

REPORT ON
Socio-Economic Development of the Tea Tribes of Assam-
An Evaluation

CONDUCTED BY
ASSAM INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH FOR TRIBALS AND SCHEDULED
CASTES, GUWAHATI

CHAPTER – I

Introduction:

The tea community in Assam forms an important segment of the greater Assamese society. They have a long association with the state when the first group of people of different communities were brought to Assam to work as labourers in the tea gardens. The first commercial production of tea started in the year 1835 with the establishment of the Chabua Tea garden in Dibrugarh district of Assam. Over the next few years, tea cultivation started to be taken up in the different areas of Upper Assam and as such the demand for labours increased. According to different scholars, the first group of tea labourers were recruited by the East India Company in 1841 to work in the tea plantations of Assam . They consisted mostly of tribal and other backward Hindu Caste groups from the regions of Chotanagpur. Over the decades labours from other parts of India like Bihar and Bengal were also brought to Assam. In early years they were brought through the riverine routes of the Brahmaputra and the Surma Valley. The history of their journey and arrival to Assam is filled with pathos. They were forcibly uprooted from their home and hearth and had to adjust to an alien land. After settling in a new environment, their misfortune did not end. In the gardens they led pathetic lives devoid of humanity and respect.

In the last 175 years the people belonging to the tea community have increased number fold. In Assam they account for around 20 percent of the total population of the state. The tea community is a conglomeration of a number of tribes and castes. According to scholars who have written an ethnographic report on the community, there are 96 ethnic groups who are listed ‘Tea Tribes’ in Assam. Of these, 36 are recognised as Scheduled tribes, 27 as Scheduled Castes and the rest as OBCs in other states of India. In Assam, these Tea Tribes are listed as OBC/MOBC.

The Tea community form the backbone of the tea industry. The famed Assam tea is a result of the toil and sweat of the tea community . There are around 1000 tea gardens in Assam spread over all the districts of Assam. The tea community is spread throughout the tea gardens in all the districts of Assam. Over

the years, many former tea workers and their offspring have settled in areas close to tea gardens. These areas have slowly grown into hamlets and villages.

The tea industry of Assam has been playing a crucial role in the Indian economy. Assam is the largest producer of tea in India. It is a labour intensified industry and highly dependent on a large workforce. The bulk of the population in the tea industry is formed by the womenfolk of the tea tribe community. The tea tribe community is regarded as one of the most backward and exploited tribes in India. They are faced by a number of problems like poor standard of living, lack of education or health facilities and prevalence of superstitious beliefs. Considering the poor socio-economic condition of the community, the Government of India has over the years, passed several acts for improving their condition. In Assam also, the government has taken up several schemes for their upliftment.

Several organisations concerned with the Tea industry in the state are also looking into issues involving the welfare of the tea workers. These organisations are:

- Indian Tea Association (ITA)
- Tea Association of India (TAI)
- Bharatiya Cha Parisad (BCP)
- Assam Tea Planters Association (ATPA)
- North Eastern Tea Association (NETA)
- Assam Cha Mazdur Sangha (ACMS)

The Welfare Department of the Tea Board of India takes up different activities for the welfare of the Tea workers. In this context, they take up different schemes under different heads. Some of the activities are Educational Stipend Scheme. Nehru Award provides a lump-sum grant. Under another scheme, financial assistance is given by the Board to educational institutions, hospital, health clinics, different Organisations working for welfare of tea workers and their families. (51ST ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005).

The Directorate of Welfare of Tea Garden and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes, Government of Assam, established in the year, 1983 for the welfare of the Tea Tribes Community has been implementing various Schemes in the State.

Some of the schemes implemented for the welfare of the tea and ex-tea tribes of the state are the Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme (FOIGS),

Pre Matric and Post Matric Scholarship, Grants to Non Government Educational Institutions, Grants for Cultural Activities Including Educational Tours, Grants for NGO, Grants to Patients suffering from TB, Cancer and Other Malignant diseases, Grants for purchase of Uniforms .

