



# School Dropouts Among The Tea Tribe Community In Sivasagar And Jorhat Districts Of Assam (2002-2022)

**Dr. Bidyananda Borkakoty**

**Associate Professor**

**Department of Education**

**Gargaon College**

## **Abstract:**

The tea tribe community constitutes a sizable population of Assam. Although large financial investments have been made for socio-economic and educational development of this community, their progress in these spheres remains disdainfully low as compared to other communities of Assam. Despite various welfare schemes, yet there is less development in the educational status of the children of tea tribe community. The present study is an attempt to analyse school dropout among the children of the tea tribe community at the secondary level of education in Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam (2002-2022). The objectives of the present study are -to examine the extent of the dropout at the secondary level of education among the children of the tea tribe community at the secondary level in Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam and to identify the various causes of dropout among the children of the tea tribe community of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam. Descriptive survey method was employed. Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect data. Multistage stratified sampling technique was used for selection of sample. Cohort method was used to identify the rate of dropout. The data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively using well established statistical techniques. It was found that the causes of dropout among the children of the tea tribe community are- academic causes, economic causes, social causes and miscellaneous causes. It is suggested that Government should provide proper educational facilities and well planned welfare schemes to the children of the tea tribe community

**Keywords:** Dropouts, Tea Tribe Community, Cohort method

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is considered as a pivotal instrument in the process of development. Secondary education occupies a significant role in the scheme of educational development of a country. Primary education provides the immediate basis for educational expansion whereas secondary education prepares students for advanced and higher learning. The tea tribe community constitutes a sizable population of Assam. Although large financial investments have been made for socio-economic and educational development of this community, their progress in these spheres remains disdainfully low as compared to other communities of Assam. School dropout is the most pervasive problem among the tea tribe community of Assam. Although official statistics shows that enrolment in schools is impressive, but the dropout rate among tea tribe

community is very high at the secondary education level in Assam. The solution to the dropout problem requires the serious attention of academicians, teachers, stakeholders and administrators alike.

## HISTORY OF TEA INDUSTRY IN ASSAM

It is generally believed that tea industry originated somewhere in South East Asia. In China, tea was known as a beverage for about 3000 years. Mr. Robert Bruce first discovered that the wild tea plant grows in the upper part of the Brahmaputra valley. In 1823, he came to Gargaon for trading purpose. He came to know the existence of tea plant from a Signpho chief who handed over some specimens to him. In the following year, he passed over these specimens to his brother Mr. C.A. Bruce who left England in 1809. By 1835, the Tea Committee of Calcutta confirmed that Assam tea was the true tea of trade and commerce and was identical with the tea of China. In 1837, Mr. C.A. Bruch, then 'Superintendent of the Government Tea Forests' convinced that Assam tea would be quite capable of competing with the tea of China. In 1838, the Bengal Tea Association, a private Tea Association was formed by a few European and Indian capitalists with a view to promote the tea culture and manufacture Assam. In 1839, the Assam Tea Company was formed in England. The Bengal Tea Association merged itself within a year with the Assam Company.

At present, Assam is the largest tea producing state of India. Tea is produced in large quantities in various districts of Assam. There are a number of welfare schemes provided by the government and Tea Board of India in the form of various welfare schemes such as scholarship, extension of school buildings, hostel accommodation, book grants etc. In spite of so many welfare schemes, the tea tribe community continues to be one of the unprivileged communities of Assam. Despite various welfare schemes, yet there is less development in the educational status of the children of tea tribe community. It becomes necessary to identify the causes of school dropout in secondary level of education among the children of tea tribe community of Assam. Keeping these facts in view, the present study is an attempt to analyse school dropout among the children of the tea tribe community in Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam (2002-2022).

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Balagopalan and Subrahmanian (2003)** identified the causes of dropout of adivasi children like verbal abuse from teachers and the low quality of educational provision for adivasi children.

**Hunter and May (2003)** found that youths from single-parent families, poor families and children of poorly educated parents were more likely to drop out.

**Liu, F. (2004)** identified that majority of parents were indifferent regarding their children dropping out from school.

**Sedwal and Kamat (2008)** found that economic disadvantage, poor infrastructure of schools with under-trained teachers and a number of reasons are responsible for dropout problem of children from scheduled caste or tribe groups.

