

**Socio-economic status as a Determinant of Educational Aspirations: A Study of the Tiwa
Tribe of Assam**

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Abstract

The Tiwas formerly called 'Lalungs' are one of the seventh largest (Census, 2001) tribal population of Assam. The literacy rate as reflected is 62.5 % among the ST population of Assam. Literates among STs who are having educational level graduation and above are 2.3 per cent only. Mikir, Rabha, and Lalung are at the bottom, each having less than two per cent of their literate population with educational level graduation and above. The socio economic status as revealed from the study area in eight villages of Morigaon and Nagaon districts of Assam suggests that they are economically backward and the expenditure on education is a function of family income. The parents' educational achievement is very low with most of them barely reaching the higher secondary level. The low educational qualification of parents leads to low aspiration for children. With the kind of education being provided to them not matching their needs, aspirations and value systems, they also have no other vocational skills to fall back upon. Thus, people in these areas remain unskilled and lack opportunity to opt for any other sources of income. The paper uses the theoretical framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (which suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher level needs) to understand the socioeconomic development of the Tiwa community.

Key Words: Tiwas, socio-economic status, educational aspirations, need hierarchy.