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Educational Challenges among Mising Tribe Students at the Secondary Level: Evidence from Dhemaji District, Assam, India

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Abstract—Education is the most essential tool that promotes social mobility, diminishes inequities, and empowers marginalized groups to engage effectively in society. The present study examines the Educational Challenges Faced by Mising Tribe Students at the secondary level in Dhemaji district, Assam. A descriptive survey method was employed, and data were collected from 110 students from Dhemaji district, Assam using a self-structured questionnaire consisting of academic, socio-economic, psychological, and institutional dimensions. The findings reveal that academic and socio-economic challenges are the most significant barriers, particularly lack of mother-tongue textbooks, language barriers. Financial constraints, transport difficulties, parental illiteracy, and inadequate home environments, hesitation to ask questions to the teachers and lack of proper communication emerged as major factors hindering students' educational progress. These findings highlight the strong impact of socio-economic and family background on students' educational engagement and academic outcomes. The findings highlight the need for improved access to learning resources, financial support, and supportive learning environments to enhance the educational outcomes of Mising tribe students.

Keywords: Education, Mising Tribe, Educational Challenges, Assam, Socio-economic

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most essential element for the improvement of any country (Baidya, & Barik, 2023). Education is acknowledged as a transforming agent that promotes social mobility, diminishes inequities, and empowers marginalized groups to engage effectively in society. For indigenous and tribal communities, access to quality education plays a critical role in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion. India's tribal population, comprising over 8.6% of the national demographic, continues to face multiple socio-economic, cultural, and educational disadvantages (Census, 2011).

II. MISING TRIBE

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The Mising tribe is the second largest tribe, among the tribes of Assam, India (Patir, 2025). They belong to Yilueto-Burmese group, sub category of the Mongoloid race. The word Mising is derived from the two words "Mi" and "Toshing/Anshing". "Mi" means Man and Anshing/Toshing means worthiness. The word in familiar to many tribes in South East Asia. Another name "Miri" also stands the Mising people (Payun 2021). The Mising, who were originally hill tribes of the Arunachal Pradesh, migrated down to the Plains of Assam in search of a peaceful and better economic life in earlier times (Baidya, 2023). They are spread among three districts: East Siang district, Lower Dibang Valley, and Lohit district in Arunachal Pradesh (Doley, 2020). Mising, also called Miri, live in the Indian state of Assam's districts of Dhemaji, North Lakhimpur, Sonitpur, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Sibsagar, Jorhat, and Golaghat (Doley, 2020). In Dhemaji districts there is a highest Mising Population and most of them live in the river side and the villages where the students face various academic challenges. The community has owned their culture and traditions that has been handed down form age. Some indigenous rules also govern their society.

They are listed under Scheduled Tribes Orders Act of the Indian Parliament, first notified by the President of India as constitutional order in 1950. In the latest amendment of the Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes order under reference, notified by the government of Assam in 2003, the Mising has been listed as "Miri" (Miching). The Mishing tribe, predominantly found in the riverine areas of Assam, has historically been engaged in agriculture, fishing, and handloom weaving (Baishya et. al., 2024). Despite their rich cultural heritage and traditional knowledge systems, the Mising community continues to experience systemic educational disadvantages due to socio-economic marginalization, linguistic exclusion, and geographical isolation (Doley, 2020). Seasonal floods and riverbank erosion have further compounded their vulnerabilities, often disrupted schooling and limited access to educational infrastructure.

Education, which is an important tool in nation-building process, is also used to build civilization. Without education, a sustainable history of civilization can't be constructed (Narah, 2021). In tribal areas, especially in Mising dominated, the literacy percentage is poor. Furthermore, Mising society has a lower proportion of highly educated or professional people than other progressive communities (Doley, 2020). So, it is necessary to study the educational problems faced by the Mising tribe students to build a sustainable environment. This study seeks to critically examine the educational challenges faced by Mising tribe students in secondary schools of Dhemaji district and provide evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Phukan, N. (2019). Studied the Impact of Language Policy of mising and tea tribe students in primary education and found that Assamese is not mother tongue language of Mising community students for which they face difficulties in the teaching-learning process.