The schemes implemented by the Government of Assam are as follows:

1. Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme (FOIGS): The main objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance in the form of 100 % subsidy to the Tea Tribes families living below the poverty line to take up various income generating schemes and hence enable the families to enhance their annual income. This scheme covers agricultural sectors including horticulture, fishery, veterinary and animal husbandry schemes like rearing of milk cow, goat, poultry, duck, piggery, etc., and small enterprises such as pan shop, grocery shop, vegetable shop, cloth shop, fish trade, etc., including tailoring, embroidery, *thela* (pool cart), tri- cycle rickshaw. Each of the above schemes range from Rs. 10,000/- to a maximum of Rs. 50,000/- for SHGs. This scheme also includes schemes for Tent and Decorates, Broiler farming, Beauty Parlour, Cutting, Tailoring, Tea nursery, Vermi- compost, etc.

Under FOIG(Special project) , power tiller (to SHGs), LLP Pump set, Sewing machine, Drinking Water Filter, Solar Lamp, Bi- cycles to students are distributed in addition to financial grants- in aid.

This scheme has benefited families since the implementation of the scheme from the year 2001-2002. Till the year 2012-2013, a total number of 4,20,107 beneficiaries have been covered under this scheme and an expenditure of Rs. 9602.15 (in Lakh) has been utilised.

2. Pre-Matric Scholarship: Under this scheme, yearly scholarship has been arranged for hostellers and day scholars belonging to Tea & Ex-Tea Garden Tribes. Under Pre-Matric scholarship altogether 3, 36,492 Nos. of students were awarded scholarship utilising Rs.1311.85 lakh since 2001-2002 to 2013-2014.

3. Post-Matric Scholarship: Under this scheme, scholarship are provided to poor Tea Tribes students who are pursuing Post-Matric Courses and encouraging them to pursue further studies. Under Post-Matric Scholarship scheme, 5279 nos. of students were awarded scholarship with an amount of Rs.96 lakh during the period from 2001-2002 to 2013-2014.

4. Financial Assistance for Higher Studies: Financial Assistance is awarded to students for studies like Administration, IIT, IT, MBA, MBBS, BDS, Engineering, Law, etc, including research work. Between 2008-2009 and 2013-2014 5,522 students benefitted from this scheme. An amount of 370.00 lakhs was utilised under the scheme.

5. Grants for Cultural Activities including Educational excursion: Under this scheme, financial grants @ Rs. 10.000/- or above on need based requirement is provided to the Cultural Organisations of Tea Garden and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes for development and preservation of their cultural heritage, which includes purchase of musical instruments, holding cultural functions , exchange of cultural troops including educational excursion. etc. In addition, under this scheme, financial grants are made to students embarking for educational excursion every year. An amount of Rs.217.80 lakh have been utilized for providing assistance from 2001-02 to 2013-2014 and 1,249 beneficiaries have been covered.

6. Grants for Non-Official Organisations: The purpose of the Scheme is to assist the Non- Official Organisations such as Mahila Samittee, Association, Clubs, Libraries of Tea Tribes and Ex- Tea Tribes., which are rendering voluntary welfare services for all round development of the community. In general cases an amount of Rs. 20.000/- is given to each Non- Official Organisation. An amount of Rs.105.21 lakh has been utilised since 2004-2005 to 2013-2014 which have benefited 711 such organisations. .

7. Grants to Patients suffering from T. B. /Cancer and other malignant diseases: Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to poor Tea Tribes Community people suffering from various malignant diseases like Cancer, Tuberculosis etc., for their treatments. Under this scheme needy patients are given financial support at the rate of Rs. 10.000/-, Rs. 20.000/- , Rs.50.0000/- and above depending upon the nature of suffering from diseases. From the year 2001-02 an amount of Rs.159.35 lakh has been spent for providing assistance to 2,309 patients.

8. Grants for Purchase of Text Book and Uniforms: Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to poor students of the Tea community for purchase of text books and uniforms. The existing rate of the grants is Rs. 500.00 per beneficiary- student distributed through concerned Sub-divisional welfare offices. Since 2004-2005 to 2013-2014, 55.04 lakh have been spent which have benefitted 1,130 students.

