



# **Socio-Economic Status and Level of Self-Esteem of the dropout students of Tea Tribe Community, special reference to Dharia – Dighalia Gaon Panchayat of Tengakhat Development Block, Dibrugarh, Assam.**

**Probin Topno**

**Ph.D., Research Scholar**

**Assam University, Silchar- 788011**

**&**

**Prof. Gangabhusan M, Molankal**

**Department of Social Work**

**Assam University, Silchar – 788011**

## **Abstract:**

Education has become a basic need of human beings today. As per the Act, 2009 Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education, all the children aged between six to fourteen years have the right to get free education. But due to unavoidable circumstances from the parents' end, many children have to remain out of school or drop out. There are pull and push factors that compel the children to remain out of school.

Tea garden colonies of Assam have been facing the problem of school dropouts for years. Various efforts have been made by the management, government, and civil society organizations to minimize this issue, despite all efforts, a huge number of children found school dropouts in many tea gardens. There are various factors contributing to the problem such as socio-economic status, lack of favorable environment for studies, cultural factors, etc.

In this study, an attempt has been made to measure the socio-economic status of parents and correlate school dropout and self-esteem of school dropout children to find out the psychological barrier associated with the issue. In this research, various possible social work interventions are put forth to overcome the problem of school dropouts among the Tea Garden Communities in Assam.

**Key Words:** Tea Tribe Communities, Socioeconomic Status, school dropouts, Self-esteem.

***Introduction:***

Formal education has become a mandate for people in acquiring knowledge, making self-discipline, acquire skills & techniques for life. The system of education differs from nation to nation based on their education policy. Pre-schooling or formal education starts at the earliest year of a child's life. In the initial stage, children are expected to develop cognitive, emotional, physical, and social skills. Pre-school is designed to nurture children just outside the parental child-rearing care. Soon after this stage children are led into the formal primary education system.

At the early stage of schooling, both parents and children dream or visualize life after education. Small kids are taught to dream or have an aim in life. Same is also trained at the school but this visualization gradually deteriorates as they ladder up to higher standards. Children quit their education without completing the formal education for which they have enrolled. This is a common phenomenon seen everywhere in the country. A study was done on understanding why students Dropout in High School, according to their Reports: Are they Pushed or Pulled, or Do they fall out? A comparative analysis of seven nationally representative studies by Jonathan Jacob Doll, Zohreh Eslami, and Lynne Walters has stated in their findings, that both pull and push factors determine a child's school dropout. The pull factors are mostly personal and family issues that led the students to drop out and push factors could be due to a lack of affability toward teachers and their peers (Jonathan Jacob Doll, 2013). Another research is done on the Causes of School Dropouts at the Secondary Level in the Barani Areas of Punjab (A Case Study of Rawalpindi District) presents that social and economic causes for boys are the early dropouts from school, the other causes are lack of proper attention of parents and peer pressures influences school dropouts (Abdul Qayyum Mohsin, 2004). To retain a student till the completion of education various factors play a vital role such as educational institutions, family, the attitude of the students towards education, social environment, etc.

***Tea Garden & School Dropouts:***

Tea plantation companies have employed a huge number of laborers. These laborers are being managed as per the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. Among the communities, it is found massive numbers of students get dropouts before they complete their formal education. A study conducted on Problems of Primary Education among the Tea Tribe Students in Assam: with special reference to the Dhekiajuli Sub-Division

found that most of the children find difficulties in enduring higher education standards due to the problem of language (Dr. Moyuri Sarma, 2020). Linguistic challenges often become a hindrance to higher standards and lead them to drop out. The community speaks a language that is not allied to the local dialect therefore, it becomes harder for the children to grasp the dialect easily. Parental involvement in education is poor among the tea garden communities. A study on Parental Involvement in Academic of Children in Tea Communities of Assam displays that parents are more involved with lower primary class children than second class children. The researcher also has led to the conclusion that the parents find it easier to be involved with lower primary class children than the secondary class children (Poppy Gogoi, 2020). Gradually, when the children do not get attention from parents, interest in education disappears and leads them to dropouts. Within the tea garden areas, many more factors are visibly associated with school dropouts such as social, economic, peers pressure, social environment, lack of support from family or parents, etc. A study conducted in Tea Garden Schools in the Bokakhat Sub-Division of Golaghat District of Assam presents that, with the introduction of Sarba Shiksha Abhijan there is an improvement in the facilities of schools in the Tea Garden areas. The study also points out there are several facilities still lacking to cater to the need of the students (Ghatowar, 2015). Formal education can be acquired with balanced support from parents and the educational institution. The rhythm of education collapse if any of these institutions fails in providing backup. The same is the case in Tea Garden communities, the rate of school dropouts is higher either due to a lack of support from family or educational institutions.

