

EDUCATION AND TEA TRIBE COMMUNITY WOMEN- A CASE STUDY IN DIBRUGARH DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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ABSTRACT--Education is an instrument that can change the status of women. The knowledge that is attained through education helps open doors to a lot of opportunities for better prospects in career growth. But unfortunately in Assam still a very large section of people especially women are deprived of getting education. Poverty is the greatest hindrance for attainment of education among women. In Assam the tea tribes are one of the community which is still backward in terms of education despite of various effort taken by the government in the field of education. This paper makes an attempt to highlight the status of education of tea worker's women, their interest for education, their children status of education and also the various problem faced by them in continuation of education of their children after the primary education

Key Words-- Status of Education, Gender Discrimination, poverty.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tea industry is perhaps the most established industry in India and today it is appreciated as having the status of most outstanding amongst other sorted out businesses in the nation. It is to be duly remembered that along with the male amongst more than a million labourers, there is a considerable no of female too who are engaged straightforwardly in manor and assembling ventures of the tea industry of India.

The chance of the development of tea industry in India opened up with the death of the contract Act of 1833, which allowed Europeans to possess land right now. The tea plant was found in Assam and in Himalayan Foot slopes by Charlton and Captain Jenkins in 1833.

Assam is the greatest maker of value tea in India. Assam's tea industry is subject to around 2,000,000 workers practically every one of whom are the descendents of the individuals who were purchased to Assam as manual labour by the East India Company and later by the British rulers from 1830's through 1920's. The tea clans from the foundation of the Assam tea industry and are found in practically all the locale of Assam.

Tea is one of the work serious ventures that rely for the most part upon both male and female specialists. A remarkable component of the tea business is that half of the work power establish of ladies labourers. Cutting of leaves is accomplished by manual work, and that rely for the most part upon ladies labourers and to a great extent ladies are utilized in these activity. Plucking the leaves from the plants is a hard and a tiring activity and for the most part ladies are to be seen occupied with these work. A lady works alongside these occupation, and furthermore need to take care of the local front as a spouse, mother and a home producer. A lady worker is in this manner exposed to majority of job desire, which now and again become normally contrary. Other than it is especially

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deplorable that even now, additionally however ladies are engaged, government has cultivated out different arrangements for ladies then likewise ladies have not had the option to go past subsistence level. Financial issues of these ladies workers kept on being regrettable. They have extremely low proficiency rates and for the most part rely upon working tea garden for their occupation. Their principle occupation is to work in the tea cultivates as every day compensation. They are commonly overburdened with their profitable, regenerative and other local exercises.

II. REVIEWS OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sharma.G conducted a study to the tea tribes of Assam are among the background and most exploited tribes in India through their newer generation is comparatively educated. The tea planters usually exploit the tea tribe in every possible way. Lack of education,poverty, addition to alcohol are the major problems in the life of tea garden workers.

S. Madhumita Handique and Diganta Kr Gogoi conducted a study in Rajgarh Tea estates of Dibrugarh District of Assam. Their main objectives of the study was to understand the problems of girl child education of the tea tribe community.

Bora (2002) conducted a study to examine the existing facilities for primary education in Tea Garden of Dibrugarh District.

III. AREA OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to three tea estates namely Lengrai Tea Estates and MaudTea Estates a of Dibrugarh District. Both the tea estates are from remote area, far away from Dibrugarh town.

IV. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The women workers in the tea plantation have a vital role and significant role in the development and progress of the tea industry. The vast labour population settled in and around the tea plantation not only contributes largely to the building up of economy of their respective states but also plays a very important role in social and political activities in the country. Though their contribution in building up of economy of the country is great but still they are exploited from the authority and the outside agency. Therefore, to understand the prevailing status of education of tea tribes and more particularly the women tea garden labourers in the Assam tea plantation in the context of the existing socio-economic setting to which they have been exposed since their migration. It is with this background, the study entitled "Education and Tea Tribe Community Women- A case Study in Dibrugarh District".

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the educational status of the tea garden women workers.
2. To find out the basic problems of tea garden women regarding education.
3. To find out the educational status of the children of the tea tribe community women.
4. To find out the factors for the low rate of accessing education.

5. To suggest remedial measures to solve the problems faced by the tea garden women workers.

VI. METHODOLOGY

The population of the study comprises the entire women working in the tea garden of Dibrugarh District Assam.