**Sarma and Rabha (2020)** investigated the educational problems of the primary schools of tea garden areas and found that linguistic difficulties is responsible to poor academic progress of little children. There is also no availability of Adult Education Centre in the study area. There is no Adult Education Centre in the area of the surveyed tea gardens

**Sahu and Bhuyan (2022)** analysed the educational status as well as problems of the children of the tea-tribal community such as financial problems, lack of sexual education, early marriage of girl child, involving somewhere as child labour and negative attitude of parents towards education.

## OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of the present study are-

1. To examine the extent of the dropout at the secondary level of education among the children of the tea tribe community of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam.
2. To compare the dropout rates of the children of the tea tribe community studied in urban and rural schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam.
3. To identify the various causes of dropout among the children of the tea tribe community of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam.
4. To suggest appropriate remedial measures for reducing the rate of dropouts.

## METHODOLOGY

For this study, descriptive survey method was employed. Both primary and secondary sources were used to collect data. Primary data was collected with the help of information sheets, schedules and interview. The secondary schools of both the Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts were considered as universe of the study. Multistage stratified sampling technique was used for selection of sample. In the first stage, one sub-division from each district was selected. From Jorhat District, Jorhat sub-division and from Sivasagar, Nazira sub-division was selected. In the second stage, schools from each sub-division were divided into two strata according to urban and rural area. Total 40 schools from two sub-divisions were selected and 50 dropouts and their parents were selected as sample of the study. Inquiry form- A was used to collect information relating to dropouts; Inquiry form-B was used to collect information from dropouts' parents. Schedule I was used for gathering information relating to the schools. Interview schedule for dropouts and parents was used as tools for data collection. Cohort method was used to identify the rate of dropout. The data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively using well established statistical techniques.

## FINDINGS

The present study was conducted with a view to obtain a clear picture of the dropout problem of the children of the tea tribe community at the secondary level of education in Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam from 2002-2022. The findings of the present study are as follows-

### A) Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) at the first phase cohort (i.e. 2002-2012) :

To compute dropout a cohort of 300 students were followed in 2002 and 330 students were followed in 2012. Table 1 and 2 shows the number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) out of the initial cohort followed.

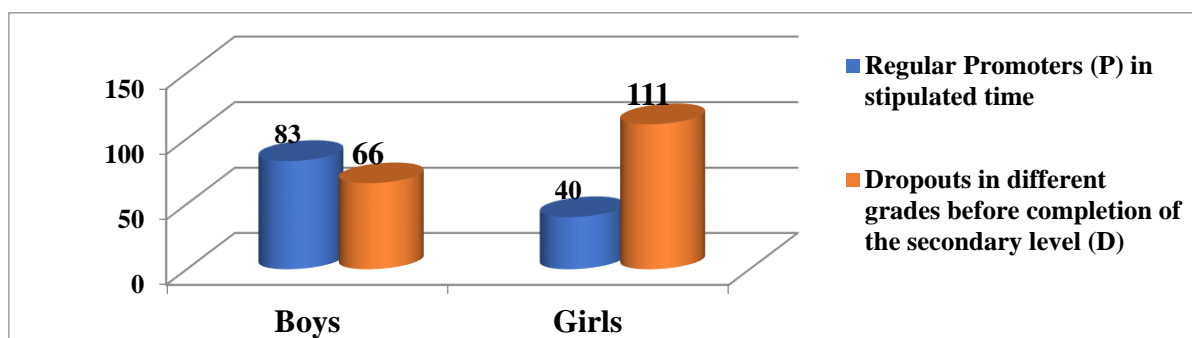
**TABLE 1**

### **Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the initial cohort (2002-2012)**

SL. No.	Category of Students	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Regular Promoters (P) in stipulated time	83	40	123
2	Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level (D)	66	111	177
Total		149	151	300

From the table 1, it is clear that at the initial cohort (i.e.2002-2012), Regular Promoters of boys (i.e.80) in stipulated time is higher than girl students (i.e. 40) and Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level is highest among girl students (i.e. 111) as compared to boys' students (i.e.66).

The Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the initial cohort (2002-2012) is shown in figure 1.



