 (n 7) para 6 (physical accessibility); CRC (n 12) art 27.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education (PIB, 'Several steps have been taken up to promote minorities' education in the country' (PIB Delhi, 31 December 2018).

make them self-reliant. If the children of Munda families who go to school are given priority in micro-loans and children's education is included as a non-formal condition, it can improve Munda education. Microcredit can give borrowers a steady income that helps advance social objectives. Many now send girls to school, realizing education's role in ending poverty. By ensuring low interest, timely payment collection, and educational support, microcredit can continue empowering women.¹⁶ Studies of NGO-led microcredit in Bangladesh report that a significant share of borrowers credit microfinance access with keeping their children in school, and that microfinance correspondingly improves household income, welfare, and employment outcomes.¹⁷

- (iii) *Providing Shelter and Relief in Climate-Vulnerable Areas: Climate change impacts children and their education in several ways. Economic difficulties from climate-related consequences may compel families to prioritize urgent needs over education, reducing school enrollment and increasing child labor, especially in the climate-vulnerable agricultural sector. It also affects children's emotional well-being, as rising disasters erode the sense of safety necessary for learning. For the Munda, who have no land and rely on Sundarbans-centric livelihoods, annual displacement due to disasters disrupts education. Boys and girls often stop studying to work or beg. One-off financial assistance, improved shelter, and local administrative monitoring are needed. Australia's integrated approach to Aboriginal education offers a model.*

B. Pedagogical and Curricular Innovations

- (i) *Implementing a Day Meal Program: Munda communities live in remote and economically disadvantaged areas, facing challenges in accessing quality education due to a lack of infrastructure, resources, and economic means. High poverty levels often cause malnutrition among children, affecting cognitive development and academic performance. The Munda people suggest that the government provide lunch to primary or secondary students to reduce family burdens and encourage school attendance. The Supreme Court of India directed state governments to implement a mid-day meal scheme in all government primary schools. Several studies have demonstrated that India's Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme significantly improves both nutrition and school enrollment, particularly among girls and marginalized communities.*
- (ii) *Adopting Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Culturally responsive pedagogy aligns with a rights-based education paradigm and ensures that students are respected, autonomous, and treated as equals. There should also be a focus on children's rights to maintain their identities. It shares similarities with*

¹⁶ Ishita Roy and Pronab Biswas, 'Role of Microcredit on the Education: A Study on NGOs in Bangladesh' (2016) 6(2) *Asian Business Review* 105, 106.

¹⁷ Roy and Biswas (n 22) 106.

reconstructive and socially just teaching approaches, where educators work to address injustices. Indigenized education incorporates indigenous viewpoints and language into mainstream systems, fostering culturally sensitive teaching. However, the government's initiative for minority students to learn in their native tongue is hindered by a shortage of trained teachers.

- (iii) *Strengthening Mother Tongue-Based Education:* The aim of the government to have ethnic minority students solely learn in their native tongue from pre-primary level up to class II and then progressively acquire Bangla from class III, is failing owing to a shortage of teachers proficient in minority languages.¹⁸ In Sylhet, the situation is particularly critical because there have been no structured training programs for ethnic language teachers.¹⁹ Munda people have always used the Sadri language to communicate among themselves. The use of the Sadri language at the pre-primary stage can help in making them school-oriented. Since Sadri language has an alphabet, producing books in this language can add a new dimension. An orientation session can be organized for teachers to familiarize them with the specific requirements of ethnic minority students.²⁰

C. Teacher Development and Community Involvement

- (i) *Prioritizing the Appointment of Teachers from the Munda Community:* Measures should be taken to appoint teachers from the Munda community in the relevant educational institutions. This intervention will lessen the cultural and linguistic gap between the teachers and students. Educated Mundas often pursue careers in NGOs and development sectors rather than government educational institutions. The government, therefore, will need to make targeted arrangements, including competitive remuneration and dedicated placement pathways, to attract Munda graduates into the public school system. A study shows that when teachers share characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, language) with their students, it positively affects student performance and attitudes.²¹
- (ii) *Introducing Job-Oriented Education and Training:* There is a psychological situation of the Munda children that they can earn money by doing daily labor. As there is no such income for going to school, many children do not want to go to school. Job-oriented education or training can be a solution in this regard. Concretely, this could take the form of vocational modules, in fisheries, sustainable agriculture, handicrafts and small-trade skills relevant to the Sundarbans economy, integrated into the secondary curriculum, delivered in partnership with NGOs and the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

¹⁸ Chiran (n 29).

¹⁹ Chiran (n 29).

²⁰ M A Kalam, 'Factors Affecting Performance of the Ethnic Minority Students in Secondary Schools' (2003) 33 *BRAC Research and Evaluation Division* 205.

²¹ TS Dee, 'Teachers, Race and Student Achievement in a Randomized Experiment' (2004) 86(1) *Review of Economics and Statistics* 195.

institutes, and supported by attendance-linked stipends so that the opportunity cost of school attendance is offset. Employment should also be secured for those who have studied up to secondary or higher secondary, according to their education and ability, through priority recruitment quotas in local government bodies, NGOs and Sundarbans-based development projects.

E. CONCLUSION

The financial crisis is the primary barrier to access to education for the Munda community. The trend of taking over the Mundas' lands, socio-political marginalization and the adverse effects of climate change fueled their worse condition. The study also found the state's inaction on the grounds of multiple failures, each of which calls for a concrete response: an inadequate scholarship scheme; inaction toward early marriage absence of political will to eliminate dadon; failure to minimise language prejudice; irresponsibility of government school teachers; lack of governmental officials' surveillance; an insufficient shelter scheme and absence of residential school. Apart from these, parents' unconsciousness about education, the psychological situation of the Munda children to earn money, an extensive number of family members and only Sundarban-centric livelihood are responsible for this educational condition of the Munda Community. Considering the findings, sufficient and separate scholarship programs should be arranged for each minority group and ethnic sect. The educational fees should be waived, particularly when more money is required during the registration for the exam, the students are dropped. As the most vulnerable in the region, the government should introduce an integrated approach that addresses issues such as healthcare, social and cultural marginalization, poverty, employment and the absence of affordable housing.