Baidya, A. K & Barik, P. K. (2023). Issues and Challenges of Tribal Education in North-East India and found out that there are various problems and challenges face by the tribal population especially in socio-economic, academic and personal level.

Baishya, N., Doley, P. P., Buragohain, D., & Saikia, P. (2024) studied the Quality of life among Mishing and Tiwa tribes in Assam: Unraveling socio-economic complexities and charting a path to inclusive development and findings reveal that there are nuanced challenges from land rights to infrastructural gaps.

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Doley, J. (2020) studied to address the opportunities and difficulties that the Mishing tribe faces in the sphere of education and the study found that poor economic condition, illiteracy of the parents, early marriage and lack of awareness hinder educational development, although improving literacy and emerging professionals indicate positive prospects.

Narah, U. (2021) studied the challenges and prospects in the field of education that Mising tribe face. Educational progress of the Mising community is limited by poverty, poor economic life, parental illiteracy, early marriage, lack of educational environment and the language problem the students face in the schools.

Ottaplackal, J. J. & Anbu, K. (2022) studied the issues and challenges for imparting education to children from indigenous communities. The study found that the tribal students face various problems such as Low awareness, poverty, early marriage teachers lack of familiarity with the Tribal dialect and Cultural mismatch, Policy gaps and digital divide hinder their educational outcomes.

IV. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Education is widely recognized as a powerful instrument for social transformation and the upliftment of marginalized communities. However, tribal populations in India, including the Mising tribe of Assam, continue to face numerous barriers in accessing quality education (Narah, 2021, Doley, 2020, Khatiwora & Singh, 2020). Despite various governmental initiatives and policies aimed at promoting inclusive education, significant gaps still exist in terms of access, equity, and learning outcomes among tribal students. This creates a strong need to examine the specific educational challenges faced by such communities. The Mising tribe, being one of the major indigenous communities of Assam, resides largely in rural and flood-prone areas where educational facilities and resources are often limited. Factors such as poverty, geographical isolation, parental illiteracy, lack of proper home environment and lack of infrastructural support may adversely affect students' academic progress. However, there is a lack of focused empirical studies that comprehensively examine these challenges at the secondary level, which is a crucial stage in students' educational development. The present study is therefore significant as it provides a systematic analysis of educational challenges across multiple dimensions, including academic, socio-economic, psychological, and institutional factors. By identifying the key barriers faced by Mising tribe students, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the issues affecting their educational participation and achievement.

V. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the Educational Challenges Faced by Mising Tribe Students at the Secondary Level in Assam.
2. To suggest remedial measures to overcome the educational challenges faced by Mising tribe students at the secondary level in Dhemaji District, Assam.

VI. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The researcher has adopted descriptive survey method as it aimed to investigate and analyze the educational challenges faced by Mising tribe students at the secondary level without manipulating any variables. Surveys are frequently used to gather data on a certain group, describing their traits, experiences, insights, or viewpoints (Deckert & Wilson, 2023).

VII. POPULATION

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The population of the present study comprised all Mising tribe students studying at the secondary level Class IX in government and provincialized schools of Dhemaji district, Assam.

