

# Educational Status of Tea Garden Workers and their Children: A Review

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## Abstract

The present study analyses prior research to examine the educational status of workers and their children who are employed in tea estates and to explore whether they face any challenges in accessing education. Additionally, the study explores the potential role of educational policies, acts, and initiatives in facilitating the educational success of these workers' children. This study is entirely based on secondary data sources. Various online search engines, such as Google Search, Google Scholar, Academia.edu, Shodhganga Search, Shodhgangotri, ERIC, EBSCO, BASE, RefSeek, JURN, Scite.ai, and others, were used to gather the required data. Upon thorough investigation, the study identifies certain deficiencies in the educational access of these children and proposes measures to address these issues, thereby enabling them to access education and effect changes in their lifestyles, societal standing, and economic sectors.

**Key words:** Education of tea workers, Educational problems, tea garden workers, educational initiatives, socioeconomic status.

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## I. Introduction

Tea is an agro-industrial sector, which necessitates a considerable workforce for activities such as harvesting, production, packaging, and global marketing. Consequently, a substantial number of individuals are employed in these industries to sustain their livelihoods. At present, tea is cultivated in 60 countries worldwide, predominantly located in Asia and Africa (Yan et al. 2020). Among these, China and India are the leading producers of tea globally. Additionally, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Kenya also engage in tea cultivation, with a large segment of their populations employed in this sector. In India, 1,131,942 individuals are employed in tea gardens (PIB, 2019); while Bangladesh employs 359,085 workers (Ahmad & Faisal, 2016); Kenya has 3 million, and Sri Lanka supports over 1 million individuals (Van Der Wall, 2008). Despite the huge employment opportunities provided by the tea industry, it fails to offer a healthy and adequate lifestyle for its workers. The majority of these workers experience poverty due to the low wages they receive. They face social, economic, and educational marginalisation. Many started working young because of financial constraints, which prevented their capacity to keep their education intact and led to their present low-paying job. Thus, poverty and non-literacy keep them from attaining desirable social status, economic stability, and a healthy lifestyle.

Education is a process that equips individuals to function effectively in society, meet basic survival needs, and lead quality lives. Its primary objective is to prepare competent individuals by imparting necessary knowledge, skills, strategies, and morals. It removes superstitious beliefs, increases awareness, and improves socioeconomic status. However, most tea garden workers are not literate. They continue to work as low-wage labourers in tea gardens. Additionally, they cannot pursue other skilled jobs because they lack the necessary skills. As a result, they remain in these low-wage positions, which prevent them from affording a quality lifestyle and leads to inadequate housing, poor sanitation, and a lack of social protection. The grip of this poverty brings a shadow over their lives and living conditions, discouraging them from seeking healthcare practices and creating obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for their children. High dropout rates and absenteeism are still prevalent among the workers' children in the tea garden areas. In addition to poverty, factors such as parental non-literacy and lack of awareness, child marriages, insufficient schools, inadequate school infrastructure, and poor transportation systems contribute to the dropout rates and absenteeism among children. Moreover, some students drop out of school to start working at a young age due to poverty. It follows that the children of these workers continue to have a serious need for high-quality education.

Therefore, considering this perspective, this review paper thoroughly analyses prior research conducted by distinguished researchers and organisations to develop a broad understanding of the educational status of

workers and their children, as well as any possible hindrances. It also highlights areas that necessitate additional investigation and study. After analysing and synthesising previous research, this study sums up the findings and highlights some specific gaps that require further exploration. The results will inspire researchers to investigate related issues, which will ultimately help improve the socioeconomic and educational conditions of workers and their children. This information will also help educators and administrators formulate policies regarding education for children and adults by introducing adult literacy programmes.

## II. Materials and Methods

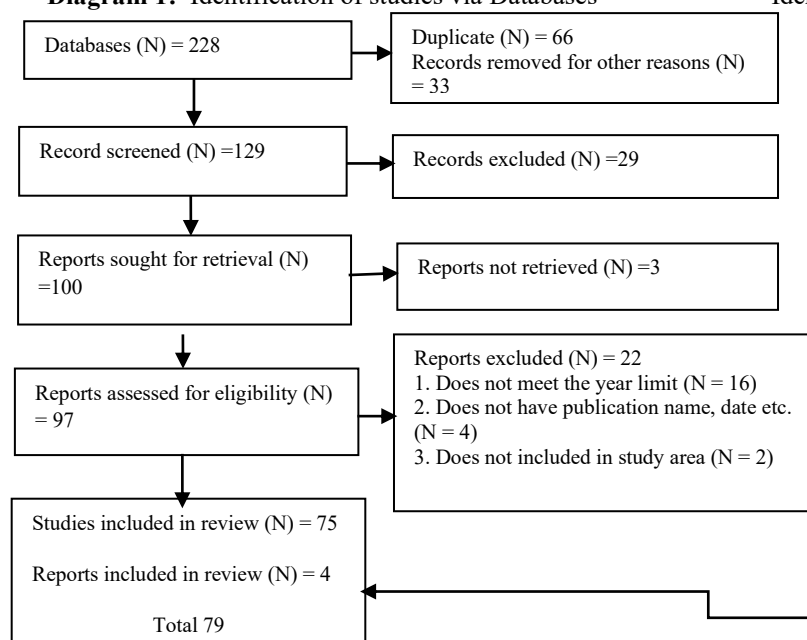
### Research Questions

1. Are tea garden workers and their children literate?
2. Do they face any challenges in accessing education?
3. What are the effective outcomes of educational acts and policies implemented in the tea garden schools?

