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## Girl Child Education among Tea Tribes: A Case Study of Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh District of Assam.

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### Introduction:

Children are the future hope of a country. Their protection, care and nursing should, therefore, be the concern not only of their own parents but also of society and the state. Therefore after independence the problem of child welfare has engaged the attention of both the Central and State Governments. Recognizing the value and importance of child education for future nation building, special provisions have been made for educational facilities to children of all sections of the society. But statistics shows that everywhere girl children are given less education than male children and that is the reason why over vast areas of the country the majority of illiterates are women. Despite some special measures like allotment of separate fund for girls' schools, introduction of some special courses of study to attract girls, scholarship to girls, provision for girls' hostel, appointment of female teachers etc., progress of girls' educa-

tion is found to be very slow. The enrolment of girls at the entire primary, secondary and tertiary levels seem to be low as compared to the males. The girl drop-out rate is also higher in schools and colleges than that of the boys.

Education is the cornerstone of women's empowerment. Giving them education means empowering them to enjoy the benefits of development which in turn enables them to live their lives with dignity. Unless the girls do not get proper education in their childhood, they will become powerless women in future and will be bound to depend on their counterpart males physically, psychologically and economically which will ultimately make them vulnerable to violence.

### Theoretical Framework:

Children grow up through socialization process which is based on cultural norms and values. Children are taught in one or other way to acquire the knowledge and behaviour pattern as desired by the society. What in general are man's and woman's roles in the social life are determined by cultural system and accordingly, children are socialized and as consequence the children develop sex-based role perception from early age and in adult stage they tend to perform their roles accordingly to the cultural norms of the society. Girls are socialized to perform mainly the house-keeping role and boys bread earning activities for which modern education is necessary. In modern system higher education provides better prospect for better occupation which guarantees higher standard of living. In patriarchal society the boys are therefore encouraged if not insisted upon by the parents for higher education. On the other hand, since women's role is maintaining household works which can be managed without formal education, they are neglected if not discouraged for higher education.

On the basis of the above discussions an attempt has been made in this paper to examine the educational status of the girl child

with special reference to tea tribes girls of Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh district.

### **The History of the Tea Tribes in Assam**

The discovery of the tea bush in Assam by Robert Bruce inspired the colonial capitalist to make large-scale investments in it. The availability of suitable land and a thin population were favourable conditions so was the climate of Assam. To attract the investors the colonialist enacted many laws in their favour. Within two decades many more British companies entered to different parts of Assam. Between 1859 to 1866, the British Authority cleared the hills of Assam for tea gardens and tried to attract huge investments for the industry. Within a few decades, tea manufacturers in Assam had covered 54 percent of the market in the United Kingdom and had outstripped China

Once the problem of capital was solved the first major tea garden was started in upper Assam in 1839 by the Assam Company. From the time the steady growth of the tea industry began from 1870, the plantations faced labour shortage. The technology of the plantation system that was launched was primitive and labour intensive. So supply of labour became the crucial factor. At first the planters hoped that the indigenous people of Assam would become labourers once they lost their land according to the *Wasteland Grant Rules 1838*. But the Bodo, Kachari, Ahom and other indigenous people of Assam were reluctant to clear dense forests infested with malaria and kala-ezar. Besides, becoming wage labourers on land that was acquired unjustly from them would have gone against their self-respect. The income differential between plantation work and the peasant economy and the unattractive working conditions added to their refusal to become wage labourers. Besides, the cultivators were reluctant to be away from home to work in the plantations. It needed both men and women but Assamese men were not ready to allow women to work under the

British planters. The Chinese whom the British brought to Assam did not fulfil the requirements.

Thus faced with labour shortage, the planters began to recruit workers from Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and other parts of India as indentured labour in slavlike conditions. They were uprooted from their land and livelihood by the *Permanent Settlement 1793* meant to ensure regular tax collection for the colonial government. Impoverished by it they had no choice but to find other sources of livelihood. In the absence of alternatives, they were forced to follow the labour contractor and become indentured labour on the land that the Assam indigenous communities had lost under the same colonial processes to the tea gardens. This labour force has been popularly called as the 'tea tribes' and 'ex-tea tribes'.