9. Grants to Non-Government Educational Institutions: The objective of the scheme is to create an educational environment among Tea Tribes students who are pursuing studies in Non – Government Educational Institutions by providing financial assistance to such Institutions. These institutions utilise the money for purchase of teaching instruments, cultural/musical instruments, goods, furniture repair and extension of school building, construction of toilets and urinals, hand pumps for pure drinking water in school premises. Educational institution having minimum 50% of students from Tea community is eligible for grant. Financial grants @ Rs. 50.000/- to Rs. 300.000/- is given to eligible institutions. . An amount of Rs.12.75.50 lakh has been utilised from the year 2001-2002 to 2013-2014 .It has benefited 2,748 such institutions.

10. Grants for Construction of Girls' Hostel: Girls students from the tea community can now go out of their houses and stay in hostels for pursuing higher education. In this context the government has constructed new hostels in different places of Assam, namely in Sibsagar, Nagaon, Sreerampur, Tezpur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Behali. Moreover, in places such as Duliajan, Tengakhat, Dergaon, Rangapara, Mazbat, Korotigram (Rongpur) in the Barak and Sonari new hostels are under construction. Since the year 2007-8 to 2013-14, an amount of Rs.717 lakh has been utilized which was spent for construction and renovation of 26 hostels for girls belonging to the Tea community.

11. Grants for Construction of Boys' Hostel: Boys hostels have been constructed at Silchar, Hailakandi, Karimganj, Sreerampur, Gossaingaon, Moran, Margherita, Diphu and Kachugaon. At Biswanath Chariali, Tezpur and Guwahati new hostels are under construction. Since the year 2007-8 to 2013-14, an amount of 587 lakh has been utilized for construction and renovation of 20 hostels for boys belonging to the Tea community.

12. Construction of Rest House-cum-Cultural Centre cum Museum: To showcase the rich and vibrant culture of the Tea communities, a Museum has been set up in Guwahati. This museum aims to preserve the cultural heritage of the tea tribes. The campus also includes a Conference hall, a short stay Rest House for senior citizens and other persons of the community. A 20 seated Tea Tribes girl's hostel is also functioning in these building premises. This campus holds the Directorate for

Welfare of Tea & Ex-Tea garden tribes. An amount of Rs. 666.00 lakhs have been utilized for the above purpose over the years from 2004-5 to 2013-2014.

13. Installation of individual Electrical Meter at the quarter of tea workers: Free electric meter has been distributed by the Government of Assam for providing electricity to Tea Garden workers living in quarters. Since 2005-6 to 2013-2014, Rs. 112 lakh for 8,148 beneficiaries have been utilized.

14. Sanitation (executed jointly with UNICEF): The Government of Assam in collaboration with UNICEF has been providing low cost sanitary latrine to BPL/APL households in the tea gardens since 2008. An amount of Rs. 885 lakh benefitting 41,192 beneficiaries have been utilised till 2013-2014.

15. Water supply Scheme (executed jointly with UNICEF): The Government of Assam in collaboration with UNICEF has been providing clean water to BPL/APL households in the tea gardens since 2008 through the Water Supply Scheme. An amount of Rs. 805 lakh benefitting 1366 beneficiaries been utilised till 2013-2014.

16. Training of ANM /GNM/B.Sc Nursing and Para- Medicals: With an aim to ensure placement of students from the Tea and Ex-Tea tribes, training is being imparted to B.SC. Nursing, GNM and other Para medical trainees and financial grants extended for training ANM, GNM, B.Sc., Nursing, M.Sc. Nursing and other Para-Medicals. The scheme started from 2008-9 and an amount of Rs. 620 lakh benefitting 1537 beneficiaries has been utilised till 2013-2014.

17. Training and Training materials: Training is imparted in trades like carpentry, plumbing, masonry, electrician, computer application and providing BOSCH's tool kits after successful completion of training for self employment. The scheme started from 2008-9 and an amount of Rs. 1407 lakh benefitting 11315 beneficiaries have been utilised till 2013-2014.