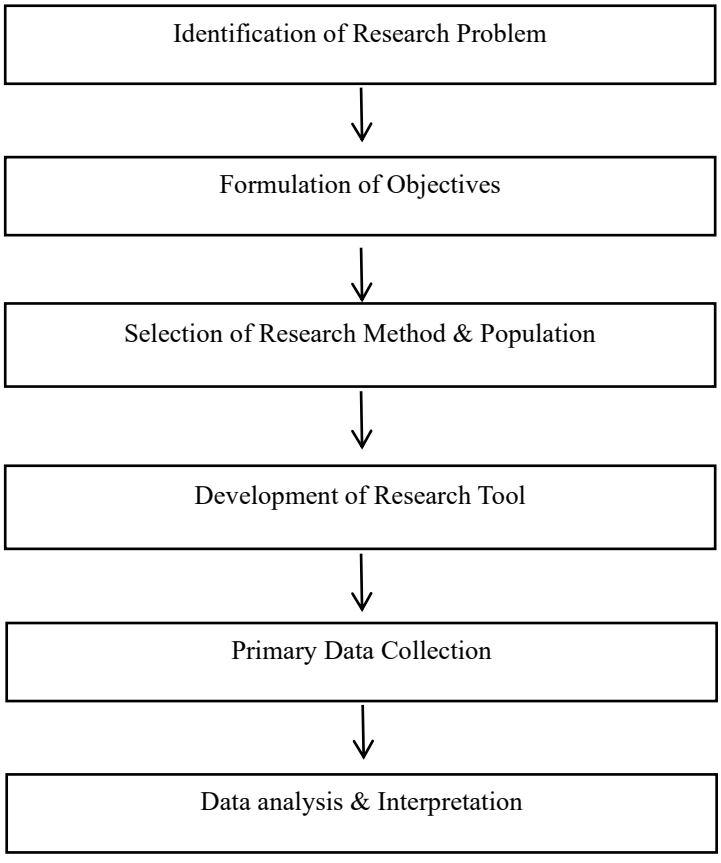
VIII. SAMPLE

A total of 110 Mising tribe students from Dhemaji district were selected as the sample for the study. The sample included 55 male and 55 female students from various schools, ensuring equal representation of both genders.

IX. RESEARCH TOOLS

The Researcher developed a self-structured questionnaire consist of four dimensions: Academic Challenges, Socio-Economic Challenges, Psychological and Social Challenges, Educational Infrastructure and Institutional Support. The responses were collected using a dichotomous scale (Yes = 1, No = 0), allowing for easy quantification and analysis of the data.

X. STAGES FOLLOWED IN THE STUDY



XI. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Objective 1: To study the Educational Challenges Faced by Mising Tribe Students at the Secondary Level in Assam.

Table 1: Academic Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

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Item no	Problem description	Yes	No	Total
1.	language barriers in understanding classroom lessons.	80	30	110
2.	Lack of textbooks/reference materials in preferred language	90	20	110
3.	Large class sizes make it difficult to clarify doubts	42	68	110
4.	Struggle with time management (studies vs. family)	89	21	110

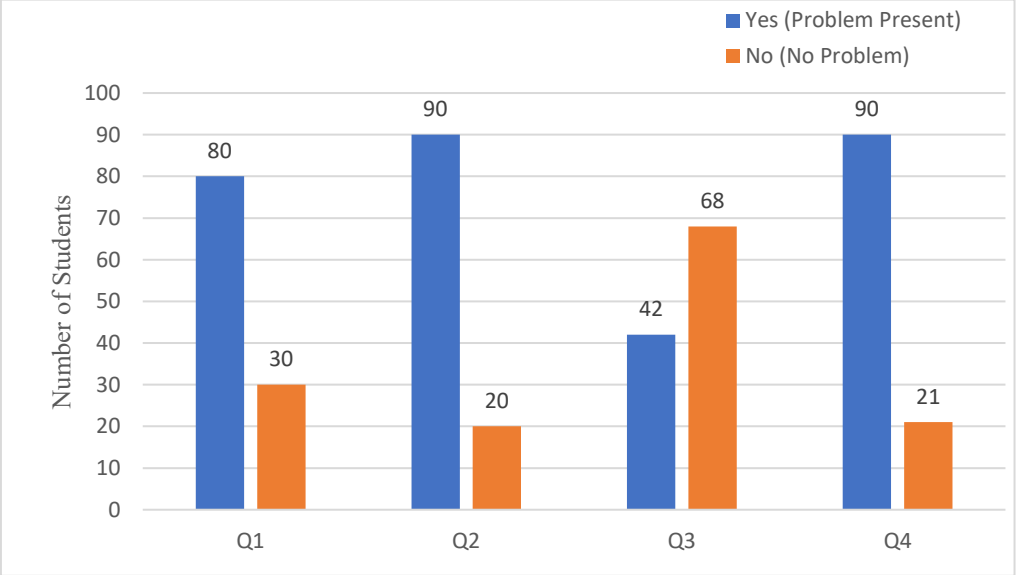


Figure 1: Graphical representation of Academic Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

From table 1 and Figure 1 a majority of Students, 80 (72.7%) out of 110 face language barriers in understanding classroom lessons. Lack of Materials in Preferred Language is the most critical academic problem identified in the survey. With over 90 (81.82%) students reporting a lack of textbooks and reference books in their preferred language. Additionally, only 42 (38.18%) students agreed that large class sizes make it difficult to clarify doubts, while a majority of 68 (61.82%) students did not perceive this as a major issue. 89 (80.91%) Students face difficulties in time management and family responsibilities.

