ARTICLE

Secondary Education for Ethnic Children: Opportunities and Challenges

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Secondary education is a core component of the education system in Bangladesh, serving as the bridge between primary and tertiary levels. The primary objective of this paper is to examine the current state of secondary educational opportunities available to ethnic children, as well as the challenges they typically encounter. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected through an interview schedule, a school information sheet, and focus group discussions with teachers and students. A total of 30 secondary schools were selected as the primary sample units. The findings indicate that most schools have an insufficient number of teachers and classrooms, both in rural and urban areas. Toilets are available for teachers, girls, and boys; however, they are often unhygienic. Moreover, ethnic students in secondary schools face a range of difficulties, including economic hardship, communication barriers, security concerns, political and racial issues, and family and societal pressures.

Keywords: secondary education, ethnic community, educational opportunity

Introduction

Bangladesh has a vast population comprising a diverse range of ethnic communities. In Bangladesh, at least 75 ethnic communities are living across the country (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2012). However, they are generally the most socially and economically disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of the whole population. Keeping this in mind, the Government of Bangladesh emphasises ethnic education, even in its own language, across the country. Different government bodies working in education are focusing on the facilities needed to support the ethnic communities in continuing and strengthening their education. However, it is a matter of fact that the people of most of these ethnic groups are illiterate or poorly literate due to several reasons, such as language problem, communication issues, available institutions, and their socio-economic disadvantages.

The National Education Policy 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2011) emphasises the education of ethnic children. Although the policy aims to improve the quality of education for ethnic minorities, it fails to outline specific actions on the part of the government regarding educational activities for ethnic children within the policy. The National Children Policy 2011 (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2011) includes several generic provisions for children from indigenous communities and other disadvantaged groups, stating that ethnic minority communities will receive facilities for educational tools and other special benefits; that all rights must be ensured for children belonging to ethnic minority and underprivileged communities; and that, without obstructing their traditions and cultures, the government will introduce special programmes to enable these children to develop their full potential.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 'Education for All' (EFA) initiative support these needs by stating that access to relevant basic education for every child, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, or religious background, is the right of all children. Article 28 of the Constitution of Bangladesh also clearly states that the state shall refrain from any discrimination (e.g., based on religion, caste, community, or birth). In addition, Articles 15 and 16 also firmly

Editor's Note: This study sheds light on the persistent challenges faced by ethnic communities in secondary education. Drawing on data and policy frameworks from the early 2010s, it illustrates the sociological processes through which exclusion is reproduced. While the temporal context of the data warrants acknowledgement, the theoretical framing offers a durable lens for understanding how infrastructural deficits operate as active barriers to social mobility. Given the time elapsed since the study's inception, the findings reflect the conditions prevailing at that time. The Editorial Board acknowledges this interval and affirms that the study remains substantially relevant to contemporary policy and research debates.

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state the equal right to education for all, including children from ethnic minority groups.

Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018) argue that investment is also necessary in the secondary education system to enhance the capacity of governments and the private sector to deliver basic services and promote sustainable growth. The availability of secondary education also encourages the completion of primary education. Cuadra et al. (2005) emphasised that every student should have a secondary education, because it serves as the link between what they imbibe in primary school and college education. Much vital knowledge that helps a growing mind think, analyse, and study the world around them is developed and enhanced even further as a result of what is learnt or imbibed in primary school. Colleges require that students complete their education before they can gain admission, as it provides a solid foundation upon which students can build a more advanced educational framework.

Secondary education is a powerful tool in the fight against climate change (Daniel, 2010). He argues that educating girls to the secondary level is the most promising way of reducing population growth. Secondly, secondary education is essential for developing individuals with the cognitive skills to contribute to society. Thirdly, parents recognise that primary schooling serves as a foundation and that the real benefits to their children accrue from continuing their education at the secondary level and beyond. There could even be a 'knock-back' effect if secondary education does not become available. Without the possibility of progression to that level, parents may be less inclined to send their children to primary school, thereby putting at risk the gains already made.

Primary education has expanded significantly in many developing countries since the 1950s, resulting in a substantial increase in gross enrolment in secondary education (Maclean, 2001). However, as access to secondary education has expanded, its overall quality has often declined, as resources have become increasingly stretched and systems have become less efficient.

