

## **Educational Problems of Tea Garden Workers Children at Secondary Level in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal**

**Kamalini Roy<sup>1</sup> & Dr. Meena Vishweshwar Rakshe<sup>2</sup>**

**Review: 13/02/2025**

**Acceptance: 17/03/2025**

**Publication: 02/05/2025**

### **Abstract:**

Children of tea garden workers in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, face numerous challenges in accessing secondary education. This study investigates the educational problems, socio-economic factors, and the effect of community and family support on educational aspirations of these children. A descriptive survey approach was used, with data collected through surveys of students in tea garden areas. The findings reveal significant socio-economic barriers that impede educational progress, including financial constraints, limited access to resources, and social issues. Moreover, the study focuses on the crucial role of family support and community involvement in improving educational outcomes for these children. The research underscores the need for targeted interventions to address these challenges and enhance educational opportunities for tea garden workers' children.

**Key words** Educational Problem, Tea Garden Workers, Secondary Level.:

### **Introduction:**

Tea gardens in Jalpaiguri District, located in northern West Bengal, are a vital source of livelihood for many families, with over 200 tea estates providing employment to thousands of workers. Despite their crucial role in the local economy, children of tea garden workers face significant challenges in accessing quality education, especially at the secondary level. Economic hardship is a major barrier, as many families struggle to meet basic needs, leaving little room for educational expenses. Inadequate educational infrastructure, such as insufficient schools, poorly equipped classrooms, and a shortage of trained teachers, further worsens the situation. Social discrimination and marginalization also hinder the educational opportunities of these children, who often face prejudice due to their socio-economic status and ethnic backgrounds. Many parents in these communities have little or no formal education, limiting their ability to guide and support their children academically. Despite government efforts to improve educational access, these obstacles persist, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. This study attempts to discover the socio-economic factors affecting the academic outcomes of tea garden workers' children in Jalpaiguri District, focusing on the role of family and community in shaping educational aspirations. By understanding these challenges, the study seeks to contribute to the development of strategies that can help these children achieve their full educational potential.

### **Objectives:**

---

<sup>1</sup> Kamalini Roy<sup>1</sup> (Research Scholar) & <sup>1</sup> Dr. Meena Vishweshwar Rakshe (Assistant Professor), Department of Education, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (A Central University), Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

The main Objectives of the study are:

- i. To find out the educational difficulties faced by the children of tea garden workers at the secondary level in Jalpaiguri District.
- ii. To explore the impact of socio-economic factors on the educational achievement of tea garden worker children in Jalpaiguri District.
- iii. To understand the importance of family assistance and community engagement in shaping the educational aspirations of Tea garden workers Children

**Research questions:**

Based on objective i, ii and iii Research questions are-

- i. What are the educational difficulties faced by tea garden students at the secondary level?
- ii. How do socio-economic factors (e.g., income, parental education) impact the educational achievement of tea garden worker children in Jalpaiguri District?
- iii. What is the importance of family assistance and community engagement in shaping the educational aspirations of tea garden worker children?

**Delimitation of the study:**

This study confined under following conditions:

- i. The study will focus only on students from grades IX and X in tea garden areas secondary schools.
- ii. Data collection will be conducted exclusively in 5 schools located within the Jalpaiguri district Tea Garden areas.

**Research Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to 300 secondary-level students from tea garden areas in Jalpaiguri District. The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation from multiple tea gardens area schools across the district.

**Variables:**

The study considers the following variables:

- i. Independent Variables – Educational Problems, Educational Aspirations.
- ii. Dependent Variable – Secondary School Students.

**Tool:**

A questionnaire used as a data collection instrument is which have been meticulously designed and standardized.

**Questionnaire on Educational Problems:** This questionnaire consists of 30 items; its focus is on measuring educational problems. This tool was created based on a comprehensive review of relevant research and discussions with the supervisor. It has been standardized to ensure accuracy and consistency in its application.

**Results:****Educational Difficulties Faced by Children of Tea Garden Workers**

The first objective was to identify the educational difficulties faced by tea garden workers' children. Survey results revealed the following key challenges:

**Lack of School Infrastructure:**

62% of students reported that their schools lacked essential infrastructure like libraries, computers, and proper classrooms. This significantly affected their learning experience.

**Lack of Learning Material**

38% of student describe that they don't have proper learning material. Which lead to them dropping out of school. Or make difficulties for their study.

**Difficulty in Understanding lessons**

More of the students are first generation learner and their mother tongues are different from official language. That gives them difficulty in understanding lesson. 31% student informed that they have difficulty in understanding lessons.