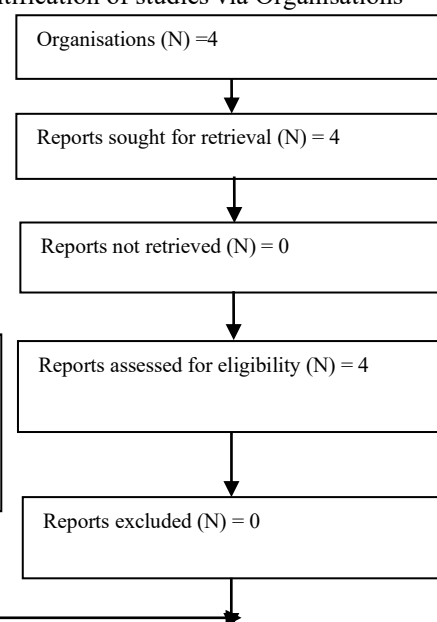
**Table 1:** Eligibility Criteria of Data Inclusion and Exclusion

Criteria	Details
Year-limit	2010 to 2024
Search engine	Google search, Google scholar, Academid.edu, Shodhganga search, Shodhgangotri, EBSCO, RefSeek, JURN, Scite.ai
Key words	Education for tea garden workers, Education of the children of tea garden workers, Socio-economic status of workers
Type of research	Qualitative and descriptive research
Type of publication	Journal articles, research papers, abstracts, theses, dissertation, news articles, government reports, project reports etc.
Type of sample	Studies regarding socio-economic status and education of tea estate workers and their children
Study area	India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kenya

**Diagram 1:** Identification of studies via Databases



Identification of studies via Organisations



PRISMA flow diagram 2020 (Kahale et al., 2021)

### Method of data collection

This study is entirely based on secondary data sources. As a systematic review, it comprehensively analyses various previous studies to achieve a holistic understanding of the educational status of workers and their children. To aggregate the necessary and relevant data for this study, various online search engines, such as Google Search, Google Scholar, Academia.edu, Shodhganga Search, Shodhgangotri, ERIC, EBSCO, BASE, RefSeek, JURN, Scite.ai, and others, were used. After randomly downloading various activities conducted by prominent researchers, these were carefully screened according to inclusion and exclusion criteria. In this study,

only those studies that are highly significant, relevant and meet the inclusion criteria were considered and analysed.

### III. Literature review

**Table 2:** Educational status of tea garden workers

Researcher/s	Year	Literature review
Akhtar, P. R.	2013	emphasized the educational needs among tea tribe women in the Udalguri district, suggesting that education could empower them to advocate for their rights and enhance their skills, potentially aiding in their socio-economic and cultural development.
Bosumatari, D., and Goyari, P.	2013	examined the status of women's education among tea plantation workers in Assam, finding that approximately 60.2% of respondents were non-literate. Factors such as economic disadvantage, neglect of girls' education, lack of school availability, and early marriages contributed to the low status of women's education.
Devi, P.	2014	explored the high illiteracy rate among women workers employed in tea gardens in the Sonitpur district of Assam.
Deb Nath, R., and Nath, D.	2014	highlighted that insufficient educational attainment contributes to precarious livelihoods and substandard living conditions for workers in Dewan Tea Garden of Assam.
Ahmad et al.	2015	noted that the majority of the workers who were employed in the tea gardens of the Sylhet district in Bangladesh were non-literate, although it found some literate workers who completed the primary level of education. The researcher further explored that the workload's demands and insufficient support from the authorities prevented the workers from continuing their education.
Roy and Sattar	2015	reported that only 40% of tea garden workers in Bangladesh had attended school. Nevertheless, there is an increasing interest among these workers in pursuing open and distance learning to improve their professional and personal lives.
Ansari, S., and Sheereen, Z.	2016	investigated and revealed that 58.4% of the 125 tea garden workers in the Alipurduar District were illiterate, with a mere 1.6% having completed secondary education.
Sarkar, S., Chowdhury, A., Roy, P., and Chowdhury, M.	2016	contended that various socio-economic challenges faced by female tea garden workers in West Bengal severely limit their access to quality education and a healthy lifestyle.
Bosumatari, D., and Goyari, P.	2015	examined the limited educational accessibility in the tea garden areas in the Udalguri District of Assam. Due to limited access to secondary or higher education institutions, children are not interested in further education after completing primary education. Furthermore, the study revealed a significantly high rate of waste and stagnation among schoolchildren, as well as a high rate of non-literacy among the parents.
Baro, N.S.	2017	exposed that school dropouts and low retention rates were closely linked to the socio-economic conditions of the households.
Borah et al.	2017	revealed that in Assam, out of 194 non intervention sample workers, 113 (58.2%) were illiterate, 64 (33.3%) had studied up to the primary level, and 17 (8.7%) had reached the higher secondary level and beyond.
Lama, N.	2017	explored the fact that the children of tea garden workers from Darjeeling district had higher educational aspirations for employment, personal development, and the fulfillment of their dreams, but they were impeded from fulfilling these aspirations due to poverty and societal issues.
Debnath, S., and Debnath, P.	2017	found the high non-literacy rate among tea garden workers; however, some of the workers received primary education.