**Fig. 1: Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the initial cohort (2002-2012)**

From the figure 1, it is clear that, at the first phase cohort (2002-2022), out of 300 students 123 students were Regular Promoters (P) and 177 students were Dropouts (D) i.e. dropped out before completion of the secondary level.

### B) Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase cohort (2012-2022)

The Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase cohort i.e. 2012-2022 is shown in table 2.

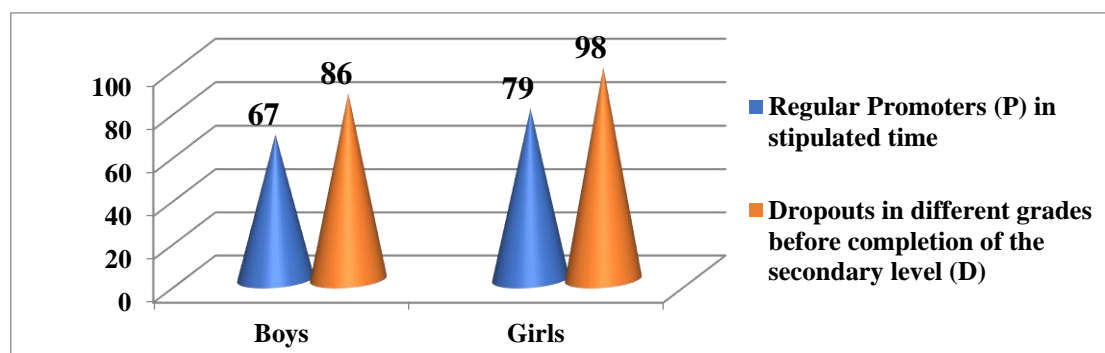
**TABLE 2**

#### Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase cohort (2012-2022)

SL. No.	Category of Students	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Regular Promoters (P) in stipulated time	67	79	146
2	Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level (D)	86	98	184
Total		153	177	330

From the table 2, it is clear that at the second phase cohort (2012-2022), Regular Promoters of boys (i.e.67) in stipulated time is less than girl students (i.e. 79) and Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level is highest among girl students (i.e. 98) as compared to boys' students (i.e.86).

The Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase cohort i.e. 2012-2022 is shown in figure 2.



**Fig. 2: Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase cohort (2012-2022)**

From figure 2, it is clear that at the second phase of cohort (2012-2022), out of 330 students 146 students were Regular Promoters (P) and 184 students were Dropouts (D) i.e. dropped out before completion of the secondary level.

### C) Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase cohort (2012-2022)

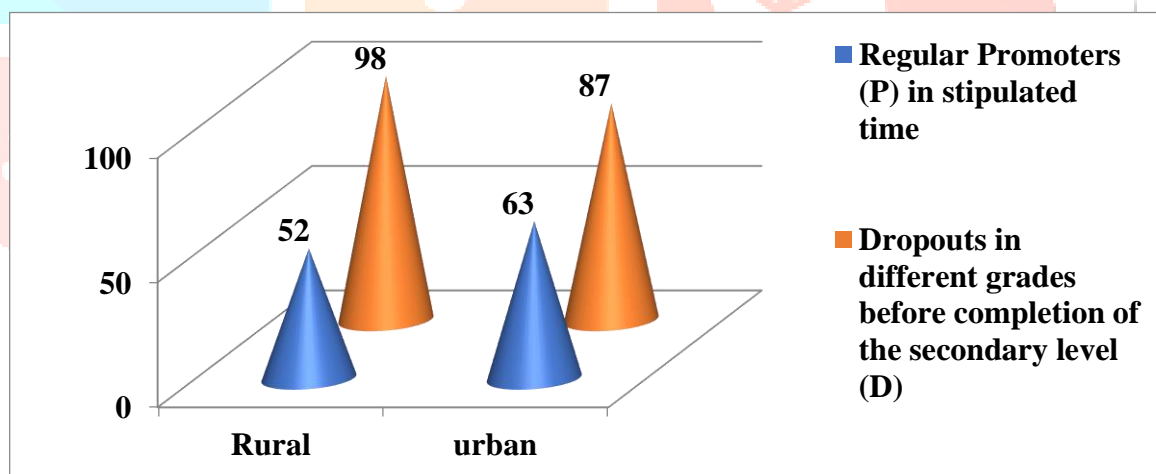
The number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) among the children of the tea tribe community studied in urban and rural schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam is shown in table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Cohort (2012-2022) in Urban and Rural Schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam**

SL. No.	Category of Students	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Regular Promoters (P) in stipulated time	52	71	123
2	Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level (D)	90	67	177
Total		142	138	300

From the table 3, it is clear that at the first phase cohort (2002-2012), Regular Promoters (P) in stipulated time among the students studied in urban schools (i.e.71) is greater than the students studied in rural schools (i.e.52) and Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level is highest among students studied in rural schools (i.e. 90) as compared to students studied in urban schools (i.e.67).

The Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the initial cohort (2012-2022) in urban and rural schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam is shown in figure 3.



**Fig. 3: Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Cohort (2012-2022) in Urban and Rural Schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam**

From the figure 3, it is clear that at the first phase cohort (2002-2012), out of 142 students studied in rural schools, 53 students were Regular Promoters (P) and 63 students were Dropouts (D) i.e. dropped out before completion of the secondary level. Out of 138 students, studied in urban schools, 71 students were Regular Promoters (P) and 67 students were Dropouts (D)

### D) Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) in the second phase (2012-2022)

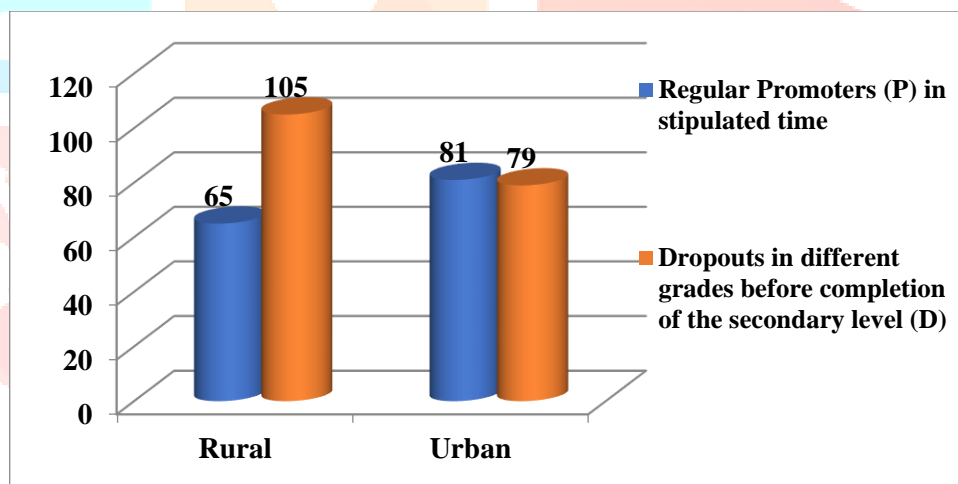
The number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) among the children of the tea tribe community studied in urban and rural schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam is shown in table 4.

**TABLE 4**  
**Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase (2012-2022) in Urban and Rural Schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam**

SL. No.	Category of Students	Rural	Urban	Total
1	Regular Promoters (P) in stipulated time	65	81	146
2	Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level (D)	105	79	184
Total		170	160	300

From the table 4, it is clear that at the second phase cohort (2012-2022), Regular Promoters (P) in stipulated time among the students studied in urban schools (i.e.81) is greater than the students studied in rural schools (i.e.65) and Dropouts in different grades before completion of the secondary level is highest among students studied in rural schools (i.e. 105) as compared to students studied in urban schools (i.e.79).

The Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) at the second phase cohort (2012-2022) in urban and rural schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam is shown in figure 4.



**Fig. 4: Number of Regular Promoters (P) and Dropouts (D) at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Cohort (2012-2022) in Urban and Rural Schools of Sivasagar and Jorhat Districts of Assam**

From figure 4, it is clear that at the second phase (2002-2012) out of 170 students studied in rural schools, 65 students were Regular Promoters (P) and 105 students were Dropouts (D) i.e. dropped out before completion of the secondary level. Out of 160 students, studied in urban schools, 81 students were Regular Promoters (P) and 79 students were Dropouts (D)

## E) CAUSES OF DROPOUT

It was found that the causes of dropout among the children of the tea tribe community are academic causes, economic causes, social causes and miscellaneous causes. Important causes are as follows-

