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A Scenario of Primary Education in Tea Garden Areas of Assam, India

Dr. Rijumoni Saikia

Associate Professor, Dikhowmukh College, Assam, India

Abstract:

Primary education today is regarded as a basic need .It is imparted from the age of 6 -14 years . All shorts of growth and development of a child depend on elementary education .It is the gateway of secondary education than to higher education .

Assam is one of the backward state of India with 62.45% of literacy according to census 2001 and 73.18% of literacy according to census 2011. Among the different communities living in Assam, the tea garden communities are educationally lagging behind. It is admitted that literacy rate of these community is lower than other communities. It has been also observed that growth of primary education is poor in tea garden of Assam. The magnitude of wastage and stagnation of the primary education in case of their tea garden communities is be lived to the greater than others. Therefore the burning problem of illiteracy cannot be solved without special attention to the tea garden communities.

The findings of this study stated that as the primary education in the tea garden area is not satisfactory and there are lot of problems behind the slow growth of the primary education in the tea garden areas of Assam, So remedial measures should be taken up by all sections of the society to develop the scenario of primary education in the tea garden areas of Assam.

1. Introduction

Primary education today is regarded as a basic need. It is imparted from the age of 6 -14 years. All sorts of growth and development of a child depend on elementary education. It is the gateway of secondary education than to higher education. Primary education constitutes a very important part of the entire structure of education. It is the stage that the child starts going to a formal institution. The education which the child received from the formal institution provides the foundation of his physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and social development. Sound elementary education gives a fillip to sound secondary and higher education. On the other hand, strong structure of higher education requires a strong foundation of elementary education. It is the means to develop the social competency of an individual to fulfill his individual needs living in a society. In a developing country like India, elementary education is regarded as the stepping to national educational Superstructure. Elementary education helps to increase and develops traits of democratic citizenship and to strengthen national integrity. So, in the context of establishment of democratic traditions, and values, it is necessary to give opportunity for literacy to all the children of school going age. The Directive principles of the Indian Constitution had laid down the provision for making available the opportunities for free and Compulsory elementary education within ten years of the adaptation of the constitution for all children between the age group of 6-14 years.

Assam is one of the backward state of India with 62. 45% of literacy according to census 2001 and 73. 18% of literacy according to census 2011. Among the different communities living in Assam, the tea garden communities are educationally lagging behind. It is admitted that literacy rate of these community is lower than other communities. It has been also observed that growth of primary education is poor in tea garden of Assam. The magnitude of wastage and stagnation of the primary education in case of their tea garden communities is be lived to the greater than others. Therefore, the burning problem of illiteracy cannot be solved without special attention to the tea garden communities.

Under the above circumstances the investigator has taken to study entitled “A scenario of primary education in Tea Garden Areas of Assam.” (Study based on Sibsagar District)

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The study has been conducted with the following objectives...

1. To study about the infra-structural facilities of primary education in the study area.
2. To know the attitude and role of parents, teachers and the tea authority/management towards primary education.
3. To find out the problems and causes related to slow progress of primary education in Tea garden areas.
4. To evolve remedial measures to solve the problems for the growth of primary education for the greater interest of the nation.

1.2. Significance

The study is significant from the following points of view:

1. As the tea garden people are less educated, in fact most of these are illiterate, so it is necessary to study about the primary education among the children of the tea garden.
2. No systematic major work specially on the problems of primary education among the tea garden children has been conducted so far in recent period, so this study is important as it will highlight the scenario of primary education in tea garden areas in the present time.
3. As the tea garden community is the part and parcel of the great Assamese society and Education is necessary for the development of a society. So it is important to study about the Primary education among the children of the tea community.

2. Field and Methodology

The field of the present study is based on four selected tea-gardens located in the district of Sivasagar, Assam. Methodology is one of the important part of social research. It is the most systematic and logical of the principles which lead scientific investigation.

Universe of the study:

The universe of the present study is some of the tea gardens of Sivasagar District of Assam. The researcher has selected four tea gardens randomly from the district. These gardens are Amgoori tea garden, Dubba Tea estate, Doomur Dullung Tea estate, Rajabari Tea Estate, Mutturapur tea estate etc. Therefore L. P. schools from these tea gardens have been chosen for the study.