Both primary and secondary data was collected to analysis the present study

Primary data were collected through direct interaction with 100 respondents, 50 respondents from one tea estates and other 50 respondents from another tea estate with a structured questionnaire.

To select the sample from sample tea estates, the researchers apply the technique of incidental sampling approaching only those whom the researcher meets

VII. TOOLS AND TECHNIQUE USED FOR DATA COLLECTIONS

1. Interview schedule: In this study, interview is adopted as a tool for data collection in order to gain depth and details responses of the respondents.
2. Personal observation has also been done on tea estates women.
3. Different Journals, magazines, books and internet is also used to get the data.

VIII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Table 1: A comparative analysis of literacy rate of women workers under investigation.

SL No	Name of the Garden	No. of Participants.	Literate	Percentage
1.	Maud Tea Estates	50	22	44%
2	Lengrai Tea Estates	50	18	36%
3	Grand Total	100		

Table 1 reveals that Maud Tea Estates out of 50 respondents only 22 women are literate i.e we can say only44% is literate, and in Lengrai Tea Estate out of 50 respondent only18 women are literate i.e only 36% are literate.

Distribution of respondent according to their age group

Table 2: Distribution of respondent according to age group.

Age group	15-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65
Respondent	40	30	15	10	5

Source: Field Survey in the Sample Tea Estate.

It is cleared from the above figure that out of total 100 respondents, highest number of respondents that is 40 belong to the age group of 15-25, followed by 30 respondent to the age group 26-35, followed by 15 respondent to the age group 36-45, 10 respondent to the age group 46-55 and only 5 respondent come under the age of 56-65.

From the above table it is clear that their show that the majority of the respondents are from the age group of 15-25, this is a teenager period and also a crucial time of parenting. This group of people are interested in education and they want to be educated and some they also want their children to become educated.

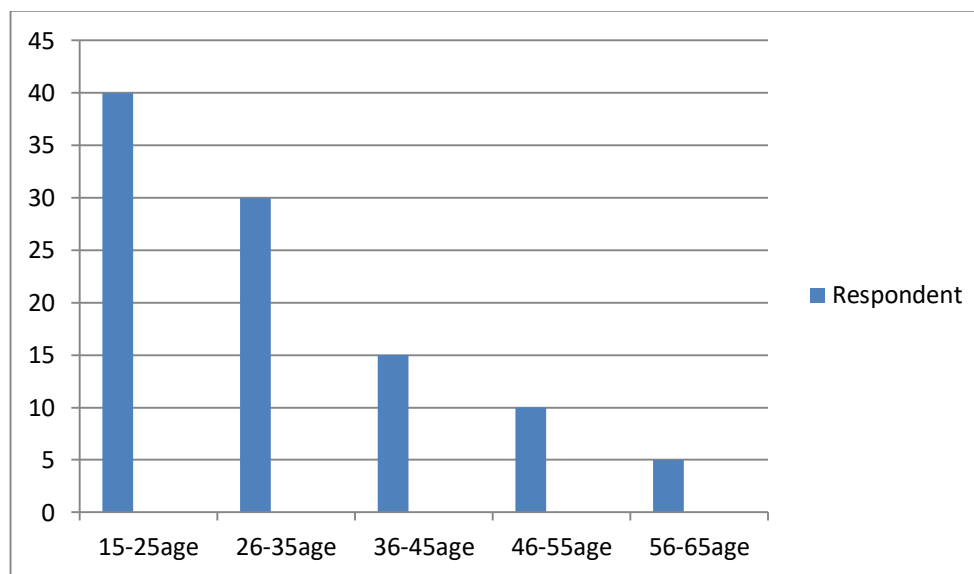


Figure1: Distribution of respondents according to age group.

Distribution of the respondent according to the educational Qualification.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to the qualification

Illiterate	Class V	Class VIII	Class X	Class XII	Graduate	P.G	Other qualification.
60	48	38	22	17	8	1	2

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows the educational Qualification of the respondents. The survey reveals that majority of the respondents are illiterate, 48 are educated upto primary level. 38 respondents are educated up to class VIII, 22 of them pass matriculation exam, out of which only 17 of them are Higher Secondary exam pass and 8 of them have graduation degree and it is very sorrow that only 1 has done post graduation degree from selected two tea garden from the selected respondent. 2 respondents have acquired other qualification.