1. Lack of interest in studies by the children of the tea tribe community.
2. Parents are not able to provide necessary study materials for continuing the studies of their children.
3. Due to poor economic condition, children are forced to work by their parents for increasing family income.
4. Home Environment is not suitable for continuing the study.
5. Socio-economic background of the children of tea tribe community is one of the significant causes for dropped out.
6. The children of the tea tribe community are devoid of basic physical facilities like housing facilities, toilet and drinking water at their homes which negatively influence their education.
7. Involvement of students specially girl students in domestic work.
8. Early marriage of girls of the tea tribe community.
9. Parents don't have favorable attitude towards the education of their children.
10. Due to linguistic problems, the children of the tea tribe community could not achieve good progress in school works.

## SUGGESTIONS

In the light of the above findings, the following suggestions can be made for reducing the dropout problem at the secondary level of education among the children of the tea tribe community.

- 1) Government as well as Non-governmental organizations (N.G.O) should organize awareness programme among tea tribe community to create awareness regarding the benefits of secondary and higher education.
- 2) Along with primary schools, secondary schools should also be established in tea garden areas so that children of the tea tribe community can continue their studies.
- 3) Most of the parents are addicted to alcohol. They remain addicted to drinking after their daily hard work which spoils the educational atmosphere at home. The Government and NGOs should create awareness among the tea tribe community regarding the bad effects of alcohol.
- 4) The teachers should have positive attitude towards the children of the tea tribe community so that it will motivate them to come to the school.
- 5) Most of the children from tea garden community are malnourished, undernourished, underfed and lack of good health. The Tea Garden Authority and the school should arrange regular medical checkup for the children of the tea tribe community
- 6) Teachers should used different innovative teaching techniques and methods, organise co-curricular activities to motivate the children of the tea tribe community.
- 7) Government should provide proper educational facilities and well planned welfare schemes to the children of the tea tribe community.
- 8) An adult literacy center should also be established in every tea garden.
- 9) The economic status of the tea tribe community is very low. Parents could not afford the study materials Government should provide sufficient study materials and teaching aids to all secondary schools.
- 10) The school should arrange various social activities by involving parents of the children of tea tribe community so that all parents are aware of their children's academic achievement.

## CONCLUSION

School dropout is the most pervasive problem at all levels of education. The present study reveals that the rate of dropout is very high among the children of the tea tribe community at the secondary level of education in Sivasagar and Jorhat District of Assam. Since the tea tribe community is an important segment of the population of Assam, their upliftment regarding socio-economic and educational status is very urgent and desirable for the prosperity of the tea industry at large and overall progress of the Assamese population. The study reveals that most of the children from tea tribe community cannot continue education because of the various factors like poverty of the family, illiteracy of the parents, lack of awareness, early marriage of girl child etc. From the heart-to heart talk with the parents and dropouts it is clear that they are not optimistic to employment opportunities after completion of the secondary level of education.

To conclude, considering the urgent need of reducing dropout rate of the children of tea tribe community at the secondary level of education, it is hoped that the present study will be considered useful for carrying out further research investigations in the same field and also for the development of educational status of the tea tribe community of Assam.

## REFERENCES

1. Balagopalan, S. and Subrahmanian, R. (2003). Neither suited for the home nor for the fields: inclusion, formal schooling and the Adivasi child, *IDS Bulletin*, 34(1).pp. 55-62
2. Hunter, H. and May, J. (2003). Poverty, Shocks and School Disruption Episodes among Adolescents in South Africa. *CSDS Working Paper*, No. 35.
3. Liu, F. (2004). Basic education in China's rural areas: a legal obligation or an individual choice? *International Journal of Educational Development*. 24: pp. 5-21
4. Sahu, E., Bhuyan, S. (2022). A study on the Educational Status of Tea-Tribe Community in Assam, *Journal of Positive School Psychology*. Vol. 6 (2).pp. 5385 – 5389
5. Sarma, M. and Rabha, 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*, Vol. 29(9s), 4473 - 4486. Retrieved from <http://sersc.org/journals/index.php/IJAST/article/view/16930>
6. Sedwal, M. and Kamat, S. (2008). Education and Social Equity: With a Special Focus on Dalits and Adivasis in Elementary Education. *CREATE Pathways to Access Series No. 19*.