These are various factors that lead to dropouts. In this study, the researcher has tried to find out the socio-economic status and the level of self-esteem of the students' dropouts to establish the phenomena. It is a fact that socio-economic condition is one of the factors that lead the students to dropouts', similarly self-esteem often leads the ongoing students into a devastated scenario.

### ***Methodology & Tools for data collection***

Descriptive design of quantitative approach is applied for the research. Samples were selected from the villages & tea gardens of Dharia-Dighalia Gaon Panchayat of Tengakhat Development Block in Dibrugarh District, Assam. Convenience sampling of Non-Probability Sampling Design was used for identifying the sample unit.

**Objectives of the Study:**

- To study the socio-economic status of the school dropout students as a factor for school dropout.
- To find out the level of self-esteem of the school dropout Tea Tribe students.
- To find out the possible social work intervention among the Tea Tribe communities to minimize the school dropout.

Tools for data collection, two standardized scales were used of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale & Udai Pareek's Socio-Economic Scale to measure the self-esteem and socioeconomic status of the respondents respectively.

**Analysis of the Data:**

Table 1  
Demographic Profile of the Respondents

<b>Particular</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequencies</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Age of the Respondents</i>	Early adolescence	26	40.6
	Adolescents	38	59.4
<i>Sex of the Respondents</i>	Male	45	70.3
	Female	19	29.7
<i>Type of family</i>	Nuclear Family	53	82.8
	Joint Family	11	17.2
<i>Education Qualification</i>	Dropout at class 7	49	76.6
	Dropout at class 8	12	18.8
	Dropout at class 9	1	1.6
	Dropout at class 10	2	3.1
<i>Social Group of the Respondents</i>	Oraon	55	85.9
	Munda	5	7.8
	Khariya	1	1.6
	Santhal	2	3.1
	Oriya	1	1.6
<i>The religion of the Respondents</i>	Hindu	27	42.2
	Christian	34	53.1
	Buddhist	3	4.7

The above Table represents the age of the respondents. The youngest respondent was 12 years and the oldest respondent was 16 years. The respondents were categorized into two categories as early adolescence and adolescents. The table shows that the majority of the respondent belonged to the adolescent age group. Thus, we can say that the findings of this research are dominated by the opinions of the adolescent age group.

It is seen from the demographic profile of the respondents that the majority (70.3 percent) of the respondents are male while only 29.7 percent are female respondents. This presentation proves that the finding of this research is influenced by the opinions of the male section of the respondents.

It is found that the majority (82.8 percent) of the respondents belong to the nuclear family while only 17.2 percent of the respondents were from joint families. It was observed during the data collection that most of the respondents liked to live in independent families. Among the tea garden community, it is seen, that only one or two members usually take up the occupation of their parents i.e., the permanent post in the company, and the rest would either search for a new job or work as a temporary worker within the tea garden. Only the permanent job holders can retain the company quarters, therefore, at least one of the siblings engages himself/herself in tea garden work.

From the analysis, it can be interpreted that the majority (76.6 percent) of the respondents are dropouts at the seventh standard and only 3.1 percent were at the 10th standard. This indicates that the students who are from the age of 12 to 16 years have dropout from the 7<sup>th</sup> standard to the 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

The data analysis presents the social groups that participated in the research. The Oraon community is dominantly felt among the respondents in this research. Thus, the finding of this research with regards to the socio-economic status and family environment is more from the perspective of the Oraon community. The family characteristics of the respondents from the Kharia community are least represented.

From the analysis, it is found that the majority of the respondents were Christians followed by 42.2 percent of Hinduism. Only 4.7 percent are followers of Buddhism. It is to be concluded that the major religions followed by the Tea Garden Community living in Borbarua Tea Estate are Christianity.