Table 2: Socio-Economic Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

Item no	Problem description	Yes	No	Total
5	Family's financial condition affects educational expenses.	81	29	110
6	Transport and commuting difficulties	84	26	110
7	Parental illiteracy affects educational support at home	69	41	110
8	Home lacks electricity and proper study space	63	47	110

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9	Limited access to scholarships or financial aid makes continuing education difficult.	74	36	110

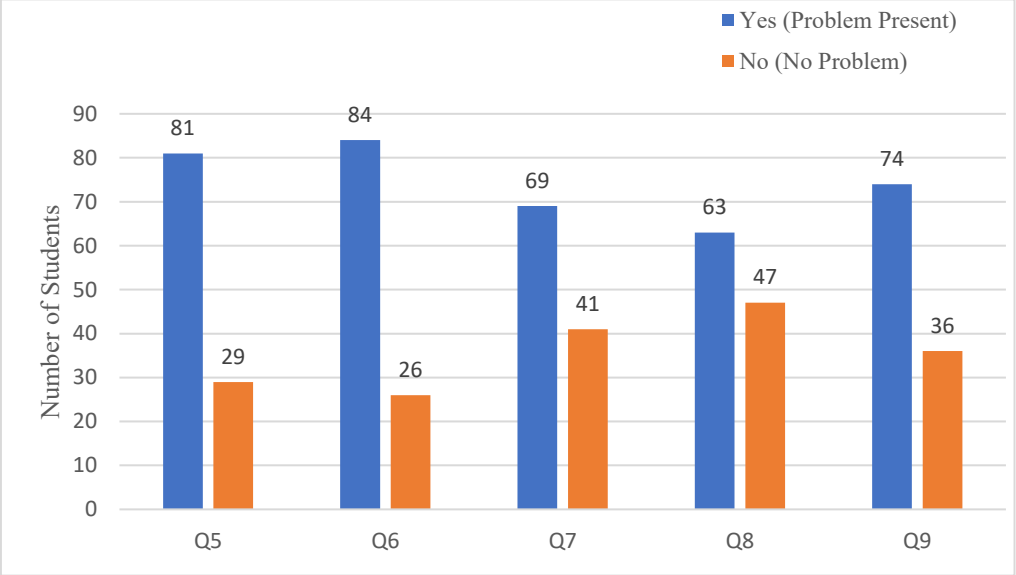


Figure 2: Graphical representation of Socio-Economic Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

From table 2 and Figure 2 a large proportion of students, 81 (73.64%) out of 110, reported that their family's financial condition affects their ability to afford educational expenses. An even higher number of students, 84 (76.36%) out of 110, reported facing transport and commuting difficulties. A considerable number of students i.e. 69 (62.73%) stated that parental illiteracy affects the educational support they receive at home, while 41 (37.27%) students did not report this issue. More than half of the students, 63 reported that their home lacks electricity and a proper study space. Similarly, 74 (67.27%) out of 110 students reported that limited access to scholarships or financial aid makes it difficult to continue their education, whereas 36 (32.73%) students did not report this issue.

Table 3: Psychological and Social Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

Item no	Problem description	Yes	No	Total
10	Hesitation to ask questions or seek help from teachers	71	39	110
11	Peer pressure that distracts from academic goals	43	67	110