Secondary schools are reconnecting young people with education and the workforce. Secondary education offers the best hope for young people to develop skills that will put them in a strong position to secure good jobs. Many countries have made significant progress in improving access to primary education; however, in the developing world, many youth still fail to transition to secondary education, which would enable them to consolidate and build on their basic skills.

This study aims to investigate the current state of secondary educational opportunities in ethnic localities. The findings of this study will help to understand the current scenario of secondary educational opportunities and facilities for ethnic communities. Furthermore, the findings will help identify future initiatives to provide quality secondary education and create opportunities for continuing the education of ethnic children.

Theoretical Orientation

This study adopts social exclusion theory as its theoretical framework to analyse the barriers faced by ethnic minority children in secondary education. Whereas traditional poverty theories emphasise material deprivation and resource scarcity (Townsend, 1979), social exclusion theory provides a multidimensional perspective on how particular groups are systematically "shut out" from social, economic, and political structures (Silver, 1994). In particular, the study draws on Sen's (2000) concept of unfavourable inclusion. Sen contends that exclusion does not solely entail being denied access to institutions; it may also involve being included on terms so adverse that meaningful participation becomes impossible.

In this context, ethnic minority children are, in principle, 'included' in the secondary education system through formal enrolment. However, as the existing literature indicates (Kabir & Nath, 2005), and as the analysis presented later in this study will illustrate, ethnic minority children experience forms of unfavourable inclusion through persistent language barriers, the absence of Science streams, and unhygienic school infrastructure. These patterns align with de Haan's (1998) broader argument that ethnic minorities often face a multidimensional "rupture of social bonds" (p. 10), a process that defines them as outsiders and denies them access to essential services, such as quality education, required for full participation in the majority society.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to explore the present status of secondary educational opportunities for the ethnic communities. To achieve the aim of this study, the specific objectives are to: (a) identify the available opportunities and facilities in secondary schools in ethnic areas, including academic opportunities and infrastructural opportunities; and (b) investigate the challenges that ethnic children face in studying at the secondary level.

Scope of the Study

The study covers three hill districts (Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachari) where ethnic people reside in Bangladesh. The secondary schools located in those areas are considered the primary data sources. More specifically, this study aims to investigate the present opportunities available for ethnic children in secondary schools and the challenges they face.

Methodology

As the objectives of this study are to explore the opportunities and challenges faced by ethnic children in secondary education, both qualitative and quantitative evidence are required. To reveal the actual scenario regarding the integration of objectives for both types of data, it is necessary to follow a mixed-methods research design. To identify the educational opportunities for ethnic children, 30 secondary schools were conveniently selected from three districts (10

from each). Separately, 15 secondary school teachers were purposively selected to provide their views on the educational status of ethnic children. These teachers were selected as key informants for qualitative interviews independent of the school sample size, prioritising those with significant experience in ethnic education rather than attempting a statistical representation of all 30 schools. A total of 6 FGDs with ethnic students (2 from each district) were conducted to understand their opinions about their educational opportunities and challenges. A total of three FGDs with parents (one from each district) have been arranged to gather their opinions about educational opportunities and challenges for their children. The secondary sources of data were collected through a school information schedule, an interview schedule, and focus group discussion guidelines. The narrative data is presented using alpha-numeric coding, indicating the strategies used.

Results

As mentioned earlier, a total of 30 secondary schools have been selected from three different districts where ethnic communities reside. In rural areas, 90% of the secondary schools were selected from the non-government category, while 10% of the schools were selected from the government category. Moreover, in urban areas, 70% of the schools selected are from the non-government category, 20% from the government category, and 10% are secondary schools from the private category.

Opportunities at Schools

The available opportunities in secondary schools in ethnic areas are divided into two major categories: academic opportunities and infrastructural opportunities.

Academic Opportunities

Teachers' Related Information

Data show that 10% of rural schools have fewer than six teachers, 30% have six to eight teachers, 45% have nine to eleven teachers, and 15% have more than twelve teachers. Moreover, in urban areas, 30% of schools have 6 to 8 teachers, 20% have 9 to 11 teachers, and 50% have 12 teachers or more.

A significant number of teaching posts were found vacant in selected secondary schools in ethnic areas. In rural areas, 10% of schools have one vacant position, 25% of schools have two vacant positions, and 20% of schools have three vacant positions. On the other hand, 10% schools have 2 vacant posts, and another 10% schools have 3 vacant posts of teachers in urban secondary schools.