Saha, J. K.; Acharjee, D. C.; and Rahaman, M. M.	2017	observed the basic literacy among the tea garden workers who can read and write in Bengali. However, according to the researchers, some of the workers had completed primary education, while few had reached the secondary level.
Biswas, R.	2018	investigated that most of the tea garden workers residing in the Son Gachhi tea estate in the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal were non-literate, noting that very few students completed higher secondary education. The study found no graduates or individuals with higher education in the area.
Choudhury, M.	2018	found that women were unable to pursue education beyond primary school due to the absence of secondary or high schools in the tea garden regions of Sonitpur district. Additionally, poverty and the liberal attitudes of parents were significant factors affecting the education of women and girls.
Jalil and Oakkas	2018	experienced the disadvantages and discrimination among tea garden Workers in Bangladesh. They found that the tea garden workers were more economically and educationally backward than the other people in the country. They found that 48% of the workers were illiterate, and factors like poverty, the non-availability of schools, and parental unwillingness hindered the workers' educational access.
Moktan, R.	2018	examined the educational status of women workers in two tea gardens in the Darjeeling district and discovered that approximately 29% of the 90 female workers were illiterate.
Afzal, F., and Alam, A.	2019	explored that tea garden workers lived below the poverty line, believed in superstitions, and had poor educational achievements.
Bishwasarma, A., and Borah, B.	2019	noted that the lack of primary schools in proximity to students' homes, scarcity of teachers, language barriers, poverty, and child marriages obstruct the education of these tribal workers and their children.
Begum, R.	2019	discovered that the majority of female workers in the tea gardens were non-literate. To heal this circumstance, the researcher recommended for the establishment of literacy camps to foster interest and awareness among the workers, with a particular focus on education in these areas.
Hemasrikumar and Arthi	2019	explored inadequate living conditions, social circumstances, and non-literacy among tea garden workers in Manjoor Block, Nilgiris district.
Rai, P. C.	2019	found the poor educational attainment among workers. Basically, the workers completed their primary education, although some were found to be non-literate.
Borgohain, J.	2020	explored the poor educational attainment of the women workers in the Sivasagar district, which led to their low socio-economic status. It also found the low enrolment and attendance ratios of these workers' children in the schools.
Gogoi, M.	2020	highlighted the inadequate educational opportunities available for workers' children.
Gogoi et al.	2020	exposed that tea garden workers in Assam have varying academic aspirations for their children, with some having high aspirations and others having low aspirations.
Gayathri, P., and Arjunan, R.	2020	found that the low educational attainment is responsible for the poor living conditions and lifestyles among tea garden workers in the Nilgiris district. It recommended that government interventions are very emergent to protect the workers and their welfare.
Roy Sarkar, R.	2020	found a high non-literacy rate among the tea garden workers in the Ambootia tea estate of Darjeeling.
Agarwalla, R.	2021	examined that the workers were largely non-literate and unaware of their children's educational needs.
Chetia, S.	2021	identified a poor literacy rate among tea garden workers in the Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of Assam. The children of these workers attended school until primary education, but thereafter, most of them discontinued their studies. Linguistic challenges, economic constraints, non-literate