Selection of the Sample

In the present study Random sampling procedure has been adopted for the selection of sample from population. The Random Sampling method has been used for the study. The researcher has adopted lottery method to select the sample.

2.1. Tools of Data Collection:

The data for the study has been collected from two sources-- Primary and Secondary.

To collect Primary data, the following two techniques have been applied.

- 1) Interview Schedule
- 2) Observation Method

The Secondary data has been collected from various sources, such as Census report, Journals, articles, official record and also from the Tea garden authority.

Interview guide also have been prepared to collect Secondary data.

3. Organization and Discussion

3.1. Infrastructural Facilities in the Schools

The infrastructural facilities are one of the important aspects in the education system. Infrastructural facilities such as adequate building, Playground, Urinal/toilet, drinking water facilities, electricity, teaching aid, sufficient number of desks and benches are very necessary for proper environment of education in the educational institutions. In this regard the researcher has enquired about the available infrastructural facilities in the schools under study area.

From the study it is found that 66.66% Schools have no proper common room for headmaster and teachers. 60% schools have no Urinals/ Toilets for the students. 73.33% schools do not have electricity connection. 66.66% schools do not have fencing in the school campus, 60% schools have no adequate teaching aids and 66% schools do not have sufficient number of desk and benches for the students. These are the major infrastructural problems of the schools. On the other hand, it was found that from the construction point of view, the buildings are in all the schools are satisfactory. All the above sample tea garden L. P. Schools have pucca buildings. But schools are not hygienic. There are problems of door and windows, partition wall, Urinal and toilet, electricity facility and ceiling fan etc. in tea garden primary schools.

3.2. Playground

Playground and co-curricular activities play a major role in the educational process of the children of L. P. schools for the lack of which pupils have to suffer indirectly to a great extent. Playing the main process both for the mental and physical development of the children. Teacher can teach the students about discipline, unity, friendship, good manners, morality etc. through the medium of play and other co-curricular activities. These became the means of interest to school for the young children. But the investigator finds that 40% garden L. P. schools have no playground.

3.3. Method of Teaching

Success of education mostly depends upon the method applied in teaching the students. About 50 percent schools use lecture method as main method of teaching. Though play way method is most suitable for primary education but it is observed that 50% Teachers only used the play way method. Of course, SSA training now has been given in every teacher but it is not properly followed in the tea garden areas schools under study area.

3.4. Necessary Funds not Available

From the interview with the Headmasters in all the sample schools it has been found that some of the sample schools received grants from the Government or from the Tea-garden management and authority. But some of the schools are not getting the required money

for purchasing the necessary equipment for the school. So they want more financial support either from the Government or from the Tea-garden management and authority.

3.5. Difference in Language Spoken at Home and at School

Language is a vehicle of human expression. It is related to the inner impulses of man. Every class, group community or people of a region have a particular affirmation with their language. The tea garden labourers speak their dialects at home and at all the situation where the people from same community gather. Tea tribes use a common language known as 'Sadri' as lingua- Franca.

But the medium of instruction in most of the tea garden L. P. schools are Assamese. Therefore, all the students of this community have to learn the medium of instruction first to get knowledge about the curriculum of primary level.

3.6. Social Environment

The illiterate parents cannot realize the value of education. The study discloses that the social atmosphere in tea garden area is not at all suitable for education. Majority parents are illiterate. All of them pass their free time sitting before TV, hearing tape recorder, radio etc. and taking alcohol. All these activities create only disturbances for the learner. Either there is any club for passing the leisure time in a good way by reading or neither playing or they are interested also for this. Maximum tea garden labourers are spoiling their money. Since the atmosphere in the society as a whole is not congenial for education, the few parents and their children also suffer who are conscious for educational progress.

3.7. Ignorance and Lack of Awareness of the Parents (tea garden labour) towards Education

An uneducated guardian does not realize the worth of education and they cannot make sacrifice for the education of his/her children. Therefore, the guardian should be made aware of the importance of education in order to develop a desire to educate his/her children. The study reveals that among the labourers of the tea garden only 30% are conscious for education. The remaining 70% tea garden labourers are not at all conscious about the education of their children and are quite ignorant of the importance of education. Their duty is finished in giving admission only and never shows interest for providing the necessary reading and writing materials, school dresses, home tutor etc. They do not have any high ambition for a better life. Today the age is very much competitive. Nobody can survive without education. The courses in schools, colleges are also becoming more advanced day by day. But due to lack of awareness and education these labourers are less conscious towards education of their children.

