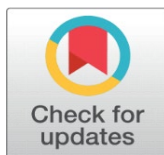
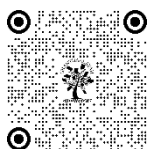


A STUDY ON INSTITUTIONAL ENVIROMENT OF THE MODEL SCHOOLS OF TEA GARDEN AREAS OF LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT, ASSAM

Jeni Ekka¹, Dr. Asomi Chaliha²

¹Lecturer, DIET Lakhimpur-787052, Assam

²Associate Professor, Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh-786004, Assam



DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i6.2024.2404](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i6.2024.2404)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2024 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

The National Policy on Education 2020 aims to transform the Indian education system by making it more inclusive, holistic and flexible. In continuations the Government of Assam launched a significant initiative in October 2020 to establish 119 Model Schools across major tea growing districts through Public-Private- Partnership (PPP). By May 2022, 97 of these schools were inaugurated marking a pivotal step towards providing quality education within tea garden community. The present study, through qualitative research methods, examined the institutional environment in enhancing Enrolment, Attendance and Community participation in the Model Schools in the Tea Garden areas of Lakhimpur district, Assam.

Keywords: Model Schools, Institutional Environment, Enrolment, Attendance, Community Participation, Model Schools, Tea Garden Areas, Lakhimpur District, Assam

1. INTRODUCTION

National Policy on Education 1968 had stated that a good institution is one in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students. The report of Education Secretary of Assam in Project Approval Board (PAB) meeting in 2007 informed that 10-11% population belonging to tea garden areas and students of tea garden areas try to get employed in tea gardens at early age which leads to low enrolment (Saikia, 2007). Various initiatives were taken under SSA and RMSA and among them the Model School concept is very significant.

In 2007, as part of the Central Government's commitment to make secondary education of good quality available, the scheme for setting up of 2500 Model Schools all over India was taken under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The concept of model schools is to provide infrastructure and facilities at least of some standards as in Kendriya Vidyalayas and with stipulation on pupil-teacher ratio, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) usage, holistic educational environment, appropriate curriculum and emphasis on output and income. (Source: Ministry of Education of India, Official website). Some of the key features of a Model School are:

- a. Education provided in a Model School should be holistic and integral touching upon physical, emotional and aesthetic development in addition to academics.
- b. Necessary infrastructure will be provided for sports and co-curricular activities and there will be sufficient scope for sports, recreation and outdoor activities. Facilities like playground, gardens, auditorium etc. will be provided along with satisfying teaching needs in Model Schools.
- c. The curriculum should cast the local culture and environment and learning should be activity based.
- d. These schools will have adequate ICT infrastructure, Internet connectivity and full-time computer teachers.
- e. The Teacher Pupil Ratio should not exceed 1:25 and the classrooms will be spacious enough to accommodate at least 30 students. However, classroom-students ratio will not exceed 1:40.
- f. Special emphasis may be given to teaching of Science, Math and English. If required, bridge- courses may be introduced for weak students.
- g. The school curricula should include the material/items that inculcate leadership qualities, team spirit, participation abilities, development of soft skills and ability to deal with real life situation.

Through these Model Schools the Government of Assam aims to bring a holistic change and provide quality education to the children of the workers of tea garden areas. The present study is an attempt to study the institutional environment in enhancing enrolment, attendance and community participation in the Model schools of the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam.

1.1 MODEL SCHOOLS IN THE TEA GARDENS OF ASSAM

Tea production in Assam has set our nation in the world arena for its world- class tea and Assam takes pride in its tea gardens and the tea garden community. However, despite more than seven decades of independence of the country, still the community suffers from the marginalization of the Tea Garden Authority particularly in the fields of literacy and education. During the 2017-2018 state budget session the then Honorable Finance Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma and the present Chief Minister of Assam took a revolutionary step to set up 200 schools in the tea garden areas of Assam. Accordingly in October 2020, foundation stone was laid for 119 Model High Schools at a cost of 142.50 crore in the major tea growing districts of Assam (GOA, Official Website). And these schools to be run in a Public Partnership Mode (PPP). In May-June 2022, 97 model schools were inaugurated in the tea estates of Assam to function for the academic session 2022-2023, and the remaining 22 schools to be ready for the academic session 2023-2024 (The Print, 20 May,2022).