Table 2  
Socio-Economic Status of the Respondents

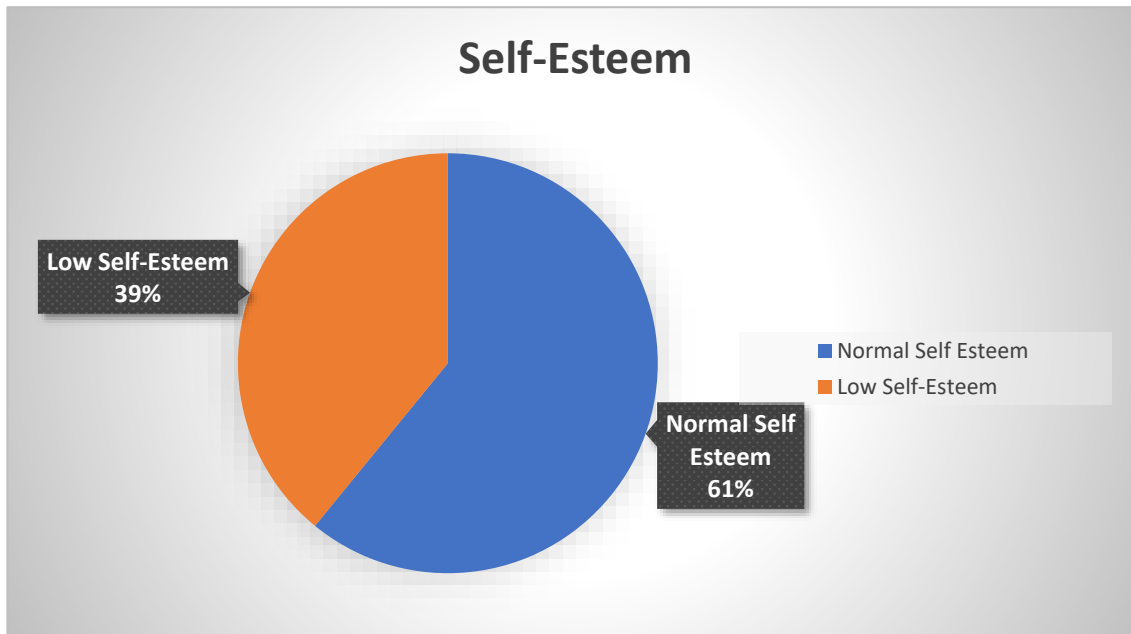
<i>Response</i>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Middle Class</i> (Scored between 24 – 32)	3	4.7
<i>Lower Middle Class</i> (Scored between 13 – 23)	61	95.3
<i>Total</i>	<b>64</b>	<b>100</b>

The socio-economic status of the respondents was measured using the Udai Pareek SES scale. The Udai Pareek scale categorized socio-economic status into grades A, B, C, D, & E i.e., Upper class, Upper middle class, Middle class, Lower middle class & Lower class respectively. The majority of the respondents were found in the category of Lower Middle-Class socio-economic status (95.3 percent). Only 4.7 percent of respondents' families were found to be placed in the Middle-class socioeconomic category. Within the research area among the tea tribe community upper class and upper-middle-class families are not found. As per the Udai Pareek Scale, Middle-Class & Lower-Middle-Class families are graded into C & D categories respectively.

All the respondents' parents are directly or indirectly involved in the tea gardens for their survival. Though both of their parents are involved in earning, their income is not sufficient to support their children for higher education. Adolescent age is fit for generating income for the family is the common understanding among the community members. Continuation of education is given the least importance in the tea garden areas. Since the tea garden is an organized sector that doesn't allow children to get involved in work, often parents opt unorganized sector for their children to earn livelihood for the family. Education of girl child is low among the tea tribe community as compared to boys mentioned in one of the studies conducted on girl child education among tea tribe: a case study of Rajgarh Tea Estate in Dibrugarh District of Assam. The study also highlights that marriage is the main cause of girl children dropping out, followed by parents' economic condition and lack of a favorable social environment (Diganta Kr. Gogoi, 2014). It is found often early marriage happens only due to the poor economic conditions of the parents. A study conducted on the impact of child marriage: A study in Ohat Tea Garden, Lakhimpur Assam defines, early marriages are forced by parents for their extreme poverty (Mudoi, 2020). So, these are the major social issues that linger around the socio-economic conditions of an individual. 60.8 percent of tea tribes were compelled to send their children to earn due to their poverty found in one of the research projects done in Kaliabor, Nagaon, and Assam (Saikia, 2017). When a child indulges in earning for the family, his/her career or education becomes secondary. This often happens with the tea tribe community in the tea gardens or villages.

Therefore, inferences can be drawn from the data, the socio-economic status of the parents often stands as a major factor contributing to school dropouts in the tea garden community.

Pie Diagram 1  
Level of Self-Esteem of the Respondents



Pie Diagram 1 represents the level of self-esteem of the respondents. The level of self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg self-esteem scale. From the analysis, it is found that the majority of the respondents have normal self-esteem i.e., 61 percent and 39 percent of respondents have low self-esteem.