		guardians, and insufficient awareness primarily caused the children to drop out of the schools.
Kujur, P., Mazhar, S. H., and Jahanar	2021	emphasised enhancing educational opportunities for women workers in tea gardens in Chhattisgarh. It is essential to increase the awareness of their rights, health, and the importance of education.
Kalimuthu and Megavarshini	2021	also highlighted the poor educational status of tea plantation workers in the Nilgiris district.
Perumal, B. V.	2021	highlighted a high non-literacy rate among tea garden workers in Theni District of Tamil Nadu. By initiating the effective implementation of an adult literacy programme and continuing education, the researcher advocated improving functional literacy among these workers.
Das, N., and Das, R.	2022	found literate workers who completed primary and secondary levels of education; few were graduates but not a single was postgraduate. Some non-literacy was also found among the workers. Behind poor educational status, the factors like family problems, poor financial condition, and early marriage were prevalent.
Doley, P.	2022	identified a high level of non-literacy and dropout rates among the tea garden community in Ikorajan Tea Estate of Assam. However, a few individuals from this community have completed higher education and are employed as teachers, administrative workers, and banking personnel.
Kanoo, R.	2023	findings revealed that in the Isabheel Tea Estate of Assam, most of the workers literate up to primary level. Due to financial constraints, the majority of the students finished their education after primary, although very few of them completed higher secondary education.
Singphow, R. R.	2022	concluded that non-literacy is a major issue among tea garden workers at the Powai tea estate in the Tinsukia district of Assam, leading to various socio-economic challenges in their daily lives. A lack of educational awareness prevents them from enjoying the advantages of various welfare schemes.
Rahman, Z., and Das, S.	2023	concluded that while parents exhibited a positive attitude towards the importance of education, they remained largely unaware of the specific implementation of educational laws and regulations.
Murmu, A., and Pyal, G.	2024	explored how the tea garden association, non-literacy, lack of efficiency, quality of work, and low demand for women workers facilitated poor socio-economic conditions.
Nath, S. K., Das, A. S., and Wankhar, W.	2024	experienced that despite the governmental provisions established under the Tea Plantation Act of 1951, educational attainment remains deficient.

**Table 3:** Educational status of tea garden workers children

<b>Researcher/s</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Literature Review</b>
Nath, L.	2011	observed a high non-literacy rate among the parents but a high literacy rate among the tea tribe children of Lakhimpur district. The majority of the children were enrolled in elementary schools, and only 2.82% studied in higher secondary schools.
Sarma, N.	2011	noted that a primary school is located in each tea garden of Jorhat District, Assam, but the infrastructure was inadequate. It lacked essential amenities such as drinking water, separate kitchens, and qualified teachers.
Bhanu, B.	2012	observed that the majority of women workers and their children completed only the primary education. However, only a small percentage of them went on to attend high school. The major barriers to achieving education were poverty, distant schools, parental liberal attitudes, early marriage, and a lack of basic school infrastructure. The researcher identified the Tea Plantation Labour Act 1951, SSA, and RTE Act 2009 as potential accelerators for education among these students.
Gogoi, D., and Handique, M.	2012	explored the educational gap between girls and boys in the Rajgarh tea estate of Dibrugarh district. It revealed that girls are lower achievers than the boys. Due to household work, lack of awareness, parents' unfavourable attitudes,

		poverty, and an unfavourable social environment contributed as primary factors to the acute status of girls' education.
Sarma, G.	2013	found that predominantly non-literate individuals were elderly people. Whatever, the introduction of the midday meal and Sarva Siksha initiatives provided the new generation with educational opportunities, leading to an improvement in educational status.
Sanil, R.	2014	highlighted the low educational status of the tea tribes of Tinkhuria Tea Estate, Assam, noting parental dissatisfaction with their children's education and a tendency for students to drop out after class VIII.
Kurmi, P.	2014	identified parental non-literacy, large family size, and low household income significantly hindered the educational attainment of workers' children at Derby Tea Estate.
UNICEF	2014	reported that most people possessed literacy skills up to the primary level after surveying 15 tea gardens in 7 districts of Assam. Nevertheless, a few of them achieved self-literacy without formal schooling.
Ghatowar, N.K.	2015	observed that the facilities of tea garden schools have improved due to the implementation of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The Mid-day Meal scheme notably increased student attendance by providing lunch. Still, students discontinued their education due to the unavailability of secondary and high schools in these areas.
Sentinel D.D. Guwahati	2015	reported on the aspirations of tea garden children for higher education. It found that students aspire to higher education but cannot achieve it due to a lack of upper primary and high schools. Additionally, the absence of proper infrastructure; early marriages; child labour; alcoholism; and trafficking hindered educational progress.
Saikia, R.	2016	assessed the state of primary education in Assam's tea garden areas, finding it unsatisfactory and identifying numerous factors contributing to the slow development of primary education.
Mehrin, N., Chodhury, T., and Nath, S.	2016	found the factors such as inadequate classroom sizes, insufficiently trained teachers, poor infrastructure, and inadequate school maintenance, along with issues like child marriage, financial constraints, non-literacy, household responsibilities, migration, and low incentives, are the significant operational challenges associated with delivering primary education in the Wetland (Haor) and Tea Garden regions of the Sylhet Division in Bangladesh.
WBCPCR	2016	highlighted that the remote location, communication issues, and other contributing factors included problems with the medium of instruction, parental illiteracy, economic constraints, and the non-availability of secondary and higher secondary schools attributed to low educational attainment and high dropout rates among the tea garden workers' children in Alipurduar district.
Baruah, P.B., and Daimari, M.	2017	revealed that gender discrimination existed among the tea garden workers' children, with more female students dropping out than their male counterparts.
Talukdar, B.	2017	found many students completed matriculation of Oraon children in the Biswanath Chariali tea garden of Assam. The availability of a primary school and a middle school within 3.5 km encouraged them.
Hazarika, H.	2017	observed the impoverished lifestyles of workers' children due to poverty. Students are suffering from health issues affecting their education. The implementation of SSA and MDM schemes could potentially increase school attendance among these children.
Saikia, R.	2017	reported that the majority of tea garden schools did not comply with the Right to Education (RTE) Act's stipulations regarding the student-teacher ratio, despite being the primary source of lower primary education for the children of workers. Additionally, the researcher identified a lack of knowledge and awareness as the principal barrier to skill development among tea garden workers.
Sarma, M.K.	2017	suggested that the government should establish educational institutions; particularly those focused on vocational training, and enforce legislative measures for female tea garden workers and their children to mitigate their