18. Sports and Youth welfare: This scheme facilitates the distribution of sports goods, holding of tournaments, talent hunt, cultural meet, inter-state cultural meets, etc. The scheme started from 2008-9 and an amount of Rs. 650 lakh benefitting 23,200 beneficiaries have been utilised till 2013-2014.

19. Skill Development Training Centres: Fifty one Departmental Skill Development Training Centres have been set up for skill development of tea tribes youths under PPP mode of operation. The scheme started from 2008-9 and an amount of Rs. 535 lakh have been utilised till 2013-2014.

Apart from the schemes mentioned above, additional schemes during the year 2013-2014 were implemented. Some of the schemes which were aimed at directly benefiting the tea and Ex-Tea tribes are:

- Distribution of GCI Sheet to needy families. An amount of Rs. 50 lakh benefitting 100 beneficiaries was utilized.
- Furniture and Furnishing materials for Tea tribe hostels: An amount of Rs. 200 lakh was utilized.
- Distribution of Water Filter : An amount of Rs. 450 lakh was utilized for distribution of water filter for safe drinking water.
- Distribution of Solar Lamp: An amount of Rs. 450 lakh was utilized which benefitted 24,724 needy students.
- Distribution of Bi-cycle to students (Boys and Girls): An amount of Rs. 500 lakh was utilized for distribution of bi-cycles to students requiring for traveling long distances to and from schools.
- Financial subsidy towards purchase of Taxi cab (through bank finance): For the purpose of providing self employment to educated unemployed youths an amount of Rs. 500 lakh was utilized which benefitted 250 youths.

During the same year additional schemes with the aim of giving indirect benefits were launched. The schemes are

- Construction of Handloom and Handicrafts Production Centres to provide means of family income especially to illiterate women of the community in the tea garden areas. An amount of Rs. 250 lakh was utilized for construction of 10 centres.
- Construction of Literary cum cultural centre to promote cultural functions and create reading habits. An amount of Rs. 500 lakh was utilized for construction of 15 centres .
- Construction of conference Hall. A modern hall with acoustic treatment in Guwahati was planned at an amount of Rs. 175 lakh.
- Construction of Library cum Museum. A modern Auditorium with a library cum mini museum at Dibrugarh was established at an amount of Rs. 100 lakh.
- Renovation or restoration of the Tea Tribes Rest House at Shillong at an amount of Rs. 100 lakh was utilized.

- Renovation of AEWB Training Centres . For the purpose of renovation an amount of Rs. 300 lakh was utilized.

Along with Governmental intervention, efforts by other Institutions and organisations have also resulted in bringing socio-economic development of the tea community.

The study aims to evaluate schemes implemented by the government and other organisations like the Tea Board, SAI, and UNICEF and examine the impact on the socio-economic lives of the tea tribes and ex-tea tribe beneficiaries.

Objectives of the study:

- To understand the socio-economic conditions of Tea and Ex-tea tribes.
- To study the role of different agencies for welfare of Tea and Ex-tea tribes.
- To examine the effectiveness of different schemes on socio-economic status of the beneficiaries.
- To identify the strengths and weakness present and provide suggestions.
- To identify the constraints, if any and suggest remedial measure to achieve the objectives of the schemes.

Methodology:

The study is based both on primary and secondary data. For the purpose of primary data collection, different types of schedules have been applied on beneficiaries and other stake holders. Participant observation method with the help of structured schedules separately for village and households was adopted. For an in depth understanding, case studies on different issues were collected. People of various ages and beneficiary of different schemes implemented for the welfare of tea tribes sexes have been incorporated in the study. Seven numbers of Investigators were engaged to collect the data. The Officer in charge of the study supervised the work of the investigators by visiting the Tea Gardens as well as the households in the settlements/ villages.

Different stake holders including Government officials, members of Non Government Organisations, student organisations of tea Tribe Community, and community leaders were interviewed for the study.

In addition, library work was conducted for collection of secondary source of information. The internet has also been widely used for sourcing data about Tea tribes.