Teachers' Ethnicity

In selected secondary schools, the number of Bengali teachers (in terms of nationality) exceeds the number of ethnic teachers. In rural areas, 63.3% of teachers come from the Bengali community, while 36.7% come from the ethnic community. In urban areas, 58.3% of teachers come from the Bengali community, while 41.7% come from the ethnic community in secondary schools.

Teacher-Student Ratio

According to the National Education Policy 2010 (Ministry of Education, 2011), one teacher is assigned to 30 students. This study finds that in rural areas, the teacher-student ratio (TSR) is 1:30 in 15% of schools, 1:31 to 1:40 in 30% of schools, 1:41 to 1:50 in 15% of schools, and exceeds 1:50 in 40% of schools. Furthermore, in urban areas, TSR 1:30 is found in 20% of schools, 1:31 to 1:40 in 20% of schools, and TSR 1:41 to 1:50 in 10% of schools. It is found that the TSR is high in half (50%) of the schools, which is more than 1:50.

Teachers' Training

The number of trained teachers is insufficient in secondary schools located in ethnic areas. It is found that in urban areas, only 51.3% of teachers have a BEd training, and 3.5% of teachers have an MEd degree. This scenario is almost identical in rural areas, as only 51.5% of secondary school teachers hold a BEd qualification, and very few (2%) possess an MEd qualification.

Teaching Aids

Posters, graphs, maps, globes, and science apparatus are the main teaching aids in secondary schools. It is found that 50% of rural schools use posters, graphs, and maps, 30% use globes, 25% use models, and 40% use apparatus as teaching aids. Conversely, 80% of urban schools have graphs and maps, 60% have posters, globes, and apparatus, and 10% have models as teaching aids.

Medium of Instruction

Data reveal that ethnic languages are rarely used for classroom instructions. It is found that all teachers of secondary schools have used the Bangla language in the classrooms for instructional purposes, while 86.6% teachers use the ethnic language during classroom discussion. Furthermore, only 20% of teachers use ethnic languages for classroom instruction, and only 10% of teachers utilise special teaching aids written in ethnic languages.

Infrastructural Opportunities

All the selected secondary schools have at least 3 classrooms. Specifically, 85% of rural and 80% of urban schools have 4 classrooms, while 40% of rural and 50% of urban schools have 5 classrooms. Furthermore, 10% of rural and 40% of urban schools have 6 classrooms, while only 10% of urban schools have 7 classrooms.

It is found that 40% of rural secondary schools have a safety wall, while 60% do not. Additionally, 20% of urban secondary schools have a safety wall, although 80% do not. Approximately half of the rural secondary schools have gardens, while 30% of urban secondary schools have gardens. Most of the selected secondary schools (80% rural and 60% urban) have playgrounds.

Water Supply and Sanitation

The primary source of drinking water is the tube-well in the secondary schools located in ethnic areas. It is found that 75% of rural and 80% of urban schools have a tubewell,

while 15% of rural schools do not have any sources of drinking water, and 5% of rural schools use a water hole/pond/river as their source of drinking water. Furthermore, 5% rural secondary schools and 20% of urban secondary schools use tap/supply water as the source of drinking water. The data showed that 73.3% of rural and 75% of urban secondary school authorities reported that their tubewells are arsenic-free. Contrary to this, 26.7% of rural and 25% of urban school authorities are unsure whether their tubewells are arsenic-free or have not been tested for arsenic.

The overall sanitation facilities are inadequate in both areas of the schools. It is found that 15% of rural and 10% of urban secondary schools have a standard toilet for all, while 15% of rural schools have a toilet for both teachers and girls. Furthermore, 95% rural schools and all (100%) schools in urban areas have toilets only for teachers. Surprisingly, only 20% of the schools in both areas have standard toilets for both boys and girls. Moreover, 80% of both rural and urban schools in the ethnic area have separate toilets for girls, while 75% of rural and 60% of urban schools in the ethnic area have separate toilets for boys.

The condition of sanitation is not sufficient at the secondary schools. Data show that 50% of urban and 73.3% of rural secondary school boys' toilets are unhygienic, although 100% of urban and 89.5% of teachers' toilets are hygienic. Moreover, 62.5% of girls' toilets in schools are unhygienic in both urban and rural areas, while all shared toilets in urban schools and 33.3% of those in rural schools are found to be unhygienic.