Thus the tea labour communities, constitute the oldest amongst Assam's immigrant groups that was recruited by the British Tea Planters from present day Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal between 1861 until the early 20th century, to work as indentured labour in tea plantations in Assam. Now they are spread over the districts of Western Assam, Morigaon, Nagaon, Sonitpur and Darrang in Middle Assam, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh and Tinsukhia in Eastern or Upper Assam, North Cachar and Karbi Anglong districts in Southern Assam and the Barak Valley. Belonging to the tribal groups such as Santhals, Mundas, Oraons, Kharias, Gonds, Khonds, Kisang and Nagesias, they settled down in Assam at the end of the contract period, and some left the tea plantations to settle in the surrounding agricultural lands before the expiration of the contract. The latter came to be known as the ex-Tea labour community which lives in villages neighbouring the tea estate and provide casual labour to it depending on seasonal demand.

The present day population of the tea labour community in the state is estimated to be 20 percent of the state's population, which according to conservative estimate comes to five million. Despite their numerical strength and long history in Assam stretching more than a century, they remain 'outsiders' without the tribal status, as has been accorded to them in their place of origin, and are deprived of benefits availed by the other backward castes.

#### **Basic Concepts of the Study:**

##### **Tea-Tribes:**

Tea tribes are conceptually illiterate people. They hardly think of changing their life style by adopting the occupation of the urban-industrial societies which need modern education. Non- education, poverty, addiction of males to country beer, poor standard of living, poor health facility etc. are the common problems in their lives. However, now a day they are also getting modern education and we now have intellectuals and professionals in various fields. But traditional values die hard and for that matter role exception of man and woman do not change so easily for which tea tribes girls continue to remain deprived of education above senior primary standard in comparison to male.

##### **Education:**

There is supposed to be something lying hidden or latest in every human child and that education is a process to convert the potentiality into reality. According to Mahatma Gandhi "By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man's body, mind and spirit."

Modern writers divide education in narrower and broader concept. According to narrower concept education refers to some formal system of learning and imparting of knowledge with definite objectives through some educational institutions like school, college, university etc. In broader sense education means a life long process of acquiring knowl-

edge through formal, informal and non-formal systems which continue to the last part of the life. Here education is a process of socialization, adjustment, restructuring of experience and development process.

For the present study we take the narrower concept of education.

##### **Girls Child:**

Generally a child is admitted to primary school at the age between 6 and 7 years and continues up to 21 years in age – that is up to graduate level in general study. In professional courses one may be required to spend some more years. In the present study girls belonging to 6-16 age groups are considered as girl children. This is the crucial age group in which children either continue or drop out of schooling. So, in discussing the problem of the study the girl children of this age group is referred to.

##### **Significance of the Study:**

The main objective of the present study is to understand the problem of girl child education of the tea tribe community. There is a great need to go to the field and observe the natural and social environments, the mode of living and to know the perception, aspiration and experiences of the tea tribes people about education, its importance and problem of getting education by talking with them in face to face situations. The findings of the study would, therefore, help us in understanding the variations of educational progress among the girl child of this tribe and also to focus attention on physical aspects of the problem.

Thus present study would be a meaningful endeavour to contribute to educational sociology as well as in formulating appropriate policies for their education.

##### **Objectives of the Study:**

1) To understand the educational status of the girl children of the tea tribes community.

2) To identify the causes of low educational status of the girls of the community.

**Universe of the Study:**

Name of the Tea Estate	Total	Tea
Labour Household	Total	Tea
Labour Population	Total	Male
Total Female		
Rajgarh T.E.	305	2548
1368	1180	

The universe of the study comprises Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh district. In view of the problem and objective of the study, the parents of the tea tribes girl children belonging to age groups of 6-16 years are selected as respondents. For data collection 50 households are selected to examine how far the parents or senior persons of these households are conscious of their daughters' education in comparison to their sons. Thus the aim of this study is to give a comparative scenario of the educational status of boys and girls that appear in most of the families if not all.

Here is a profile of

Rajgarh Tea Estate-

Source: Office of the Rajgarh T.E.

**Methodology:**

Interview schedules are used to collect data from the respondents. Each respondent is administered interview schedule individually and separately.