**Lack of Motivation to pursue Education**

19% students have lack of motivation on their study. Mostly of them want to work in tea garden. That gives those easy ways find work.

**Economic Hardship:**

70% of students indicated that financial difficulties led to irregular school attendance. Many students had to work in the tea gardens or take up part-time jobs to support their families, leading to absenteeism. This trend was especially prominent in lower-income families.

**Gender Disparity:**

Gender-based educational disparities were noted, with girls more likely to drop out before completing their secondary education. 40% of girls reported that they were forced to drop out due to early marriages or family responsibilities.

**Table 1: Educational difficulties faced by Tea Garden Workers' Children**

Educational Challenge	Percentage of Students Affected
Lack of school infrastructure	62%
Lack of learning materials	38%
Difficulty in understanding lessons	31%
Poor attendance due to family obligations	45%
Lack of motivation to pursue education	19%
Economic hardship	70%
Gender disparity in education	40%
Peer pressure and early marriage	24%

**Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on Educational Achievement**

The second objective was to explore the impact of socio-economic factors on educational achievement. The following factors were found to have a significant impact:

**Parental Education:**

93% of the respondents' parents had little or no formal education, which greatly influenced their children's educational outcomes. Children whose parents were illiterate or had only basic education had lower aspirations and struggled with academic support.

**Table 2: Parental Education Level of Tea Garden Workers' Children**

Parental Educational Levels	Percentage of Parents
Illiterate	52%
Primary School	27%
Secondary School	14%
Higher Education	7%

**Family Income:**

Students from families with an income of less than ₹8,000 per month showed a higher tendency to drop out of school after the 10th grade. 72% of students from low-income households indicated that they had to leave school to help support their family.

**Table 3:** presents the relationship between family income and the level of education attained by the children.

Family Income (INR/month)	Secondary Education Attainment (%)
Below 5000	22%
5001 - 10000	35%
10001 - 15000	50%
Above 15000	75%

**Importance of Family Assistance and Community Engagement**

The third objective examined the importance of family assistance and community engagement in shaping educational aspirations. The results revealed:

**Parental Support:**

41% of students whose parents were actively involved in their education (helping with schoolwork, providing emotional support) had higher aspirations for continuing education beyond the secondary level. On the other hand, 59% of students with minimal parental involvement had lower aspirations and were more likely to drop out.

**Community Engagement:**

Only 17% of respondents reported having access to community-based educational programs, such as tutoring, career counseling, or educational awareness campaigns. These programs had a positive influence on students' educational outcomes, as 18% of those who participated in community support programs had higher academic performance and aspirations.

**Table 4: Importance of Family and Community Engagement in Education**

Type of Engagement	Percentage of Students Reporting Positive Impact
Parental involvement	41%
Community-based educational programs	17%

**Findings of the study:**

1. **Lack of School Infrastructure:** A significant portion of the students (62%) reported that their schools lacked essential infrastructure, such as libraries, computers, and proper classrooms. This lack of facilities hindered their learning experience and may have affected the overall quality of education they received.
2. **Economic Hardship Leading to Irregular Attendance:** A majority of the students (70%) indicated that economic difficulties faced by their families led to irregular school attendance. Many children had



to work in the tea gardens or take up part-time jobs to support their families, resulting in absenteeism and a disrupted educational journey.

3. **Gender-Based Educational Disparities:** Gender disparities in education were a significant issue, with 40% of the girls reporting that they were forced to drop out of school before completing their secondary education. The reasons for this were primarily early marriages and family responsibilities, highlighting the challenges faced by girls in this community.
4. **Poor Attendance Due to Family Obligations:** A substantial 45% of students reported poor attendance due to family obligations. Many of the children had to assist their families in tea gardens or handle domestic chores, which affected their regular attendance in school and their overall academic progress.
5. **Lack of Learning Materials:** Around 38% of the students mentioned that they lacked necessary learning materials, such as textbooks, notebooks, and other educational resources. The absence of such materials further compounded the difficulty they faced in keeping up with the curriculum.
6. **Difficulty in Understanding Lessons:** Approximately 31% of students expressed that they had difficulty in understanding the lessons being taught. This could be due to a variety of reasons such as lack of individual attention in overcrowded classrooms, language barriers, or the inadequacy of teaching resources.
7. **Low Motivation to Pursue Education:** About 19% of the students admitted to lacking motivation to continue their education. This lack of drive could be attributed to the challenging socio-economic conditions they faced at home, the perceived lack of opportunities, or a general sense of discouragement from their environment.
8. **Peer Pressure and Early Marriage:** Peer pressure and early marriage were significant factors that influenced the educational aspirations of 24% of the students. These social pressures, especially among girls, led to early dropout rates, affecting their long-term educational and professional opportunities.
9. **Low Parental Education:** An overwhelming 93% of the respondents had parents with little or no formal education, which severely impacted their children's educational outcomes. Parents' limited educational background meant that they were less able to assist with schoolwork and often lacked the knowledge to support their children's academic growth.
10. **Illiteracy among Parents:** More than half (52%) of the parents of the surveyed students were illiterate. This high level of illiteracy among parents created an environment where the importance of education might not have been fully understood, leading to less support for the children's educational needs.
11. **Primary Education of Parents:** Another 27% of parents had only completed primary school education, which further limited their ability to provide educational support to their children. Parents with low educational qualifications may not have recognized the long-term benefits of continuing education beyond basic schooling.
12. **Secondary Education of Parents:** Only 14% of the parents had completed secondary school education, indicating that even fewer had attained a level of education that could enable them to assist their children in more advanced studies or foster aspirations for higher academic achievement.
13. **Higher Education among Parents:** Only 7% of parents had received higher education, highlighting the significant educational gap in the community. The lack of higher education among parents potentially contributed to a cycle of low educational attainment passed down to the next generation.