		socio-economic, cultural, and educational challenges by empowering themselves.
Raja, J.A., and Krishnaveni, V.	2017	discovered a high literacy rate among the children of tribal tea workers in the Nilgiris District, at the primary level. However, only a few pursued ITI and diploma courses, and even fewer completed undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Most of them chose to work in gardens after finishing primary school.
Kurmi, P., and Dutta, S.		pointed out the lack of high schools and inadequate infrastructure nurtured the poor academic performance and high dropout rates among children of tea garden workers.
Sarkar, D.K.	2018	noted that most children of tea garden workers attended schools within the tea estates in the Nagaon and Golaghat districts.
Gogoi, P., Borah, T., and Gogoi, S.	2019	observed no significant gender differences in the academic socialisation of children in Assam's tea communities.
Das, S. S.	2020	discovered a gender gap in accessing education where girls had a more favourable perception of the school environment than boys in terms of creative stimulation (A), cognitive encouragement (B), acceptance (C), permissiveness (D), rejection (E), and control (F) at the secondary level in Titabor's tea garden areas.
Ghosh, D., and Paul, S.	2020	noted the availability of infrastructural facilities in the tea garden schools of Alipurduar District like fire safety, dustbins, kitchens, and electricity. The study also discovered that some schools have implemented smart classrooms to enhance students' knowledge through technological support. However, some schools were suboptimal and required improvement.
Kiruy et al.	2020	noted a substantial impact of parental economic status on pupils' academic outcomes studying in government primary schools in the tea estates in Kenya.
Begum, S. and Islam, Q. F.	2021	confirmed that the low educational status of tea-tribe children is significantly influenced by the factors such as parental illiteracy, poverty, the lack of education for girls, child labour, early marriages, and the inadequate implementation of government policies, including the RTE Act 2009 and the Plantation Labour Act.
Biswas, A. K., and Sinha, B.	2021	indicated that the implementation of the RTE Act had a positive impact on children's education. Tea garden workers are now more inclined to send their children to school, despite the perseverance of poverty.
Salam, A.	2021	explored the basic educational obstacles facing tea tribe students, which are linguistic barriers, the use of single classrooms, low parental literacy, etc.
Roy, N. R.	2021	observed that the children of tea garden workers in Assam encounter numerous obstacles in their pursuit of secondary education. It included a lack of parental support, negative attitudes towards education, unsupportive teachers, financial limitations, health problems, and unavailability of schools etc.
Rai, B.	2022	revealed that the enrolment ratio was higher for male students than for female students in the tea plantation region of the Darjeeling Hills. Not only are male students high in enrolment, but they also have a higher dropout rate compared to female students.
Perumal, B. V.	2022	found that educational awareness heightened among these workers and their children due to the implementation of government initiatives and schemes.
Fukuda, Y., and Yamaji, E.	2022	assessed the educational attainment of children in Sri Lanka's tea sector, revealing that while all children of individual farmers attended school, 6.9% of those from Regional Plantation Companies (RPC) and 22.4% from Private Estates did not. The primary reasons for these dropout rates were poverty and the considerable distance to schools.
Begum, S., and Islam, Q. F.	2022	identified in their study that, while the aim of organisational and governmental policies is to improve the impoverished conditions of workers' children, the results remain ineffective due to inadequate implementation.
Sahu, E., and Bhuyan	2022	found that most respondents had left school before completing their education. Financial issues and negative parental attitudes adversely affected their education.

Baidya, P. S., and Nath, D.	2023	observed that tea garden schools were properly equipped with educational facilities for the smooth running of education. It maintained an appropriate teacher-pupil ratio, and the deployed teachers received adequate training. Additionally, boys and girls received equal treatment and opportunities in education.
Roy, S., and Chaudhury, S.	2023	found the workers in the Kalchini tea estate had poor educational attainment.
UNICEF	2023	reported that tea workers' children were attending school as suggested by their parents, but they are irregular attendants. The rate of irregular attendance is also gradually increasing as the level of education rises.
Ekka, J., and Chaliaha, A.	2024	concluded that although classrooms were well-furnished and ventilated, there were no computer or science labs available in model schools located in the tea garden areas of Assam. Additionally, there was a need for more subject teachers and proper training for in-service teachers.