**Findings and Analyses:**

**Social Background of the Respondents:**

Present study is based mainly on primary data collected from the sample respondents selected for the study. It is therefore, important first to know about their social backgrounds for proper understanding of their views, opinions on the questions of the problem. The backgrounds have been presented as follows -

**1. Sex Composition:**

Although the society of the tea tribes is patriarch in nature, yet the influence of the mother in the growth of a child can not be denied. So, both the mother and father of the girl child are selected as respondents.

**2. Age Group:**

Age group of the parents' respondents are found as observed in the following table-

**Table 1: Age Group of the Respondents**

Age Group	Respondents			
	Male		Female	
	f	p.c.	F	p.c.
25-30	18	36	21	42
31-35	20	40	16	32
36-45	12	24	13	26
<b>Total</b>	50	100	50	100

Source: Field Study

**3. Family Type:**

Family types in terms of joint and nuclear is very important in understanding various problems mainly economic, educational, women's role and status in life etc. In a joint family, it is the senior male members who take final decision on all important matters of the family including children's education, marriage etc. On the other hand, in a nuclear family, such decisions are decided by the parents themselves. So it is necessary to collect information about the nature of the respondent's family structure. The findings are as follows -

**Table 2: Family Type of the Respondents**

Family Type	f	p.c.
Joint	14	28
Nuclear		72
	36	
<b>Total</b>	50	100

Source: Field Study

#### 4. Educational Status of the Respondents:

Educational status is another important attribute of the parents concerning views and opinions on their children's education to a great extent. So information is collected about the educational status of the respondents.

**Table 3: Educational Status of the Respondents**

Educational Status	Male		Female	
	f	p.c.	f	p.c.
Illiterate	36	72.28	44	88.12
<b>Total</b>	50	100	50	100

Source: Field Study

The above table shows that the literacy rate of the respondents is very low. This is more less in case of women than that of male.

#### 5. Respondents' Children and their Educational Standard:

Inquiry about number of children of the respondents and their children's educational standard by sex difference revealed the data shown in tables below-

**Table 4: Number of Children of the Respondents**

No of Household	No of Children	Total Children	Male	Female
5	2	10	4	6
16	3	48	22	26
23	4	92	52	40
6	5 or above	30	14	16
<b>50</b>		<b>180</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>88</b>

Source: Field Study

Among the 180 children only 11 nos. of children are continuing their study now of which 7 nos. are boys and 4 nos. are girls. The other

children discontinued their studies for various reasons. The following table highlights the educational standard of the remaining children.

**Table 5: Educational Standard of the Children of the Respondents**

Standard	f		p.c.	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Illiterate	4	7	4.70	8.34
Up to Primary Level	13	19	15.30	22.62
Class V-VII	41	38	48.23	45.24
Class VIII-X	27	20	31.77	23.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study

Table 5 shows that the educational standards of female children are less than those of the boys in terms of absolute number. It is also observed that drop out numbers of female students also increase more than those of boys from Class V-VII onward up to Class X.

#### Reasons for Discontinuing Education of the Girl Children:

Queries on causes of discontinuing education as perceived by the respondents are found as follows -

##### Household Chores:

Every tea tribes woman apart from her household chores use to go to tea garden to work such as plucking tea leaves, nursing or any other works related to tea production for generating income. So in the absence of the mother, the girl child takes the responsibility of the family from household work to taking care of younger sibling setting aside her study and attending schools. As result she loses interest in study and performs poor in the examination which ultimately results in dropping out.

##### Parents' Apathy:

Education is a new development for the

tea tribes community. So far large majority of the parents are either illiterate or low literate, they are unable to understand the value of girls' education. On queries about the importance of their children's education all reply that they prefer son to daughter for education. Because girl children are meant primarily for marriage and it is the son who will look after them in old age. So if the male child would be able to secure a job by virtue of educational qualification, he will become financially better off in life and able to maintain them well.

**Poverty:**

Poverty is a common phenomenon among the tea labourers. Many of them live from hand to mouth. The parents cannot afford to get their children education beyond the primary level. So they force their daughters if not the sons to drop out of education to get engage in wage earning jobs. Most of the tea tribe girl children are found to do plucking or other nursery work in the garden or use to work as housemaids.