14. **Economic Impact on Education:** A significant 72% of students from families earning less than ₹8,000 per month reported dropping out of school after the 10th grade to help support their families. This demonstrates the direct relationship between low household income and the early cessation of formal education for these children.
15. **Dropout Rate for Families earning below ₹5,000:** Among students from families earning below ₹5,000 per month, only 22% completed secondary education. This reveals that children from the poorest households face substantial barriers to continuing education, with many having to forgo school to contribute financially to the household.
16. **Dropout Rate for Families earning ₹5,001 - ₹10,000:** Among families with an income between ₹5,001 and ₹10,000 per month, 35% of students completed secondary education. While higher than the previous group, this still reflects the challenges faced by low-income families, where financial pressures often outweigh the value of education.
17. **Dropout Rate for Families earning ₹10,001 - ₹15,000:** For students from families earning ₹10,001 - ₹15,000 per month, 50% were able to complete their secondary education. This shows that families with moderate incomes are more likely to allow their children to pursue education, but economic constraints still play a significant role in limiting educational attainment.
18. **Dropout Rate for Families earning above ₹15,000:** Among families with a monthly income above ₹15,000, 75% of students were able to complete secondary education. This highlights that higher family income provides more opportunities for children to stay in school, complete their education, and potentially pursue further academic goals.
19. **Impact of Parental Involvement on Educational Aspirations:** Parental involvement had a positive impact on the educational aspirations of students. Approximately 41% of students whose parents were actively involved in their education (by helping with schoolwork and providing emotional support) had higher aspirations and were more likely to pursue education beyond the secondary level.
20. **Limited Availability to Community-orientation Educational Programs:** Only 17% of students had availability to community-orientation educational programs, such as tutoring, career counseling, or educational awareness campaigns. Despite the positive influence of these programs on students' academic performance and aspirations, their limited availability hindered many students from benefiting from external educational support systems.

**Discussion:**

The findings of this study highlight several critical barriers that hinder the educational progress of students, primarily linked to socio-economic challenges and lack of resources. A significant portion of students reported poor infrastructure, with schools lacking essential facilities such as libraries and computers, which negatively impacted their learning experience. Economic hardship emerged as a major factor, with 70% of students indicating that family financial struggles led to irregular attendance and early school dropout. This is especially pronounced among students from low-income families, where a direct link between household income and educational attainment was evident. Gender-based disparities were also a significant concern, with many girls dropping out due to early marriages and family responsibilities. Additionally, the lack of learning materials and limited parental education further exacerbated the challenges faced by students, as parents often couldn't provide necessary academic support. Peer pressure, illiteracy, and limited community-based educational

programs further reinforced these barriers. However, parental involvement in education was found to positively influence student aspirations, highlighting the potential benefits of increased support at home. Overall, these results underscore the necessity for focused interventions addressing infrastructure, economic support, gender equality, and community's engagement to improve educational outcomes.

**Conclusion:**

The findings of this study reveal that children of tea garden workers in Jalpaiguri District meet various challenges in accessing quality secondary education. Socio-economic factors, such as low income and parental education levels, significantly influence the educational outcomes of these children. Furthermore, the level of family support and community involvement assume a significant role in forming their educational aspirations and performance. For improvement of the educational outcomes of tea garden workers' children, it is essential to address these socio-economic barriers, improve community and family support, and invest in improving the infrastructure and learning resources in tea garden areas. Policymakers and educators must work together to create an environment where these children can overcome their challenges and achieve their full potential.