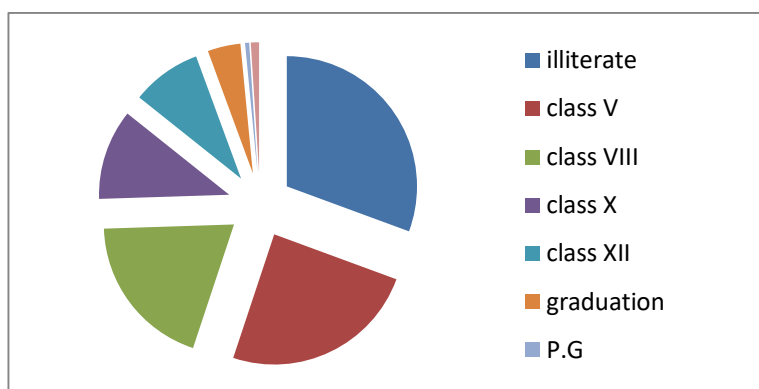


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents according to their educational qualification.

Participants interest on Education according to age group.

With a view to have an idea about the interest of women workers regarding education, 100 female participants of the two tea gardens are interviewed to get a correct picture in this regard.

Table 4: shows No. of participant interest on Education according to age group.

Age Group	15-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65
Respondents	45	32	18	10	5

From the above table its reveals that out of 100 respondents' highest number of respondents that is 45 belong to the age group of 15-25, followed by 32 respondents of age group 26-35, 18 respondents of the age group 36-45 and 10 respondents of the age group 46-55 and 5 only come under the age of 56 to 65 years of age.

From the above table its shows that majority of the respondents are from the age group of 15 to 25 years of age which is a very young age and they know about the needs of education for women to make women empower in society, as education is considered as a tool to get women empowered. Next shows the age group of 26-35 years of age, which is a very crucial time of parenting. And of-course the biggest responsible of the parents is to educate their child.

IX. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENT'S CHILDREN.

Education plays a great role in the life of everyone all throughout the life. Getting proper education is very necessary to get success and happy life just like food is necessary for healthy body. It is the prime duty of the parents to send their children to school.

Table 5: Educational Status of the Respondents Children.

Educational qualification	Illiterate	Primary	Class V	Class VIII	Class X	Total

Sex	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	T
Children of Respondents	28	32	38	29	25	15	22	12	14	3	127	91	218

The table 5 shows that there are a total 218 children (only children below 14 years of age) are taken into account among the sample of 100 respondents.

In case of some respondents they have children of above 14 years of old who are mostly dropout and engaged in some or the other type of unskilled work in tea garden.

The total number of male children is 127 and female children are 91. From the responds of the respondents it has been found that 28 male child and 32 female child are illiterate, 38 male child and 29 female children are educated upto primary level, 25 male child and 15 child are educated up-to class v. The number further decrease when it comes to class VIII and Class X. Only 22 male child and 12 female child educated up-to class VIII. There are 14 male and a very female i.e only 3 female child educated class X.

It has been observed that the tea tribe women are not aware about education up to the level of expectation. The enrolment of their children in the schools of various stages show that their interest and decision in sending their children to school is determined more by the added advantage offered by the school than by the objective of education in general. It is their poverty that makes them send their wards to LP School for availing the facility of mid day meal freely offered by the central government. As a result, schools concerned show a cent percent enrolment where the contribution of the tea tribe children enthused by their mothers is the highest. However, depressingly enough, the trend of enrolment in the schools in the gradual higher stages is noticeably low where the same women folk play the most determining role. These women, who always want some economic advantage, do not find the same in the Upper Primary and High School stages, and hence they do not send their children or wards to schools concerned. Rather, they encourage and compel them to be engaged in some money making avenues in tea gardens, factories, mills etc. Girl children are found to be engaged in well- to- do houses in household chores, child care and such other income avenues. In fine, the motive of adding to the income of the family supersedes the tea tribe women’s interest in education for their children.