3.8. Addiction of Alcohol among the Labourers

Many people live in a very bad environment which is not hygienic and sound for living. Therefore, a large number of students have little facilities to read at home. Their parents don't realize the value of education. They have no tradition of learning in their families. On many occasions they have to do excessive domestic work and as a result that they have no time to guide properly their children at home.

Socio-economic condition of the tea garden labourers is not congenial. Their living standards are very below standard. Most of them are of ill health. So they became the victim of various types of epidemic diseases. They are ignorant about the modern development of science and technology and they live in midst of various types of superstition, prejudices etc. Thus most of the labourers do not understand the need of education to their own children. Again some of them do not provide their children necessary reading equipments such as paper, pencil, books etc.

From the study the investigator has found that 85% labourers are addicted to alcohol. The average income of a tea garden labourer is Rs. 1200 per month except free ration, fire wood, bonus etc. Again both husband and wife work in the tea garden. So, they can give minimum facilities for education to their children and attention for the welfare of their family. They remain addicted to drinking they cannot take interest for education of their children. They spoil the educational atmosphere at home. This habit of taking alcohol in excess quantity by the tea garden labourers hampers the educational progress of the children in primary level.

3.9. Presence of Child Labour

Another unique characteristic of the area under study is the presence of child labour. As the tea garden labourers are not interested for the education of their children. On the other hand, they are economically very poor, so they drop their children from the school as soon as they find difficulties for supplying the necessary materials for education of their children because of their own faults. They are lavishly spending the money, borrowing money in very higher rates of interest, taking alcohol in excess quantity and also involve in gambling, absenteeism in service etc. This hampers the endeavour of progress of universalization of Primary education.

3.10. Role and Attitude of the Tea garden management

In developing the primary education in the tea garden areas it is necessary to play a vital role by the tea garden management. In this respect the researcher has enquired about the role and attitude of the tea garden management. The researcher found that more than 60% tea authority is not so concerned about the education of the children of the tea garden labourers. Though some facilities have been provided by some of the tea authorities but the percentage is not encouraging. From the observation it is found that 37.5% tea authority have been provided facilities and another 62.5% authority do not provide any facilities to the children of the tea garden labourers for their children's education.

3.11. Problems of Enforcing Compulsory Primary Education Act.

Although the compulsory primary education act has been passed, yet it has not been properly enforced.

The attendance activities i. e. the teachers must be made to work vigorously for the enforcement of the Act. They should enlist the co-operation of elected representatives or influential people in the area for the enrolment of children. Parents who willingly do not send their children to school should be finding out as provided in the Act.

3.12. Absence of Adult Education

Adult education is a powerful auxiliary and an essential incentive to primary education. No programme of compulsory education of children can succeed without the active support and co-operation of adults. Regarding necessity of adult education Prof. Humayun Kabir has correctly remarked, "A state may pass a law making education compulsory but unless the people accept such laws, no state can enforce them by military or police."

But absence of adult education among the tea garden labourers has some impact on the slow progress of primary education among the children of garden labourers. The importance of adult education is tremendous. According to Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao "without adult education and adult literacy, it is not possible to have that range and speed of economic and social development." The illiterates can receive education with the help of adult education programme. "The programme of adult education can develop the interest of parents towards education and they encourage their children to attend class regularly. This will lesson wastage and stagnation in primary education." But due to absence of the programme of adult education nothing is possible among the tea garden labourers and their children.