Area of Study

The tea tribes are found in almost all the districts of Assam. Majority of them are concentrated in the districts of Darrang, Sonitpur, Nagaon, Jorhat, Golaghat, Dibrugarh, Cachar, Hailakandi, Karimganj and Tinsukia. For the study, field work was conducted in the districts of Bishwanath Chariali, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup (Rural), Morigaon, Nagaon, Sibsagar, and Tinsukia .

Sample Design

Fifty villages/settlements less than twenty eight Development Blocks of nine districts of Assam were surveyed for the study. All the settlement / villages were selected at random basis for the study.

There were eleven settlement/ villages from Dibrugarh district which has the highest number of Tea Gardens in the state. From Tinsukia, ten villages were selected. Field work in Golaghat district was conducted in eight villages. Seven villages from three subdivisions namely Jorhat, Mariani and Titabor of Jorhat districts were taken up for the study. From Sibsagar and Bishwanath Chariali districts four villages, each have been selected. Three villages from Kamrup (Rural), falling under the subdivision of Digaru and Kamrup (rural) were selected for the study. From Nagaon district, two villages from the Sub Division Nagaon and Development Blocks Bajiagaon and West Kaliabor were selected. One village from Morigaon has been undertaken for the study.

Analysis of Data

The data collected for the study was analysed by using simple statistical tools.

Period of Study: The study was conducted from May 2017 to July 2017.

Workshop: After the completion of the study, a one day workshop was held on 31-9-2017 for dissemination of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER - II

An account of the Surveyed Villages

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to present the types of basic amenities, facilities, nature of transport, communication , etc., in the villages covered under the study. All these factors have immense influence on the socio-economic condition and development of the population.

Spatial features of the Villages

All the villages/settlements under the study are located in the plain areas and the settlement pattern of the 48 villages are agglomerated and 2 are dispersed.

The study was conducted in 50 settlements from 9 districts of Assam. Forty seven settlements /villages are within the jurisdiction of Tea Gardens. The largest number of villages, eleven are from Dibrugarh district which have the highest number of Tea Gardens in the state.

From Tinsukia , ten villages were selected. These villages are from two subdivisions namely Margherita and Tinsukia.

Field work in Golaghat district was conducted in eight villages. The villages fall under two Development Blocks of Golaghat and Padumoni .

Seven villages from one subdivision namely Jorhat were taken up for the study. From Sibsagar and Bishwanath Chariali districts four villages, each have been selected.

The villages from Biswanath Chariali , are within the jurisdiction of three Development Blocks namely Baghmari, Bishwanath and Sakomato from Bishwanath Subdivision . Three villages from Kamrup (M), falling under the subdivision of Sonapur and Chandrapur were selected for the study. From Nagaon district, two villages from the Sub Division Nagaon and Development Blocks Bajiagaon and Kaliabor were selected.

One village from Morigaon has been undertaken for the study. Details are shown in Table-1

TABLE- 1

Table-1 showing districts, subdivisions, Blocks, Tea Gardens and settlements/villages surveyed

Sl. No.	Name of the Districts	Name of the Subdivisions	Name of the Blocks	Name of the Tea Gardens	Name of the settlements/ villages
1.	Bishwanath Chariali	Bishwanath	Baghmari Bishwanath Sakomato	Monabari T.E.	Monabari T.E
				Baghmari T.E.	Purab line
				Pertap gaur T.E.	Newline
				Sakomato T.E.	Sakomato
				Monabari T.E.	Monabari T.E
2.	Dibrugarh	Dibrugarh	Barbaruah Lahowal Panitola Tengakhata	Mancotta T.E.	Ahubari Line
				Ida T.E.	Saora Line
				Sessa T.E.	5 No. Line
				Jalan Nagar South T.E.	Pucca Line
				Bokel T.E.	4 No. Line
				Muttuck T.E.	Gurabagan Line
				-	Miri Pothar Gaon
				Sealkotee T.E.	1 No. Line
				-	Koilabari Gaon
				Mohanbari T.E.	3 No. Line
				Dirial T.E.	Gutibari line
3.	Golaghat	Golaghat	Golaghat Padumoni	Doyang,T.E.	Doyang T.E
				Jamuguri,T.E.	Jamuguri T.E
				Dolowjan T.E.	Dolowjan T.E
				Oating T.E.	Oating T.E
				Butulikhua T.E.	Butulikhua T.E
				Henduritin T.E.	Henduritin
				Jallan Golaghat T.E	Jallan Golaghat
				Balijan T.E.	Balijan