Graphical representation of study area

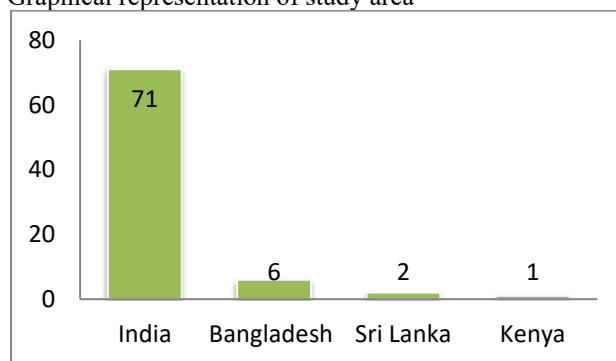


Figure 1: International Level

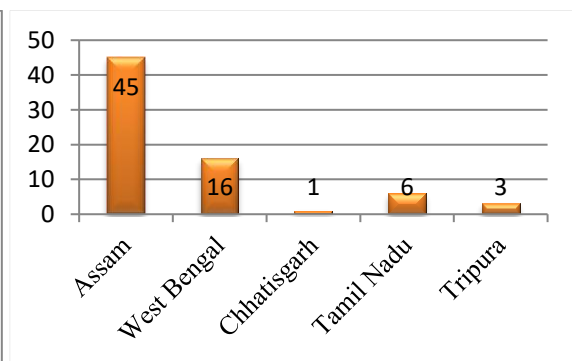


Figure 2: National Level

#### IV. Summary of findings

**Table 4:** Educational status of tea garden workers

Dimensions	Descriptions
Educational attainment	The study's findings were derived from a comprehensive review of existing literature on tea garden workers' education and socioeconomic status, highlighting a significant prevalence of non-literacy among the tea garden workers. Although some studies have identified instances where workers have completed primary education, few have attained secondary or higher education; it is not satisfactory.
Facts for low educational attainment and non-literacy	Studies also explored the reasons behind the non-literacy and low educational attainment of among these workers. The study explored several factors that significantly contributed to the low literacy of the workers, including poverty, lack of access to schools, teacher shortages, inadequate transportation systems, parental reluctance and neglect of girls' education, early marriages, and language barriers.
Gender discrimination	While these issues impact all workers, they particularly affect female workers, who suffer disproportionately from illiteracy.
Poor socioeconomic status	Conversely, the lack of education and work skills perpetuates poverty and poor socioeconomic conditions among these workers. Baro (2017) examined the socioeconomic status of tea garden labourers and its correlation with educational attainment, enlightening us that school dropout rates and low retention rates are closely associated with the household's socioeconomic conditions for the workers.
Poor living condition	Due to extreme poverty, these workers are unable to meet basic needs, live in an unhealthy environment, and suffer from malnutrition. They cannot enjoy the same socioeconomic status, educational opportunities and rights.
Recommendations for education	So, special attention is required to improve the conditions of the workers and remove all the barriers. In this situation, education can serve as a beacon for the



workers. Some studies have highlighted and recommended to provide the quality adult education facilities that could empower them to advocate for their rights and strengthen their skills, thereby facilitating their socioeconomic and cultural development.

**Table 5:** Educational status of tea garden workers' children

Dimensions	Descriptions
Literate but low educational attainment	The extensive literature review on the education of tea garden workers' children indicated that most the children of tea garden workers are literate and have completed only primary education. Bhanu, B. (2012) observed that most women workers and their children only completed primary education. Although most students prefer to conclude their education at the primary level, a few also advance their education to secondary and higher education, resulting in a low rate of higher-educated children.
Problems of education	Studies highlighted that the three-dimensional barriers, namely the domestic dimension, transportation issue and the educational barriers, affected the attainment of education for workers' children. The primary domestic barriers to educational attainment include poverty, and parental liberal attitudes, negative perceptions of education, child labour and early marriage due to economic pressures.
1. Domestic barriers, 2. Transportation and 3. Educational barriers	Additionally, inadequate school infrastructure, unsupportive teachers, single classrooms, linguistic barriers, and students' health issues impede educational progression.
Gender discrimination	Besides these, poor transportation also discourage students attain the distant schools.
Drop out	The study also identified gender discrimination in educational participation and completion, with a higher dropout rate among female students compared to their male counterparts.
Government initiatives	Most of the children drop the school after completing primary education.
Lack of schools	Despite the challenges in tea garden areas, government initiatives aim to enhance literacy rates among children, occasionally achieving success. Implementing the Tea Plantation Labour Act 1951, SSA, MDM schemes, and the RTE Act 2009 could increase interest and attendance among these students.
Recommendations	Although primary schools are present in these tea gardens and government initiatives facilitate the attainment of primary education, the absence of secondary schools and colleges impedes further educational advancement for these workers' children.
	The study also explored research suggestions and recommendations regarding the necessity for secondary and nearby higher educational institutions. Due to the lack of such institutions, students cannot pursue further education. Where secondary schools and higher education institutions are available, students complete their education up to that level; otherwise, they conclude their education at the primary level.

