

A study on the Educational Status of Tea-Tribe Community in Assam

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Abstract

Education is the key to success and happiness. It is the key for the development of a nation. The constitution of India (Article 21, A) provides free and compulsory primary education for the age group 6-14 years. Despite this, majority of the children of some communities do not go to school or they leave school before completing their education. This paper studies the problems of education of the tea-tribe community in a particular village of Assam. Both primary and secondary methods of data are used. The result of the study shows the educational problems of the children of the tea-tribal community.

Keywords: tea-tribe community, education, Article 21, A.

INTRODUCTION

The tea-tribe community form a major percentage of population in Assam. Assam literacy cannot achieve 100 percentage, unless all the children receive education. The tea-tribe community of Assam is still lagging in education. Therefore, they are unable to gain higher social status. There are many factors behind their lower literacy rates. There are some factors at individual level and also there are factors at community level. Mostly, these children are the first generation learners. Their parents' possess minimal education or they hardly have any formal education. Therefore, these children face many problems in their education. Despite of the different governmental initiatives, yet 100% literacy even in primary education has not been achieved yet. Therefore, their problems must be identified with well research in order to locate and solve their problem.

History of Tea-Tribes in Assam:

The discovery of tea bush in Assam by Robert Bruce inspired the colonial capitalist to make large-scale investment in it. The first

major tea-garden was set-up in Upper Assam in 1839 by the Assam Company. Slowly, tea industry started developing and there was shortage of labour. The planters began to recruit workers especially from Jharkhand. This labour force has been popularly called as the 'tea-tribes.' Now this community is spread all over Assam.

Review of related literature:

Gogoi, Diganta Kr. and Handique Madhumita, in their study on Girl Child Education among Tea-Tribes in Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh District of Assam, stated some factors that causes low educational rates among the girl child belonging to the Tea-Tribe community. These factors as stated by them were household works, parents' unfavourable attitude, financial problems, engagement in tea gardens as tea labourers, lack of facilities. They concluded that still the educational status of girl child is low among the tea tribes.

Sarma (1994), in her study of education problems of Tea garden labourers in Assam found that the causes of non-schooling of the children belonging to tea tribe are lack of

parental attitude and disinterest in education. This is because that they are sure and confined to work in the tea-garden only. Therefore, no schooling is needed according to them.

Bora, in his study *Education of Tea Tribe Children (2002): A case study of Udalguri District of Assam surveyed the tea gardens of Dibrugarh District and found that the enrolment of girl child is lower than boys due to early marriage. He also stated that schools in the tea garden area fail to create a motivating environment to attract the students.*

Biraj Jyoti Kalita(2018), in his study 'Socio- Cultural Life of Tea Plantation Workers in Assam: A Study from Historical Perspective,' mentioned that alcoholism is one of the shortcomings of their society which hampers their overall development, including their education.

The review of related literature shows that there are different factors which hinder the educational development of the tea-tribe community. And there are a few research done of both the genders i.e.; boys and girls together. Therefore, we intend to study the educational problems of both the gender.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the educational status of the tea-tribe community in Alimur village.
2. To study the problems of education of education of the tea-tribe community.
3. To suggest measures to improve their educational status.

Significance of the study:

The present study is significant because-

The village has a lower population. And the literacy rate is 68.61%. As majority of population in this village is occupied by tea-tribal community, therefore, this study is very significance.

The study is also significant to universalize primary education as the government has initiated many acts and programmes regarding this, yet not achieved it. Therefore, it is very important to know the

problems of non-universalization of primary education.

Methods and Tools used in the present study:

To know the different data to know the problems of education of the tea-tribe community, self-made interview schedule has been made to collect primary data, besides interview has been taken from a few teachers of the village. Therefore, the methods used for the present study is Descriptive Survey method.

Population of the study:

The population of the study consists of 50 respondents, out of which 30 were girls and 20 were boys.

Sampling of the study:

A sample is the small population selected for observation and analysis of data. In our study we have randomly selected the population for the study, which consists of 30 girls and 20 boys.

Tools of the study:

In this study a self-made interview schedule was made in order to collect the data from the respondents. Primary data was also collected from a few teachers of the village through interviews.

Limitations of the study:

1. The study consists of data collection from only 50 respondents.
2. The respondents might hesitate to answer to the questions and biasness in subjective questions might affect the result of the study.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

Table 1.1 *Background information of the respondents.*

Nature of background	No. Of respondents	Percentage
a. Age		
6-14	18	36%
15-16	20	40%
16 and above	12	24%

From this table, we can interpret that majority of the respondents were between the age group of

15-16 years. 36% of the respondents were between 6-14 years and 24% were in age 16 and above.