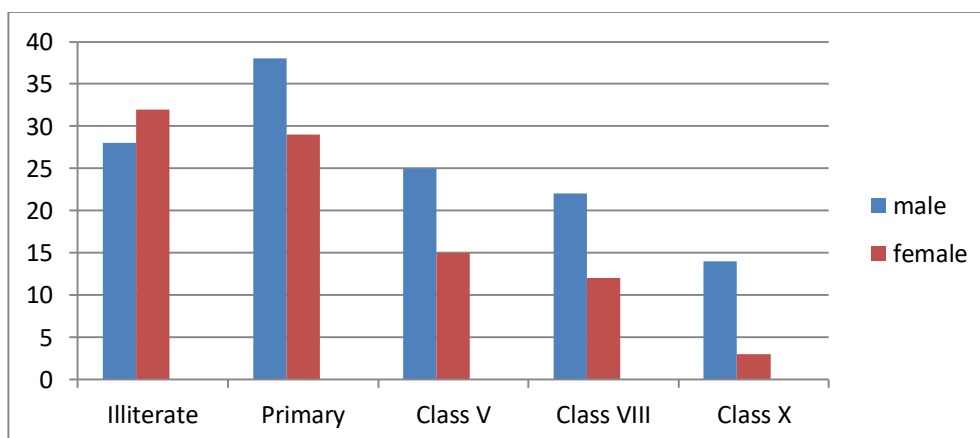


Figure 3: Distribution of respondent children (age below 14 years) according to the education level

X. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR LOW RATE OF EDUCATION IN CHILDREN ESPECIALLY GIRLS

Certain factors are observable as to why children of rural areas are deprived of formal education leading to a discernibly low rate of enrolment and outcome in the schools.

1. Poverty: Though various situations can be categorised as factors of this disappointing trend in education, the central one, undoubtedly, is the vicious cycle of poverty existing unendingly generation after generation. It is grinding poverty that never allows the parents and guardians of these rural children to think of anything else than the daily wage to meet their basic daily needs of survival. It is simply natural that, parents, unable to meet these primary needs through their bone-breaking toil, decide to engage their children in money making business or engagements. The burden of 'rooti our makaan' leaves no room for thinking of education as a way up gradation of living conditions.

2. Parents apathy: Emanating from poverty comes the second major factor i.e. apathy of parents towards educating their children. Illiterate parents burdened with the formidable task of running the family have no scope to think of a better future of the children through education. Looking at the privileged children going to school, they do not feel that their own children are deprived of the spring of life being engaged in money making business. They do not think that education is the birthright of children in a welfare country. As a result, in spite of willingness, poor children are deprived of the opportunity to have formal education. The worst sufferers are the girl children who always get only the second priority in the family in terms of educational opportunities.

3. Household chores: Illiterate parents sans the awareness about the advantage of a small family and the need of educational uplift are seen to make a big family to produce more workers to earn more wages and thus add to the chores in the house. When baby bearing mothers fail to manage the two fold burdens of daily bread and household chores, naturally the burden of the chores falls on their children who are engaged either at home or at some well-to-do families as child maid, house boy, farming helper etc. Cooking at home is a common impediment to schooling for girl children of these rural localities.

4. Marriage: Early marriage is another outcome of illiteracy and poverty of these rural people. Getting their girl children married as soon as their puberty is achieved is the biggest family burden of the poor parents, and hence, early marriage is a common social practice in these localities. When the privileged children hardly complete the high school stage, children of these backward backgrounds run a family with their babies and burdens. In case of boy children they are inspired to marry early because of their sense of pre maturity in their typical socio-economic environment and their need of a partner in their wage earning business.

5. Social discrimination: There is every logic to think it a practice of social discrimination that when a rich businessman sends his own children to reputed private schools, they go to the interior areas to bring child labourers to engage in their business farms and sites. No discernible compassion is seen on the part of these relatively affluent persons of the society to do something for the education of these unprivileged children. Rather, every commercial bait is seen to be used by this section of the society to attract the poor children towards wage labour. There is nobody in this so called learned class to apprise the illiterate poor parents that there are government schemes enough to send these children to schools by releasing them from their cheap commercial engagements. A simple

observation shows the absence social goodwill in this section of the society towards the unprivileged. Thus, social discrimination exists as a hindrance to education of these poor children.

XI. SUGGESTIONS

1. Non-Governmental Organisation, government and various social workers and other social organisation should be involved to achieve cent percent children enrolment.
2. A door to door survey should be provided by the Government to make aware of the Backward Community people for the importance of education.

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