Furniture

The seating arrangements in all selected secondary schools are typically bench or table-style. The sitting order is found to be typical, i.e., a row and column type, in 85% of rural and all (100%) urban schools, while it is U-type in 15% of rural schools. It is also found that only 25% of rural schools and 40% of urban secondary schools have sufficient furniture in proportion to their enrolled students. In contrast, most secondary schools located in ethnic areas lack this facility.

Challenges the Ethnic Children Face

Ethnic students in secondary school face several problems during their studies. Primarily, they face economic and financial problems, communication issues, security concerns, political and racial issues, family-related problems, and societal challenges. Students, teachers, and guardians mention those types of problems during FGD and Interviews. For instance, a secondary school teacher presents the overall challenges of secondary students. As he states,

> Secondary ethnic students faced various problems at different levels. Mainly, they faced economic and communication problems. Moreover, they faced problems such as mid-day meal shortages, a lack of clothing, working with family members in the hills, language barriers, and inadequate quality teachers in rural schools.
> To overcome this problem, we require holistic

initiatives from both the government and non-governmental sectors.

Economic and Financial Problems

The majority of ethnic families are facing economic and financial difficulties in providing their children's education. For these reasons, the ethnic families cannot support their children in their studies, cannot provide books on time and other educational materials that are necessary for them. Sometimes, the parents of the ethnic families become reluctant to provide educational support to their children, as they cannot do so. For example, the father of an ethnic student of Bandarban speaks,

> I have no income source. I faced an economic crisis in the last few years. I am unable to provide any financial support for children's education. Most of the time, my son wants money to buy a book, a pen, and other educational equipment, but I am unable to afford this.

The economic challenges hinder the proper education of ethnic children. One guardian from the rural areas of Khagrachhari district expressed his financial hardship:

> I am a day labourer. I do not have enough money to provide my child with an education. Therefore, my son studied in class VIII. Due to his educational expenses, I need more money. He has no supplementary books, paper, pencil, school dress, or shoes. Furthermore, the school authority wants admission fees, exam fees, and other fees at different times.

Communication-Related Problem

The majority of ethnic students are facing problems reaching the schools. For example, a guardian of Rangamati district states that during the interview time,

> Communication problems are one of the significant obstacles in ethnic secondary education. School is far from home. My child has to start school at 6:00 a.m. She has to travel by boat twice and walk to school on foot.

Generally, in ethnic areas, most students live far away from their secondary schools. Communication problems take up the majority of the day for attending school. Therefore, the children do not receive much attention in class after a tiring journey to school, and they also do not have much time to study at home. For instance, a secondary student of Rangamati district stated during FGD:

> We are five friends who come to this school from 5 to 6 kilometres away. We started our journey at 7:00 a.m. and came to school on time. Firstly, we overcome a 3 km ridge on foot, then navigate the river by dinghies. After completing the class, we will return home in the same way. We feel tired when we reach our home at night.

Language-Related Problem

The medium of instruction used in classroom teaching and learning activities is a key factor in enabling students to receive information, grasp its meaning, and apply it for further learning. However, ethnic students often face language-related challenges during classroom interactions and lectures

with their teachers. A significant number of ethnic students are unable to understand the Bengali language in the classroom. Therefore, they are unable to express their views on the delivered lessons and become inattentive throughout the lesson. The secondary teachers also support this situation. They believed that language barriers hinder the ethnic children's classroom learning. One of the secondary school teachers in Khagrachhari district argues that in rural areas, the majority of ethnic students face a language barrier in the classroom. They are not accustomed to the Bangla language and are struggling to cope with it. For that reason, they faced challenges in the classroom during the teacher's lecture. They cannot understand teachers' guidelines and instructions. Moreover, some ethnic and Bangali teachers are using ethnic languages at the end of the class to facilitate better understanding among ethnic students.

School-Level Facilities-Related Problem

Ethnic students face challenges in selecting different academic streams. The data showed that all secondary schools in both areas have a humanities stream as a provision for studying. Furthermore, 40% of rural and 60% of urban secondary schools offer a science stream, while 10% of rural and 30% of urban secondary schools offer a commerce stream. It indicates that most of the selected secondary schools do not offer science and commerce streams. For example, a student from Bandarban stated:

> Currently, I am studying in the humanities stream, but I had previously considered pursuing a science stream. I am skilled in mathematics, and my teacher has endorsed me as having a strong aptitude for understanding science. Unfortunately, the science and commerce streams are not available at my school, and only a humanities stream is offered here. Therefore, it is clear to me that I should study humanities at this school.