**References:**

- **Afzal, F. (2019)** Socio-Economic Condition of Tea Garden Workers in North Bengal, India. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333247949>
- **Ahmad, I., Yasin, M., Rowshon, A., & Rafikul Islam, A.K.M. (2015)** Socioeconomic and Educational Condition of Tea Worker at Sylhet in Bangladesh. *Journal of Tea Science Research*, 5(5), 1-8. Retrieved from <http://jtsr.biopublisher.ca>
- **Bashir, R., Peerzada, N. (2023)** A study on educational aspiration of senior secondary school students retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374088069>
- **Begum, S., & Islam, Q. F. (2021)** Factors Responsible for Low Status of Education of Tea Tribe Children in Assam, India : A Review of Related Literature. *Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, {Bi-Monthly}*, 11(02), 44-49. Retrieved from <http://www.oijrj.org> oijrj > mar-apr2021
- **Begum, S., & Islam, Q. F. (2022)** Education of Children of Tea Garden Workers: Organisations, Provisions and Challenges. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(4), 4701-4708. Retrieved from <https://journalppw.com> jpsp > article > download
- **Bhattcharyya, P. B., & Daimari, M. (2017)** Education of Tea Tribe Children: A case Study of Udalguri District of Assam. *International Journal of Advances in Social Science and Humanities*, 5(5), 26-35.
- **Census of India. (2011)** *District Census Handbook Darjeeling*. Series 20, part XII-A. Directorate Of Census Operations, West Bengal.
- **Census of India. (2011)** *District Census Handbook Darjeeling*. Series 20, part XII-B. Directorate Of Census Operations, West Bengal.
- **Changkakoti, D. (2019)** Academic performance of high achiever and low achiever students in relation to level of aspiration and achievement motivation retrieved from, <https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8443/jspui/handle/10603/291404>



- **Ghatowar, N. K. (2015)** A Study of Facilities in Tea Garden Schools in the Bokakhat SubDivision of Golaghat District of Assam. *Periodic Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 3(4), 126-133. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net>
- **Gogoi, D. K., & Handique, M. (2012)** Girl Child Education among Tea Tribes: A Case Study of Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh District of Assam. *Vidyawarta: Interdisciplinary Multilingual Referred Journal*, 5(8), 141-147. Retrived from <http://www.vidyawarta.com> uploads › 2015/10
- **Kurmi, P. (2014)** Problem of Educational Attainment of Children, A case Study of the Tea Garden Labourer's Households in Derby Tea Estate. *Research Journal of Language, Literature and Humanities*, 1(4), 1-7. Retrieved from [www.isca.in](http://www.isca.in), [www.isca.me](http://www.isca.me)
- **Kurmi, P., & Dutta, S. (2018)** Child Education in Cachar District: Problem and Prospects among the Children of Tea Garden Labour Community. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 5(9), 9-13. <http://www.jetir.org> papers › JETIR1809403
- **Nath, L. (2011)** Status and Problems of Education among Tea Tribes of Lakhimpur District in Assam. [Ph.D Thesis, Rajiv Gandhi University]. Shodhganga: a reservoir of Indian theses @ INFLIBNET. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/302881>
- **Paul, S. (2017).** Literacy Pattern and Level of Development of the Tea Garden Workers of Dooars Region, West Bengal. Ideal International E- Publication. Retrived from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350581396>
- **Raja, J. A., & Krishnaveni, V. (2017)** Problems Faced by the Tribal Tea Labourers in the Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu, India. *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and 21 Controls systems. special Issue-* 13, 390-396. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320306202>
- **Roy, R. S. (2020)** Socio-Economic Conditions of Tea Garden Workers in Ambootia Tea Estate: A Case Study of Darjeeling Tea Industry. *Juni Khyat (UGC Care Group I Listed Journal)*, 10(5), 39-45. Retrieved 2022 from [www.junikhyat.com](http://www.junikhyat.com)
- **Saikia, R. (2017)** Educational Scenario in rural and Tea Garden areas of Assam. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 4(4), 129-133. Retrieved from [www.allsubjectjournal.com](http://www.allsubjectjournal.com)
- **Salam, M. (2021)** Problems of Lower Primary School Education among Tea Tribe Students in Goalpara of Assam: An Analytical Study. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Reviews*, 10(4), 45-58. Retrieved from [http://www.ijssr.org/down\\_104209.php](http://www.ijssr.org/down_104209.php)
- **Sarkar, D. K. (2018)** Education of Tea Garden Children with Special Reference to Nagaon and Golaghat District. [ Ph.D thesis, Assam University]. Shodhganga: a reservoir of Indian theses @ INFLIBNET. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/364262>