Having low self-esteem among the tea tribe community is commonly seen. This is mostly perceived among the tribal linkage communities of the tea tribe community, the same is not found among the caste groups living in the tea garden areas. The Tea Tribe community is a mixture of the various tribes and caste groups brought as indentured laborers to work in the tea estates of Assam. The conclusion can be drawn from the analysis, though the majority of the respondents fall within the category of having normal self-esteem, a good number of the respondents have even had low self-esteem. So, having low self-esteem also is one of the factors leading to school dropout among the tea tribe students.

#### ***Findings & Possible Social Work Intervention:***

It is found in the research the majority of the respondents are from lower-middle-class families. This category of people just lives hand to mouth. They don't even have sufficient savings to have a standard of life. On the other hand, more than one-third of people are having low self-esteem and less than two-thirds of people are having normal self-esteem. Having low self-esteem among the tea tribe students is common which doesn't reflect as they grow up.

School dropout among the early or late adolescents is common among the tea tribe community. In this research, we have found most of the students are having economic constraints to pursue their education. It is observed among adolescents, that psycho-social problem often holds them back in continuing their education. In such a situation method of **Social Case Work**, intervention can help the individuals to cope with the psycho-social problem. Special attention should be given to the students having problems coping with the school environment. At the high school level when students start competing with other communities, often find it difficult due to various reasons such as language, family, and social environment issues which leads them to an inferiority complex. At this juncture, they need strong psychological support through counseling and other interventions. When such groups are found to have similar psycho-social problems in the schools, the Method of **Social Group Work** can be applied to sort out their problem.

As found in the research lack of economic constraints encourages parents not to send their children to schools instead, they encourage their children to get engaged in earning. Greater awareness is required among the parents to assist their children to continue their education & provide enough support so, they don't drop out of school. The whole process can be handled with the Method of **Community Organization** and **Social Action**. Through the Method of community organization needs assessment can be done using the tools such as PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal). Gradually prioritizing the need for education, various interventions strategies can be planned.

In tea garden areas often, managements give the least importance to education, in such situation with the help of civil society organizations demands can be made to fulfill the education need of the people.

### **Conclusion:**

In this research, it is found the majority of the respondents fall in the category of lower-middle-class socioeconomic status. Lower-middle-class families just live hand to mouth. They hardly have any savings for the future. In these circumstances, most the parents indulge all the family members in earning for their survival. Other needs of life never become their priority in life. People have adapted to survive in such an environment with little for centuries. Therefore, the least importance is given assuming life skills & other forms of education for survival. Other forms of social evil always linger around their life viz. indebtedness, superstitious beliefs, child marriage, child trafficking, child labor, etc.



Due to poor socio-economic status feeling of hopelessness among the youth is commonly found. They never dream of excellence; they have margined their thought and action within the periphery of tea gardens. Though from this research majority of the respondents have normal self-esteem but a sizable number of them have low self-esteem.

## Bibliography

- Abdul Qayyum Mohsin, M. A. (2004). Cause of School Dropouts at the Secondary Level in the Barani Areas of Punjab (A Case Study of Rawalpindi District). *Journal of Applied Sciences*, 155-158.
- Diganta Kr. Gogoi, M. H. (2014). Girl Child Education among Tea Tribes: A case Study of Rajgarh Tea Estate of Dibrugarh District of Assam. *Vidyawarta: Interdisciplinary Multilingual Referred Journal* , 0141 - 0147.
- Dr. Moyuri Sarma, M. M. (2020). Problems of Primary Education among the Tea Tribe students in Assam: with Special Reference to Dhekiajuli Sub-Division. *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology*, 4473 - 4486.
- Ghatowar, N. K. (2015). A Study of Facilities in Tea Garden Schools in the Bokakhat Sub-Division of Golaghat District of Assam. *Periodic Research: Multi-disciplinary Peer Reviewed International Research Journal*, 126 - 133.
- Jonathan Jacob Doll, Z. E. (2013). Understanding Why Students Dropout go High School, According to Their Own Reports: Are they Pushed or Pulled or Do They Fall Out? Comparative Analysis of Seven Nationally Representative Studies. *SAGE Open*, 1-15.
- Mudoj, H. (2020). Impact of Child Marriage: A Study in What Tea Garden, Lakhimpur, Assam. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 2161 - 2163.
- Poppy Gogoi, T. B. (2020). Parental Involvement in Academic Activities of Children in Tea Communities of Assam. *International Journal of Bio-resource and Stress Management*, 206 - 213.
- Saikia, P. (2017). Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on Child Labour among Tea Tribes of Assam with Special Reference to Kaliabor Sub Division, Nagaon District. *International Journal of Economics and Management Strategy*, 1-17.