## V. Discussion

### Educational status of the tea garden workers and their children

Education is a vital process for an individual that fosters personal development as well as economic and societal progress. These developments are essential for creating a more equitable and inclusive environment where individuals can flourish. Education accustoms the individual with the proper knowledge, skills, and capabilities, which are essential to getting a job. It prepares individuals to be professionals and good citizens for society as well as the country. By reducing poverty, they can enjoy all their rights, live healthier lifestyles, and have a flourishing economic life.

In tea gardens, there exist distinct perceptions regarding the education of workers. A comprehensive study that deliberated on multiple notable works indicates that the educational status among tea garden workers is significantly inadequate. This study, which reviews 79 prior works, including 46 specifically focused on the literacy and socioeconomic conditions of these workers, reveals that the majorities of them are non-literate and have never attended school. However, minorities of these workers have completed primary education, and only

a small number have advanced to secondary education (Borah et al. 2017). The lack of adequate education perpetuates their economic, social, and educational disadvantages. Consequently, their demands, desires, and recreational activities remain unfulfilled, and they are unable to lead healthy lifestyles. They are unaware of the significance of education, educational rights, political participation, health and hygiene, and community welfare. As a result, they are increasingly marginalized from mainstream society. The study underscores that poverty and its associated challenges primarily fuel non-literacy and inadequate educational attainment among these workers. To alleviate poverty, many workers prioritise employment at a young age over educational pursuits in order to provide financial support for their families. They begin working at a young age in the gardens or look for external employment opportunities. Therefore, due to engagement at work at a very young age, they were unable to continue their education, which led to a high non-literacy rate among these workers.

While the workers exhibit a high non-literacy rate, their children have a different educational place. Despite the prevalent of non-literacy among tea garden workers, recent studies suggest an increase in literacy rates among their children. Most of the children are literate, which is good for the workers, but it is not superior because most stop studying after primary school. In the current era of rapid technological advancement, education is a critical component for the development of knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving skills. But children of workers are increasingly falling behind socioeconomically due to a lack of access to further or higher education. According to Nath (2011), only 2.82% of the workers' children pursue higher secondary education, with a few enrolling in ITI and diploma courses and even fewer completing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees (Raja & Krishnaveni, 2017). Consequently, the question arises: why are children not more engaged in education? Studies identify various factors that hinder the educational progress of these children. Many students discontinue their studies due to the lack of secondary or higher education institutions within the tea gardens. To pursue further education, they need to go outside the gardens. Moreover, the remote location of the tea gardens, coupled with inadequate transportation options, discourages students. Furthermore, poverty remains a significant barrier to educational attainment.

So, it is essential for the government and local authorities to take action to stop students from falling behind in their education, with the goal of helping more children pursue higher education, as educated and skilled people can greatly help the country's growth and improve society. By alleviating poverty, non-literacy, superstitions, and inequality, they can foster a more equitable society. They can raise awareness among community members about educational rights, duties, the significance of education, and healthy lifestyles. Thus, to improve educational outcomes among these children, government support is crucial. By providing economic assistance, enhancing communication infrastructure, raising awareness about the importance of education, and establishing schools, the government can address educational stagnation among these children. Furthermore, by offering accurate information and guidance on educational pathways and career options, students can complete their education and successfully transition into the workforce.

Additionally, workers are required to implement adult literacy programs properly. Basic literacy is an indispensable prerequisite for empowering individuals, families, and communities. It enhances economic opportunities, access to equal rights, cultural enrichment, healthcare awareness, childcare, educational interest, family welfare, and employment skills. Therefore, effectively implementing adult literacy programs can improve these workers' challenges.

### **Problems of education**

In accessing education, students residing in tea garden areas face numerous challenges. After comprehensive analysis, the study identifies three primary barriers—domestic, transportation, and educational—those significantly impact their educational attainment.

1. The domestic barriers include poverty, negative perceptions of education and liberal attitudes of parents, child labour, and early marriage, all of which are driven by economic pressures.
2. Furthermore, inadequate school infrastructure, unsupportive teachers, single-classroom settings, linguistic barriers, and students' health issues hinder educational progress.
3. Additionally, poor transportation and communication systems discourage students from attending distant schools.

It is essential for the government, school administration, tea garden authorities, and teachers to collaborate effectively to enhance educational advancement among these students. Educational attainment among these children can be significantly enhanced by raising awareness among parents, recruiting proportionate numbers of teachers, improving school infrastructure, addressing linguistic challenges, providing incentives, and offering good transportation systems.