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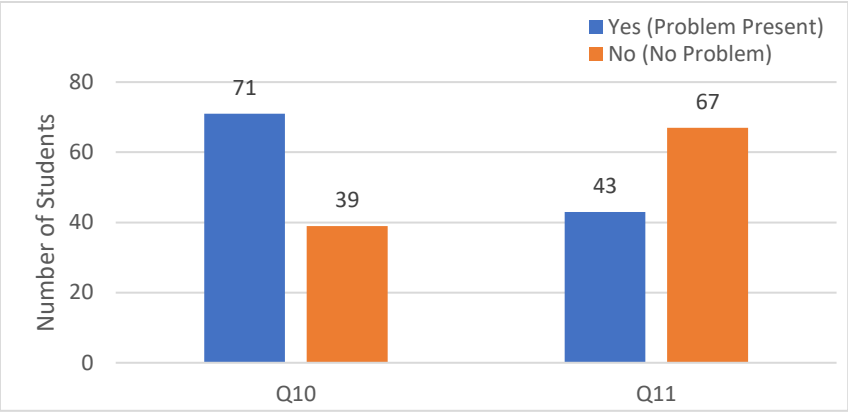


Figure 3: Graphical representation of Psychological and Social Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

A considerable number of students, 71 (64.5%) out of 110, reported that they hesitate to ask questions or seek help from teachers, while 39 (35.5%) students did not face this issue. This indicates that a majority of students experience lack of confidence or communication barriers in the classroom, which may hinder their academic understanding and participation. In contrast, only 43 (39.1%) out of 110 students reported that peer pressure distracts them from their academic goals, whereas a larger proportion, 67 (60.9%) students, did not consider this a significant issue. This suggests that peer influence is relatively less impactful compared to other psychological factors.

Table 4: Educational Infrastructure & Institutional Support Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

Item no	Problem description	Yes	No	Total
12	Inadequate library, laboratory, and ICT facilities	77	33	110
13	Teachers rarely use innovative or interactive methods	38	72	110
14	Lack of proper monitoring of teaching and performance	39	71	110

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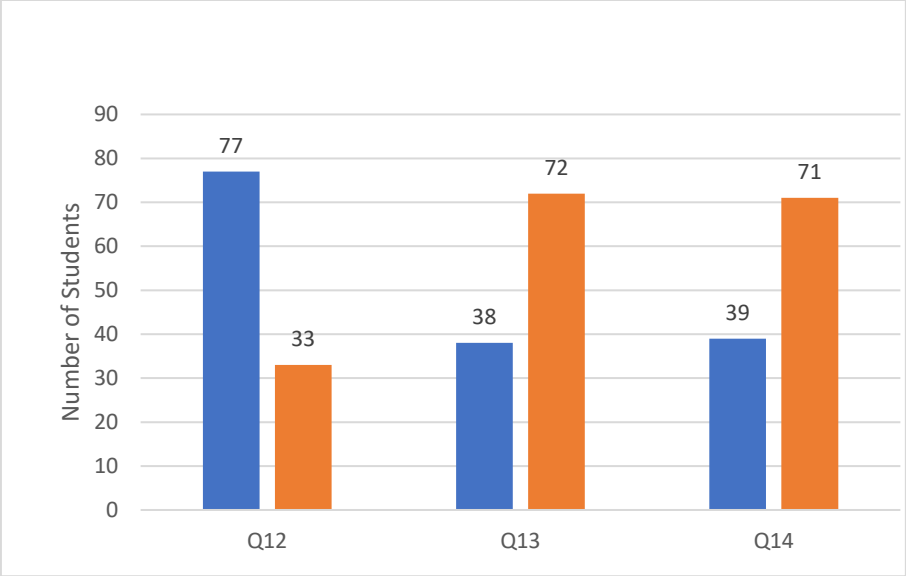


Figure 4: Educational Infrastructure & Institutional Support Challenges faced by Mising tribe Students

A majority of students, 77 (63.6%) out of 110 reported that library, laboratory, and ICT facilities are inadequate, while 40 (36.4%) students did not face this issue. This indicates that infrastructural inadequacy is a significant institutional challenge, affecting access to essential learning resources. Only 38 (34.5%) students agreed that teachers rarely use innovative or interactive teaching methods, whereas a larger proportion of 72 (65.5%) students disagreed. This suggests that most students are relatively satisfied with the teaching methods used in classrooms. Similarly, 39 (35.5%) out of 110 students reported a lack of proper monitoring of teaching and student performance, while 71 (64.5%) students did not perceive this as a major concern. This indicates that institutional monitoring systems are generally functioning adequately for most students.