**Lack of Facility:**

The tea tribes live in quarters of the Tea Estate which is not so favourable for living a big family. So the whole house remains noisy from morning till night and totally disturbed for study. The parents are indifferent or unable to provide necessary facility for the children's peaceful study.

**Marriage:**

The tea tribes emphasize much on children's marriage for they are dependent on manpower for economic development. For them marriage means getting more labour in the family which in turn gives additional income. So, the parents do not like to miss the first opportunity of marriage of their male children. Similarly the parents tend to seize the first opportunity of marriage of their teenage daughter even at the cost of education. Thus the practice of early marriage hampers the education of the girl children and even also of the male children.

Thus the responses of the respondents on the question- "According to your opinion

what is the main reason for discontinuing your girl children's study?" the responses received as shown in the following table.

**Table 6: Parents' Opinion on Reason for Discontinuing their Girl Children's Education**

Reasons	f	p.c.
Household	17	17
Chores	39	39
Poverty	11	11
Lack of Facility	26	26
Marriage	7	7
Others		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study

**Teachers View:**

To know the views of the teachers on girl-child's drop-out problems of the community studied, 10 local school teachers are interviewed. According to them failure in examinations at lower level – that is Class V-VII is the main cause of drop-outs. Parents' negligence and lack of facility for study at home and irregular attendance of classes together are attributed to the main cause of failure in the examination. At higher level, marriage is the main factor of girl child drop-out.

Thus the findings of the study lead us to the conclusion that educational status of the girl children is still low among the tea tribes community as compared to boys. The main factors can be identified as –

- 1) Household works entrusted on the girl child.
- 2) Lack of awareness about the benefit of education.
- 3) Parents' unfavourable attitude to girl education.
- 4) Parents' poor economic condition.
- 5) Engagement in tea garden as tea labourers.
- 6) Lack of favourable social environment.
- 7) Lack of minimum facilities for study.

**Conclusion:**

Today, gender equality and empowerment of women is recognized globally as a key

element to achieve progress in all areas. Man and woman both constitute a society and so their equal development is very much important for society's upliftment. Education is the main tool of women's empowerment as it enables them to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles, to change their lives in a significant way and to secure means of living with self dignity. So educating the girl child is the most effective means to enhance the status of future women and also to abolish gender inequality. An educated girl becomes a self confident woman in future who can recognize her potentialities and become aware of her rights and privileges which ultimately help her in decision making, control over the circumstances that influence her life and free from shackles imposed on them in the name of custom, belief and practice. So, the gamut of the problems of tea tribes girl children education needs thorough review on the existing policy and programmes and for developing new strategic programmes to overcome the existing problems.

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### Equilibrium studies on Mixed-Ligand Complexes of Cu(II) and Zn(II) Ions with 2-Picolinic acid and Pyridine-2,6-dicarboxylic acid as Primary Ligand and $\alpha$ -Alanine as Secondary Ligand.

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#### ABSTRACT

The stability constants of ternary complexes of Cu(II) and Zn(II) with N, O donor ligands viz. , picolinic acid(PIC), pyridine-2,6-dicarboxylic acid(PDA), and  $\alpha$ -Alanine(ALA) have been studied potentiometrically by titrating against 0.1 M KOH solution at 25° C  $\pm$  1° keeping ionic strength  $\mu=0.1$  M KNO<sub>3</sub> in aqueous medium. Formation of ternary complexes of Cu(II) ion take place by simultaneous addition of ligands while that of Zn(II) ion by stepwise addition of ligands showing the priority of complexation of PIC & PDA over ALA.

#### Key Words:

Stability constant, Cu(II), Zn(II), 2-picolinic acid, pyridine-2,6-dicarboxylic acid,  $\alpha$ -Alanine.

#### INTRODUCTION

Mixed-Ligand complexes have a large field of inorganic research owing to their importance in analytical chemistry [1-3], catalysis [2-4], biochemistry [2,5], and medicine [6-9]. Literature contain lots of data on the amino acids complexed with various metal ions due to their physiological activity, alanine plays a significant role in several metabolic processes and in regulating blood sugar<sup>[10]</sup> and improves