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The schools in the tea gardens are run by the Tea Garden management and these schools are seen to be in poor condition. The infrastructure facilities are seen to be in poor condition. Problems such as single room classroom, lack of drinking water facilities and proper toilet facilities etc. are prevalent in these schools (Gogoi, 2015). Moreover, most of the schools provide education up to the Lower primary level and few up to the Upper Primary level. Due to limited High Schools in the tea garden areas, a large number of students leave schools midway since they have to go out from the tea garden areas and it complicates the financial situation of the family (Chakraborty, 2012, Saikia, 2017). This leads to high number of dropouts among the Tea Garden Communities (Saikia, 2016).

Illiterate garden workers have a negative attitude towards education as they do not have much awareness about the benefits and importance of education which can make their life better in every sphere (Saikia, 2016). Workers of the tea gardens prefer to send their children to work in the tea gardens to earn more money for the family rather than helping them complete their high school. (Sarma, 2013).

With the aim to promote education and uplift the tea garden community the Government of Assam decided to establish model schools in these areas which will provide education up to Class X in a PPP mode with experienced non-government societies (Secondary Education, Government of Assam).

Thus, the present study was conducted in the tea garden model schools of Lakhimpur District, Assam to gain insight on the institutional environment of the model schools. Hence, the study will help to understand the institutional environment in enhancing enrolment, attendance and community participation in these model schools situated in the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the institutional environment in enhancing Enrolment, Attendance and Community participation in the Model Schools in the Tea Garden areas of Lakhimpur district, Assam.

3. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

3.1 The present study is limited to only two model schools in the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam.

3.2 The present study is limited to the Model Schools that have been functioning from the year 2022 only.

3.3 The present study is limited to 2023-2024 academic sessions only.

4. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

4.1 STUDIES CONDUCTED IN INDIA

Saikia, J.*et.al.* (2007) conducted a study on the "Problems of Non-enrolment and dropout of the children of Tea garden labors". The study found the rates of both these variable viz. non-enrolment and dropouts are higher for girls than boys. The degree of the problem varies from garden to garden. Another finding is that tea garden laborers are not admitted in the primary school in the right age.

Sarkar, S. (2013) conducted a study on "The condition of tea garden workers of Jalpaiguri district in Colonial India". The major findings were – the workers were paid low wages and bound to do over-duty without bonus money; tea garden workers had to borrow money at high interest from money lenders and they could not pack back with interest and they had to sell their children for relief from abysmal poverty; most of the workers suffered from the lack of nourishment and proper medical treatment; there was no school for children and lack of safe drinking water; the workers could not maintain their family smoothly.

Gogoi *et al.* (2015) conducted a study on "Girl Child Education among Tea-Tribes in Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh District of Assam". The study stated some factors that cause low educational rates among the girl child belonging to the Tea- Tribe community. These factors as stated by them were household works, parents' unfavorable attitude, financial problems, engagement in tea gardens as tea laborers, lack of facilities. They concluded that still the educational status of girl child is low among the tea tribes.

Chetia (2021) conducted a study on "Education among The Tea Garden Laborer, A study based on Eight Tea Gardens of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia Districts of Assam". The major findings of the study were that parents, despite of unsatisfactory social and economic conditions and most of them try to educate their children as further as possible. But, most of them are able to educate their children only up to higher secondary level due to unavailability of adequate opportunities towards higher education in their area, lack of funds to afford their children to get educated in towns and urban areas.

Begum (2022) conducted a study on "Education of children of Tea Garden Workers: Organization and provisions and challenges". The study found that in spite of all the provisions provided by the state and central government, the education of tea garden children is at dismal due to the financial conditions of the families of tea garden labors, lack of awareness, high drop-out rates, illiteracy of their parents and violation of RTE Act 2009 by parents and garden schools run by tea garden management.

4.2 STUDIES CONDUCTED ABROAD

Kaora (2001) conducted a study on "Promoting Inclusive Education in Neluwa, a Tea Plantation Area in Sri Lanka", through the Community Based Rehabilitation Program studied on the promotion of inclusive education in Neluwa tea plantation in Sri Lanka. The study highlights the government initiatives to end unequal education system in plantation areas and community-based rehabilitation program in promoting inclusive education. The study highlights the role of the Plantation Sector Education Development Program which in association with Swadish International Development Cooperation Agency aimed to improve the access to education and quality of education in the schools of the plantation areas. The study also found inequalities between plantation schools and mainstream schools and gender inequalities among women working in the tea plantations.