The secondary schools located in the ethnic areas have limited facilities for their students. The minimum facilities for quality learning appear to be absent in many secondary schools. The schools face a shortage of teachers, classrooms, and furniture for their students, as well as inadequate educational facilities within the classrooms. Not only inside schools but also outside of them, secondary students are facing security problems such as eve-teasing and concerns about safety while riding the hilly ridges, among others. During FGD, one of the female students mentioned:

> We are facing problems inside and outside the classroom. Firstly, the classroom size is too small for the number of students, and the furniture is insufficient. Additionally, the blackboard is not visible from our seats. Secondly, we are facing some problems outside the classroom, such as "eve-teasing" at school and security issues on the way to school.

As the secondary schools have limited facilities, regular classes are rare. More specifically, the practical classes of science subjects are not taught by teachers because they lack the required apparatus and other necessary supports. During an FGD, a secondary science student from Bandarban district claims that our science practical class is not being conducted due to a lack of apparatus. Most science students at rural-level secondary schools traditionally face this type of problem.

As secondary students are at their adolescent stage, they require specific facilities tailored to their needs. More specifically, adolescent girls in secondary schools should have access to specific facilities at school, such as separate common rooms, separate toilet facilities, and opportunities for co-curricular activities, among others. However, a significant number of secondary students, especially girls, are facing various problems at their school. One of the secondary students of grade X states:

> Our school does not have a separate common room for us. We have to stay in the classroom even when classes are not in session. We are currently facing different problems with the boys, such as "eve-teasing".

According to another female secondary student from Rangamati,

> My school does not have a separate common room or toilet for us. We have to use the shared toilets, and sometimes we have to use the open places beside our school's premises. It is a significant challenge for the girls to use the toilet properly for the entire day. Therefore, sometimes we have to go back home before the end of our classes.

Home Learning Environment-Related Problem

Ethnic students are facing problems not only at school and outside of school, but also at home. The significant problems at the ethnic children's home are the lack of support, lack of reading places, parents' unawareness, and lack of inspiration for studying. During the FGD, one of the students from Khagrachhari district mentioned,

> We are facing problems at home. We do not have a suitable place for reading at home. On the other hand, our parents are not mindful of our education. Sometimes they neglect us. They have no solvency to provide 50-100 taka in a month. Finally, we are having a problem continuing our education.

The family culture is also posing as a key problem for the ethnic students, especially for the girls. Usually, the rural ethnic families are not aware of children's education. They mostly think that education for girls is not necessary and even useless. They also believe that when the girls are in the adolescent period, they need to arrange their marriage. The main reason behind this type of thinking is the social insecurity existing in the ethnic areas. One of the secondary students of Rangamati district highlighted,

> We are facing a great problem in our community and at home. Our parents are not thinking of providing support for the girls to study. They believe that education is not beneficial for girls. Therefore, they are looking to arrange early marriage, even if we are doing better in our studies.

Political Problem

Sometimes, ethnic students encounter political challenges when attending school. They also became the racial victim at that time. When political unrest and racial conflicts occur in the hill tracks, all the educational institutions shut down within a minute. For example, a teacher of the secondary school under Bandarban district mentions, "We are facing political and racial problems in the hill tracks. During the political unrest, we had to keep our school closed."

Discussion and Way Forward

Ethnic students have some opportunities inside and outside the schools, but these are not sufficient for them. For example, in our study, we found that most schools have 9 to 11 teachers, indicating that the lack of teachers is a significant problem here. Nearly half of the schools have at least 5 classrooms, while all schools have 3 classrooms. Most schools have a tube well, separate toilets for teachers, girls, and boys, but these are often unhygienic. These infrastructural deficits are not merely resource gaps but indicators of "passive exclusion" (Sen, 2000), where the state's failure to maintain basic dignity in ethnic schools signals a lack of political priority compared to mainstream education.

These findings are similar to those of Kabir and Nath (2005), who investigated the fact that, on average, 12 teachers are employed in secondary schools. However, the minority community, including those from Bengali backgrounds, is underrepresented, with fewer than 10 classrooms in a school. Additionally, separate toilets are provided for teachers and students in schools. In both studies, we found that half of the teachers have BEd training at ethnic secondary schools. Ethnic students often lack a proper educational environment at home and are required to perform various household tasks. They must participate in various community festivals, religious ceremonies, weddings, worship services, and New Year celebrations, among others. Some of these occasions continued for seven to eight days. During this time, ethnic children are often required to participate in singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments with high frequency, which can seriously disrupt the educational environment at their homes (Kalam, 2003).