3.13. Difference in Language Spoken at Home and at School

Language is a vehicle of human expression. It is related to the inner impulses of man. Every class, group community or people of a region have a particular affirmation with their language. The tea garden labourers speaks their dialects at home and at all the situation where the people from same community gather. Tea tribes use a common language known as 'Sadri' as lingua- Franca. But the medium of instruction in most of the tea garden L. P. schools are Assamese. Therefore, all the students of this community have to learn the medium of instruction first to get knowledge about the curriculum of primary level

3.14. Major Findings from Study

- i. Regarding the infrastructural facilities, it is found that. There are problems of door and windows, partition wall, Urinal and toilet, electricity facility and ceiling fan etc. in tea garden primary schools.
- ii. From the study it was found that 66.66% garden L. P. schools do not have sufficient number of desk- benches for the students
- iii. It was found that due to the implementation of SSA programme all the parents send their children to the school.
- iv. From the study it was seen that as the tea areas do not have a proper environment of education so, the teachers are also not taking more initiatives in developing the scenario of the Primary education
- v. Though play way method is most suitable for primary education but it is observed that 50% Teachers only used the play way method
- vi. The investigator found from the study that 40%. garden L. P. schools have no playground. Again 40% schools have no provision for co-curricular activities viz. games and sports, singing and dancing etc.
- vii. It has been found that some of the sample schools received grants from the Government or 62.5% tea authority did not provide any help to the children of the tea garden labourers
- viii. From the study it was found that language is the main problem of the tea garden children of L. P. schools because the study revealed that the Tea tribes use a common language known as 'Sadri' as lingua- Franca. But the medium of instruction in most of the tea garden L. P. schools are Assamese. So, it is the main problem.
- ix. Regarding home environment it was found that 85% labourers are addicted to alcohol. Regarding child labour it was seen that due to economic condition 50% parents engaged their children to earn money. It is the problem of tea garden children
- x. X. Most of the parents are not aware about the children's education.
- xi. It was also observed that though child labour is prohibited but due to their economic condition 50% parents engaged their children to earn money. It is a remarkable point in this aspect
- xii. The study revealed that all the parents opined that they are willing to complete their children's education. But they have not practically applied it.
- xiii. They study shows that most of the Headmasters i. e. 86.87% opined that the parents are not aware about their children's education.
- xiv. In case of the opinion of the teachers regarding parent's interest it was found that 30% parents are only interested for the education of their children and remaining 70% are not found interested for the education of their children.
- xv. Regarding the attitude and role of the tea authority it was found that more than 60% tea authority is not so concerned about the education of the children of the tea garden labourers.

3.15. Suggested Remedial Measures

From the above study it is clear that the development of primary education among the children of tea garden labourers is very poor and it is because of the various factors. Those problems are serious in nature and needs immediate attention and action from all quarters like Department of elementary education. Department of school inspectors, teachers, tea garden authority/ management etc. These

problems will go on aggravating, if proper treatment is not done in time. In that case the worst suffers will be the little children who are the future of the nation and the dream of total literacy will never come true. Hence the following remedial measures are suggested for implementation as early as possible to eradicate illiteracy and to accurate the speed of development of primary education.

- i. The garden authority should organize awareness Programme among the garden labourers to aware them in all aspects.
- ii. The govt should make special programmes for the development of these unprivileged sections of the Society.
- iii. Parents should be given adult education to reduce illiteracy. Establishment of adequate number of Adult Education Centre in the tea garden areas is suggested.
- iv. All the schools must have playground for the all-round development of the school children.
- v. All the necessary materials and instruments for co-curricular activities must be supplied by the Government or the tea garden authority or management. These co-curricular activities must be included in the class routine and regular practices with teachers' full involvement must be ensured.
- vi. The shortage of school building must be removed either from the Government or from the tea garden management and arrangements have to be made for providing partition wall or separate classroom for separate class in all the schools.
- vii. Necessary steps should be taken to supply teaching aids and learning materials, the tea garden authority and management should provide the necessary help in this regard.
- viii. Educated boys and girls from the tea garden communities should be appointed in garden L. P. school to minimize linguistic difficulties.
- ix. Adequate socialization process has to be adopted and means of communications should be improved to break the social isolation of the tea garden management.
- x. There should be provision for co-curricular activities in garden L. P. schools. Teachers should try to involve all the students in different types of co-curricular activities. This will help in creating interest to school, increate enrolment and help in the retention of student at large.

4. Conclusion

The findings stated above suggest that as the primary education in the tea garden area is not satisfactory and there are lot of problems behind the slow growth of the primary education in the tea garden areas of Assam, so remedial measures should be taken up by all sections of the society to develop the scenario of primary education in the tea garden areas of Assam.

This study cannot be generalized for all tea garden areas. So more research on the Problems of primary education in various areas is needed to verify the findings.

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