Kabir (2007) conducted a study on "Tea Plantation workers and its circumstances: a micro-level study" of Bangladesh found that factors such as socio-cultural and religious barriers, geographical isolation have contributed to very low education and poor health status of workers. Beside these there is absence of nursery schools' facilities. All these factors together deprive the workers from their basic right to decent living.

Ahmed *et.al.* (2015) conducted a study on "Socio-Economic and Educational condition of Tea Worker at Sylhet in Bangladesh of Sylhet division". The study revealed that because of illiteracy the garden workers are still lagging socially,

economically and culturally and they are unaware of their rights. It is the duty of the society, government and all other agencies related to tea gardens, to make them literate, culturally rich and economically stable so that they can live an acceptable life without being deprived of human rights and can contribute in the tea garden immensely and flourish the economy in greater extent.

Ahmed *et al.* (2016) conducted a study on “A Study Report on Working Condition of Tea Plantation Workers in Bangladesh”. The study found that the tea plantation workers still have dreams and want to change their lives. Both tea workers and union leaders are of the view that education is the fundamental for bringing change to the community. All of them showed deep interest in education and want to see their children educated and engaging in employment other than as tea garden laborers.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 METHOD OF THE STUDY

Descriptive research method was used in the present study.

5.2 POPULATION

The population of the present study comprises of all the Model Schools of the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam. There are 3 Model Schools offering Classes from VI- X in the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam (academic session 2023-2024). The population of the present study covers all the students studying in Classes VI-X in the Model Schools of Lakhimpur District in the academic session 2023-2024, Headmaster/ Headmistress, Teachers, SMDC members, Parents/ Guardians of the students studying in the Classes VI-X in the Model School of Lakhimpur District in the academic session 2023-2024, and the Community people of in and around these Model schools of the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam.

Table 1 shows the details of the population of the present study.

Table:1
Population of the study

Name of District	Name of Model School	Total no. of students	Total no. of Headmaster/Headmistress	Total no. of Teachers	Total no. of SMDC members
Lakhimpur	Mukti Yoddha Gajadhar Kurmi Adarsha Vidyalaya (Dejoo T.E.)	206	1	8	5
	Mukti Yoddha Mahabal Gorh Adarsha Vidyalaya (Seajuli T.E.)	218	1	8	5
	Anada Tea Estate Model School	284	1	8	5
TOTAL	3	708	3	24	15

Source: School record, (Academic Session 2023-2024)

5.3. SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The sample of the present study consist of 2 out of 3 Model Schools in the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur district, Assam viz; Mukti Yoddha Gajadhar Kurmi Adarsha Vidyalaya (Dejoo T.E.) and Mukti Yoddha Mahabal Gorh Adarsha Vidyalaya (Seajuli T.E.). The sample of Head of the Institution comprises the 2 head of the institutions from the sampled schools. Moreover, for the sample of teachers 50% of the teachers from the sampled schools i.e. 8 out of 16 teachers, 4 from each of the sampled school have been selected, through purposive sampling method. Again, for the student sample, 40% of students (170 out of 424) have been selected through purposive sampling technique from the 2 sampled schools. Again, for the sample of parents/guardians, 10% of students' parents/guardians (43 out of 170) have been selected from the sampled Schools through purposive sampling technique. And for the sample of School Management and Development Committee (SMDC) members, 60% of SMDC members (6 out of 10) members, 3 members each from both Model schools have been selected through purposive sampling technique. Again, for the sample of community people 10 community people living in and around both the Model Schools from the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam have been selected through purposive sampling technique.

The following table shows the sample of the study:

Table: 2
Sample of the Study

Name of the District	No. of Model School	No. of Headmaster/ Headmistress	No. of Teachers	No. of Students	No. of Parents/Guardian	No. of SMDC	No. of Community People
Lakhimpur	2	2	8	170	43	6	10

5.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Purposive sampling method was used to select the sample size for the study.

5.5 TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY

In the present study, Questionnaire were used for Headmaster/Headmistress, Teachers and Students. Also, Unstructured interview schedule was used for Parents/Guardians and Community members.

5.6 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The statistical technique used in the study was percentage.

6 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Analysis and interpretation of the data have been discussed under the following headings:

6.1 TO STUDY THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN ENHANCING ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE MODEL SCHOOLS IN THE TEA GARDEN AREAS OF LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT, ASSAM.