Objective 2: To suggest remedial measures to overcome the educational challenges faced by Mising tribe students at the secondary level in Dhemaji District, Assam.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Improvement of Learning Resources: Schools and Government agencies should prioritize the development of bilingual textbooks and bridge language programs to overcome the severe linguistic barriers and lack of mother-tongue resources among Mising Tribe students.
- Financial Support: Financial hurdles should be mitigated by launching scholarship awareness campaigns for economically disadvantaged learners especially for Mising tribe students and adopting flexible school timings to help students balance academic work with essential family responsibilities.
- Parental awareness programmes: Initiatives should be taken by the school teachers and community leaders to educate parents of Mising tribe students about the importance of education and ways to support their children's learning.
- Development of infrastructure: Schools and Policy makers should be equipped with adequate library, laboratory, adequate classrooms and ICT facilities to enhance the teaching-learning process.

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- Supportive learning environment: Teachers should encourage student participation and create a classroom atmosphere where students feel comfortable asking questions and should be trained in interactive and inclusive pedagogy to reduce student hesitation and move away from the traditional teaching methods.

XII. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The analysis of educational challenges reveals that Mising Tribe students at the secondary level face multiple challenges such as Academic, economical, psychological and Infrastructural challenges. Among this Academic and socio-economic challenges emerged as the most dominant factors affecting students' educational experiences. This finding is consonance with the findings of (Baidya & Barik, 2023) that there are various problems and challenges face by the tribal population especially in socio-economic, academic and personal level. The data indicates a severe crisis in academic accessibility primarily driven by a language barrier during classroom instructions. (Phukan 2019; Narah, 2021) also found out that the use of Assamese as the medium of instruction creates difficulties for Mising students because Assamese is not their mother tongue, thereby affecting their teaching-learning process. This indicates that the current educational framework does not adequately account for the community's language background, resulting in a significant gap in course comprehension. The high response rate for lack of learning resources, textbook, learning materials indicates a significant gap in access to quality educational materials, and difficulties in managing time between studies and family responsibilities, which directly impacts students' learning outcomes.

Socioeconomic issues are also well established as primary barriers to educational success. A majority of students reported that financial shortage, transport difficulties, and parental illiteracy adversely affect their education. This finding is consonance with the findings of (Narah, 2021; Doley, 2020) that Mishing tribe students faces poor economic condition, illiteracy of the parents, early marriage and lack of awareness which is affect their education. Additionally, inadequate home environments, such as lack of electricity and proper study space, further hinder effective learning. Hesitation in seeking help from teachers and peer pressure, were found to be present; these factors indicate issues related to confidence and classroom interaction, which may indirectly affect academic outcomes of the students. From an institutional perspective, there is a stark contrast between the perceived efforts of teachers and the physical tools available to them While students generally feel that teaching performance is monitored, they report a high level of dissatisfaction with school facilities, specifically inadequate infrastructure such as library, laboratory, and ICT facilities. The lack of innovative or interactive teaching methods also remains a concern, particularly for those who seek more engaging pedagogical approaches. The study highlights that educational challenges among Mising tribe students are multidimensional, with academic and socio-economic factors playing a more critical role than psychological and institutional factors.

XIII. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine the educational challenges faced by Mising tribe students at the secondary level in Dhemaji district Assam. The findings of the study reveal that Mising students experience multiple challenges across academic, socio-economic, psychological, and institutional barriers. The most important obstacles found are the lack of mother tongue textbooks big gaps in language instruction in the classroom, and the heavy burden of family duties, all of which make it harder to do well in school. Socio-economic challenges were also found to be highly influential. Financial constraints, transport difficulties, parental illiteracy, and inadequate home environments, hesitation to ask questions to the teachers and lack of proper communication emerged as major factors hindering student's educational progress. These findings

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highlight the strong impact of socio-economic and family background on student's educational engagement and academic outcomes. Additionally, Institutional challenges such as; inadequate infrastructure, particularly in terms of library, laboratory, and ICT facilities, still affects a considerable number of students. Ultimately, addressing these issues requires a holistic approach that prioritizes linguistic inclusivity, infrastructural investment, and targeted socio-economic support to ensure equitable educational growth for the Mising tribe students in Assam.

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