Religion.

Table 1.2 *Religion of the respondents*

Religion	No. of respondents	percentage
Hindu	50	100%
Christian	0	0%
Islam	0	0%
Others	0	0%

The table clearly shows that all the respondents belong to Hindu religion.

Caste.

Table 1.3 *Caste of the respondents*

Category of caste	No. of respondents	Percentage
OBC	50	100%
ST	0	0%
SC	0	0%
Others	0	0%

It is clear from the above table that all the respondents were from Other Below Caste.

Family type.

Table 1.4 *Nature of family of the respondents*

Nature of family	No. of respondents	Percentage
Nuclear Family	18	36%
Joint Family	32	64%

The table 1.4 shows that majority of the respondents live in joint families.

Level of education.

Table 1.5 *Level of Education of the respondents.*

Level of education	Number of respondents	Percentage
Primary education	10	20%
Secondary education	12	24%
Higher education	8	16%
No education	10	20%
Drop-outs	10	20%

In our research, we have taken a total number of 50 population. From this table 1.5, we can say that 20% of the respondents were in primary class, 24% were receiving secondary education,

16% were receiving higher education. 20% have never received any formal education and other 20% have left their education before completion.

Causes of Drop-outs and non attending any education.

Table 1.6 *Causes of non-receiving education*

Causes	No. of respondents	Percentage
Medium of instruction	0	0%
Teachers' attitude	0	0%
Financial problem	5	10%
Parents' negative attitude	7	14%
Marriage	5	10%
Pregnancy and child-birth	3	6%
Other reason	0	

Table 1.6 represents that out of 40% respondents who have never attend school and have left the school, the chart shows that majority of students have left education because of parents' negative attitude. 10% of them were facing financial problem and 10% left school due to marriage and 6% due to pregnancy and child birth.

Major Findings of the Study:

1. Majority of the respondents reside in joint family system.
2. They even left schools before completing their education.
3. Most of them have never attended to any formal education.
4. Finance is one of the major problem of the education. They leave school because they have to financially support their family. Some of them are also working as child labour.
5. The parents of the tribal children have a negative attitude towards their education. They think that education cannot improve their life, but daily wage can. Therefore, they send their children for working to earn more money.
6. Most of the tribal girls enter into marriage life at an early age. And due to lack of

sexual education, pre-marital physical relationship also occurs.

7. On a general interview from a few school teachers, it was found that the attendance of the tribal children specially class 9 and 10 is lower than other children.

Discussion:

1. Most of the respondents reside in joint family, where they have lots of family duties to perform such as looking after their siblings and grandparents. Therefore, sometimes due to obliged by family duties, they are unable to attend the school.

2. Also sometimes, they have to leave school because of family duties. There are also other reasons of leaving the school such as sudden death of one of the parent. Death of parents is generally seen in this community because due to poverty they do not have access to good quality medical facilities.

3. There were some respondents who have never attended any formal education. When being asked, it was known that some were not allowed to receive education due to lack of parental support and also due to financially supporting the family. Parents' of such respondents think that earning money is more important than being educated.

4. The girls get married at an early age. There was lack of guidance at home. And at the same time, some of the respondents get married in order to live a happier and comfortable life, that they missed in their home.

Suggestions:

1. Educational awareness campaigns should be held specially in the remote areas to make the people conscious about the need and importance of education.

2. Importance should be given to open and distance education, so that those who work part-time could also receive education.

3. Awareness about family planning should be made among the tribal community. As the elder son/daughter has to leave school to

look after their siblings or has to work for financially helping them.

4. Sexual education should be a part of the curriculum since secondary education.

5. Opportunities for scholarship for the bright students and those who want to pursue higher education should be made.

6. Some skill based programmes should be organized to engage the younger generation, so that they could spend their leisure time in quality and productive work instead of some anti-social work such as gambling, which is not lesser prevalent among them.

Suggestions for further research:

Further research could be carried out to the problems that arises among the tea-tribe community due to absent of education such as-

1. Lower wage.
2. Lower social status.
3. Problem of unemployment.

Moreover, one of the most important and trending topic is Drug Abuse, which is also present among the today's generation of tea-tribe community. Research could be done in this field.

Conclusion:

In a conclusion of the above study we can say that there are lots of problems in the tribal community. The main factor behind these problems is only lack of education. The parents should also be given education through social platforms such as street acts, dramas, documentary films etc. The government has formulated different policies for the education for all. But government polices cannot work alone unless the general people are conscious.

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