6.1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES GIVEN BY THE HEADMASTERS/HEADMISTRESS REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN ENHANCING ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- i) 100% Heads opined that to enhance enrolment, awareness programs in the community are conducted.
- ii) 50% Heads opined that teachers' visit to the homes in the lines of the tea garden are done to enhance enrollment.
- iii) 50% Heads opined that Heads, teachers and SMDC participate in the community meetings to suggest the parents and guardians to enroll their children to Model School.
- iv) 100% Heads opined that to enhance the attendance of the students, rewards are given in the Parent teacher meetings.
- v) 100% Heads opined that Mid-day Meals are provided daily to enhance the attendance of the students.
- vi) 100% Heads opined that Parent teacher meetings are held once in 2 months to enhance community participation
- vii) 100% Heads opined that Mothers' groups are formed to enhance the community participation.
- viii)

6.1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES GIVEN BY THE TEACHERS REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN ENHANCING ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- i) 38% teachers opined that they visit the homes in the lines of the tea garden to suggest the parents/guardians to enroll their students in Model School.
- ii) 38% teachers opined that parents are informed if students are absent from the classes for more than 5 days continuously to enhance attendance.
- iii) 38% teachers opined the parents and guardians are invited in different programs to enhance community participation.
- iv) 12% teachers opined that they motivate the students to come to school regularly to enhance atte

6.1.3 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES GIVEN BY THE SMDC MEMBERS REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN ENHANCING ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- i) 50% SMDC members opined that to enhance enrollment awareness programs are conducted in the tea garden lines.
- ii) 83% SMDC members opined that appointment of teachers from the TGL community and use of Mother tongue i.e. Sadri in the curriculum may enhance the enrollment and attendance of the students.

- iii) 16% SMDC members opined that introduction of Vocational education may enhance the enrollment and attendance of students.
- iv) 16% SMDC opined that strict rules may help in enhancing the attendance of students.
- v) 50% SMDC members opined that extracurricular activities are conducted to enhance the attendance of students.
- vi) 83% SMDC opined that to enhance community participation Parent Teacher meetings, awareness programs and invitation in various school programs are organized by the school.

6.1.4 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES GIVEN BY THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN ENHANCING ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:

- i) 56% parents opined that special scholarships and grants will help in enhancing enrollment and attendance of students.
- ii) 35% parents opined that introduction of computer classes and English-speaking classes will help in enhancing enrollment and attendance of students.
- iii) 24% teachers opined that introduction of Vocational education such as wood and bamboo craft, sewing, stitching etc. may enhance the enrolment and attendance of students.
- iv) 28% parents opined that subject wise appointment of trained teachers may also help in enhancing attendance of students.
- v) 39% parents opined that flexible curriculum would help in enhancing attendance of students.

6.1.5 ANALYSIS OF THE RESPONSES GIVEN BY THE COMMUNITY PEOPLE REGARDING THE INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN ENHANCING ENROLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- i) 50% community people opined that Tea-Management should take actions to enroll the students in Model school.
- ii) 60% community people opined appointment of TGL community teachers and use of Mother Tongue be used to enhance enrolment and attendance of students.
- iii) 50% community people opined that parents call should be done to enhance the attendance of students.
- iv) 20% community people opined that use of improved teaching strategies be used to enhance attendance of students.
- v) 40% community people opined to enhance community enhancement programs and festivals should be conducted and community should be invited.

7 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

From the data given by the Heads, teachers, SMDC members, Parents/Guardians and community people related with the model schools of the tea garden areas of Lakhimpur District, Assam it was revealed that awareness programs and visit to the lines and homes by the school authorities and participation in community meetings are done to enhance enrolment of students. And, to enhance attendance of students, rewards are given in the Parent teacher meetings which are conducted every two months. Mother's groups are formed to enhance community participation. The study moreover revealed that parents are informed if students are absent from the classes for more than 5 days. Nutritious Midday meals are provided daily to enhance the attendance of the students.

Moreover, parents/guardians, SMDC members and members from the community opined that the use of Mother Tongue in the curriculum, introduction of Vocational education such as carpentry, wood and bamboo work, sewing, stitching etc. may help in enhancing enrolment and attendance of students. Also, appointment of teachers from the TGL community and use of 'Sadri' language in the curriculum may enhance both enrolment and attendance. Co-curricular activities, computer education and improved teaching strategies can enhance both enrolment and attendance of the students. Various Cultural programs and invitation of the parents/guardians and community people in different programs would help in enhancing community participation.