In hill districts, secondary schools are often underfunded and lack the necessary equipment to ensure a quality education. All kinds of educational streams (groups) are not available in these selective schools, especially the science stream, which is notably missing. This absence of high-value academic streams exemplifies Sen's (2000) concept of "unfavourable inclusion." While ethnic students are technically included in the secondary system, the systemic denial of science education effectively excludes them from future opportunities in medicine or engineering, trapping them in a cycle of lower economic mobility. Furthermore, ethnic students are discouraged from studying in the science stream, as it is considered difficult and expensive, and their economic circumstances do not allow them to afford these requirements (Kalam, 2003). On the other hand, school authorities usually do not allow lower- and mediocre-performing students to take Science.

This study examines the challenges that ethnic students encounter, including communication, economic, security, political, racial, family, and societal issues, which impede their ability to pursue secondary education. Due to the mentioned problems, the ethnic students dropped out of the formal schooling system, and in most cases, they feel education is not for them. Kabir and Nath (2005) similarly noted that the poor performance of ethnic students is attributed to socio-economic vulnerability, an unsuitable medium of instruction, a weak foundation at the primary level, non-sensitive, poor-quality teaching, a lack of parental awareness, and an insufficient support system. In most cases, secondary schools are far from home, and students journey alone. In some cases, they attend school in a group. Nevertheless, ethnic students are facing some security and eve-teasing-related problems on the way to school. It also affected the students' motivation and interest in education as well as their performance at school (Kalam, 2003).

Economic and financial limitations are one of the most severe problems for ethnic children to access secondary education. The financial condition of ethnic families is precarious, which is why they often work as day labourers and receive very low wages (Kalam, 2003). In some cases, family members forced their children to work in the field as well as at home to supplement the family income and assist with household chores, babysitting, and other tasks. As a result, children are not able to prepare their lessons on time. Due to poor economic conditions, parents were unable to cover their children's school fees, meal costs, and supplementary educational expenses. Finally, ethnic students are not able to continue their education properly, and in some cases, they drop out of formal education.

This study reveals that ethnic students are facing language-related difficulties in the classroom, and most of them are not accustomed to the Bengali language. In most cases, teachers do not provide instruction in their students' own language, which means secondary schools have failed to ensure a proper learning environment. From a social exclusion perspective, this linguistic disconnect represents a form of "institutional exclusion" (Silver, 1994). By failing to acknowledge the students' mother tongue, the school system inadvertently treats ethnic identity as a deficit, alienating students from the learning process despite their physical presence in the classroom. Kabir and Nath (2005) also obtained similar results in their study. They reported that most ethnic schools did not provide an adequate learning environment for ethnic minority students and that teachers generally showed limited sensitivity to these students' specific needs. In addition, Kalam (2003) also illustrates a similar situation in his study. He mentioned that due to a language comprehension issue, most ethnic students were unable to follow the teachers' instructions in the classroom. Ethnic students are not as competent in the Bengali language as Bengali students.

Finally, this study recommends that the required number of teachers be recruited in secondary schools so that they can teach classes on a regular basis. Qualified teachers might be recruited from the ethnic communities. Incentives may be considered for those who wish to teach in areas with ethnic populations.

All streams of secondary education should be available in secondary schools, allowing ethnic students to choose from Science and Commerce groups according to their preferences. Infrastructural development in the ethnic secondary schools is necessary to ensure at least 5 classrooms. More classrooms might be considered for those schools where 3 streams of secondary education are available. A playground should be provided in secondary schools, ensuring it is safe for play. Moreover, a school garden is necessary in all schools. These would help develop the physical and emotional development of the students. The sources of drinking water should be established in all schools, and they should be tested for arsenic contamination.

The teachers could use ethnic language in secondary classrooms when discussing, so that students can easily understand the meaning. For this purpose, initiatives could be taken to increase teachers' language abilities, especially in ethnic languages. The economic status of students should be considered when collecting fees. Initiatives should be taken to supply educational materials to students who are unable to afford the expenses. Social awareness should be developed so that secondary female students feel safe attending school regularly.

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