### **Gender discrimination**

In tea garden regions educational inequality is observed, with boys receiving more opportunities than girls (Das, 2020; Rai, 2022). Parents often prioritise domestic skills for girls over formal education. Studies have highlighted gender discrimination in educational participation and completion, noting a higher dropout rate among female students compared to their male counterparts (Baruah & Daimari, 2017). Nonetheless, Gogoi, P., Borah, T., and Gogoi, S. (2019) found no significant gender differences in the academic aspect of children within Assam's tea communities. In this context, local government bodies, school administrations, and teachers can reduce the discrimination where it exists by consulting and raising awareness among parents and family members regarding the significance of equality in education and women's empowerment.

### **Dropout**

Dropout rates among the children of workers form a significant concern. Students frequently discontinue their education, either during primary school or, more commonly, after completing the school. Several factors contribute to this phenomenon, one of which is the scarcity of secondary schools. In tea garden regions, only primary schools are available, and only a limited number of gardens have nearby secondary schools that students can attend. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, poverty, child labour, and poor transportation systems, parental liberal attitude and poverty all exacerbate the dropout rate among these children (Sarma, 2013; UNICEF, 2014; Kurmi, & Dutta, 2018). To revolutionise the situation, the establishment of secondary schools within or near the tea gardens, or the provision of efficient transportation and communication by the government and tea garden authorities, is necessary. This effort will attract students who are eager to pursue further education.

### **Effectiveness of implemented Educational Act, Policies and Initiatives in the Tea Estate Schools**

Education plays a crucial role in enhancing individuals' knowledge, skills, and critical thinking abilities. It encourages and enables individuals to achieve innovative, creative, and productive activities. In this modern era, education is an indispensable and precious tool for every human being addressing everyday challenges. Recognising the importance of education, many countries are working to provide their citizens with at least free and compulsory primary education, which enables them to tackle challenges independently. This study, which examines four tea-cultivating countries, found that all these nations propose free and compulsory primary education to children within their territories. However, only two countries, India and Kenya—recognise primary education as a fundamental right, as stipulated in Article 21(A) (Hussain, 2017) and Article 53(1)(b) (Right to Education Project, 2014), respectively. In contrast, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka mandate free and compulsory primary education, yet it is not considered a fundamental right. Nonetheless, these countries are committed to improving student access to quality education. Sri Lanka provides free textbooks, uniforms, a Mid-Day Meal, and travel assistance to boost enrolment and attendance among tea workers' children (RMIT Acumen). Similarly, Bangladesh government initiates the Mid-Day Meal to significantly increase students' enrolment and attendance (Badruzzaman & Mian, 2015). The Kenyan government enacted the Basic Education Act 2013 and introduced a school feeding programme to enhance student participation in school (Right to Education Project, 2014). In India, the government implemented the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-Day Meal (MDM) schemes, and the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 to increase interest and attendance among workers' children (Bhanu, B., 2012). The study reveals that providing these facilities has significantly increased school attendance, enrolment, and presence among tea garden children compared to previous times. However, these initiatives require effective execution to promote the development of children in tea garden areas. Additionally, it is necessary to implement acts, policies, and initiatives aimed at increasing the enrolment of workers' children in higher education institutions. Here, it is noted to be that workers' children in most tea-cultivating countries do not receive any special benefits from the government. They only have access to the same facilities as other children. So, special attention from the government could be more helpful for the workers' children in accessing education.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The comprehensive review of existing literature leads to the conclusion that the educational status of workers and their children is not satisfactory. Most workers and their children conclude their education after primary school, with only a minority pursuing secondary or higher education. Several barriers slow their educational progress, including poverty, parental non-literacy, a lack of parental awareness, child marriages, child labour, insufficient secondary and higher education institutions, and inadequate infrastructural facilities and transportation systems. Therefore, this study suggests that special attention from the government is necessary to enhance the educational attainment among workers' children. The government should add more facilities to these tea gardens, as many students want to study but cannot. The provision of appropriate facilities is likely to increase the rate of educational attainment among these children. In addition to general education,

vocational education is essential to enable them to come into professional life, thereby improving their economic status and enhancing their quality of life. The findings and suggestions made by this study will help the educational administrators and policy makers in framing the policies and taking action regarding the education for tea garden workers' children. Through this study government can visualize a true picture about the conditions, problems and prospects of education of the tea garden workers children and can initiate various activities for the betterment of this marginalised group.

### Research Gap

1. Most of the studies focus solely on the level of educational attainment, rather than considering the quality of education received by the children.
2. The tea tribe community has its unique culture and practices. Therefore, exploring the implementation and effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogy in tea estate schools could be a valuable area of research.
3. Need, problem and prospect of adult literacy programme among the tea garden workers.
4. Emergence of TVET education among the tea garden workers and their children.

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