8. EDUCATIONIONAL IMPLICATIONS

1. The study may help policymakers to develop policies and prioritize the establishment of model schools in tea garden areas and allocate resources accordingly.
2. The findings can be used to advocate for the expansion of model schools and similar initiatives in other disadvantaged regions.

9. CONCLUSION

The establishment of Model Schools in the Tea Garden areas of Assam holds significant promise for the educational upliftment and overall development of the Tea Garden labor community. These schools have the ability of access to quality education, skill development and empowerment of students of tea garden areas which can have far reaching implications for their prospects. They can empower the tea garden labor community by promoting education, skill development, health and hygiene. Additionally model schools can contribute to social transformation by challenging traditional gender roles, fostering community development and preserving cultural heritage.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

REFERENCES:

- Ahmed. (2016). A study report on Working Condition of Tea Plantation workers in Bangladesh.
- Ahmad,I et.al (2015). Study on Socio-Economic & Educational condition of Tea Workers at Sylhet in Bangladesh. *Journal of Tea Research*, 2015, Vol 5-No-5,1-8
- Assam State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, Women & Child Development. Governemnt of Assam
- Begum,S & Islam, F. (2022). Education of Children of Tea Garden workers : Orgnization, Provisions and Challenges. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*
- Bora, P. (2018). Availability and utilization of sanitation facilities amongst the tea garden population of Jorhat district, Assam. *International Journal of Community Medicine And Public Health*
- Bora, P. (2002). Surrveyed existing facilities for primary education in tea-garden
- Chakroborty, P. (2012). Tea garden workers problem in offering primary education in MelamoraGolaghat district of Assam.
- Chetia, S. (2021). Education among the Tea Garden laborers: A Sociological study based on Eight Tea Gardens of Dibrugarh & Tinsukia Districts of Assam (Doctoral Thesis) Gauhati University
- Gogoi, D. (2015). Girl Child Education among Tea Tribes : A Case Study of Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh District of Assam. *Interdisciplinary Multilingual Referred Journal*.
- Kabir, M. (2007). Tea plantation workers and its circumstances ; a micro-level study.
- Kaora. (2001). Promoting inclusive education in Nehuwa, A tea plantaion area in Sri Lanka.
- Sahu, et.al (2022). A study on education status of Tea Tribe community in Assam.
- Saikia, R. (2014) Development, Education and Human Rights : A study of Tea Tribes in Tinkhuria Tea Estate, Assam.
- Saikia, R. (2016). Scenario of Primary Education in tea garden areas of Assam. *The international journal of humanities and social science*.
- Saikia, R. (2017). Educational scenario in rural and tea garden areas of Assam. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*. Online sources Oxford English dictionary Cambridge Dictionary.
- Saikia, T. (2007). Problems of Non-enrollment and drop out of the children of tea garden labour.
- Saikia, B. (2008). Development of Tea Garden Community and Adivasis Identity Politics in Assam. *Indian Journal of Labour Economics Vol 7*
- Sarkar, S. (2013). The condition of tea garden workers of Jalpaiguri district in colonial India.
- Sarkar,D.K. (2018). Education of Tea Garden Children with Special Reference to Nagaon & Golaghat District (Doctoral Thesis) Assam University
- Sarma.N, (2011). Universalisation of Elementary Education among Tea-Tribe of Assam with Special Reference to Jorhat District. *State Institute of Education Assam, Jorhat*.

- Sarma. (2011). Universalization of elementary education among tea tribe of Assam with special reference to Jorhat district.
- Sarma, G. (2013). A Case Study on Socio economic condition of Tea Garden Labourers- A status & trend report (1995-2010), Department of Research and Training (SCERT), Assam.
- Shukla, S. (2020). Concept of Population and Sample. Indian Institute of Teacher education Gandhinagar.
- Singh. et.al. (2006). Socio-economic and political problems of tea garden workers.
- SIE (2004) Status of Literacy among Tea Tribes of Assam : A critical Analysis. Research Project for NLM, MHRD, GOI
- Sultana, B. (2022). Education of Children of Tea garden workers : Organizations, Provisions & Challenges. New Delhi. Journal of Positive School of Psychology.
- Talukdar, B. (2017). Educational Status of Oraon Children in Biswanath Chariali Tea Garden of Assam. Remarkings and Analysis.
- Tanti, S. (2001). Study of the problems of Primary education among tea garden labour of Assam with reference to Dibrugarh district.