4.	Jorhat	Jorhat	Bagchung Jorhat Titabor	Kamarbandha T.E.	Gowalla Line
				Murmuria T.E.	Pucca Line
				Bokhahulla T.E.	Bokhahulla T.E
				Barbheta Nimona T.E.	Nimona
				Nagadhuli T.E.	Nagadhuli T.E
				Hati Putty T.E.	Hati Putty T.E
				Chinnamara T.E.	Chinnamara T.E.
5.	Kamrup (M)	Chandrapur Sonapur	Dimoria Chandrapur	Amchong T.E.	Revenue Village
				Sonapur T.E.	Notun Line
				-	Haldhibari
6.	Morigaon	Morigaon	Mayong	Gopal Krishna T.E.	Labour Line
7.	Nagaon	Nagaon	Baziagaon Kaliabor	Salonah T.E.	Salonah Division
				Amluckie T.E.	I No. Line ,Bar Line, Tetul Line
8.	Sibsagar	Sibsagar	Demow	Athabari T.E.	Line No. 1
				Maskara T.E.	Maskara line
				Khonge T.E.	Khorahat
				Rajmai T.E.	Rajmai Division
9.	Tinsukia	Margherita Tinsukia	Hapjan Itakhooli	Hatimara T.E.	Line No.6
				Kehung T.E.	Hatitupa Line
				Hukanpukhuri T.E.	Hukanpukhuri
				Hapjan T.E.	Hapjan
				Monkhooshi T.E.	Monkhooshi
				Hatimara T.E.	Hatimara,R6 line
				Mohadeubari T.E.	Mohadeubari
				Deohal T.E.	12. no. line
				Chota Tingrai T.E.	3. no. line
				-	Naharsapori line

Ownership of the Gardens

The Tea Gardens are owned by Companies , Private groups and Individuals like Williamson Magor, Goodricke, Warren Tea Limited , Macleod Russels India, Jordan , Aaypeejay Tea Ltd.,Jalan Tea Industries, D.J.P.TEA Company , MK Jokai

Agri. Plantations Pvt. Ltd., Grob Tea PVT ,Bhumiya PVT LTD, Kalkata PVT LTD, Singhi T.E company PVT , Assam Tea Company Limited , Oating TE PVT LTD, Tuklai T Research, Scottish PVT LTD , Mahan Jallan, Bijoy kr Jain , Anand Bazaria, Ajay Khemka, Prabhat kr Baruah, Anup Kumar Bhaduri, Pramud kumar jalan, Reshav Tashani, Gopal Kanai,Krishna Kanai, Sushil Bholka, Arun Berlia, Ramater Berlia, Basanta Kuman Berlia,Narendra Berlia, Ashok Agarwal, Pawam Kumar Maskara, Darshanal & Anand Prakash, Nandalal Agarwal, Om Chauhan, Manohar Jalan.

Transport and Communication

Regarding transport and communication facilities, Table -2 reveals that, 30 villages have nearest motor able road within 1 kms. from the villages. The Bus Stand for 24 villages is located within 1-2 kms., while for 18 villages the nearest transport station is located outside 10 kms.

TABLE– 2
Transport and Communication facilities

Sl. No.	No. Of Villages	Transport and Communication Facilities	Distance Of The Villages (In Km)					
			<1	1-2	2-4	4-6	6-10	>10
	50	Nearest Motorable road	30	18	1	4		
		Nearest transport stand	11	13	9	6	4	7
		Nearest transport station	2	2	13	6	9	18

Condition of the Roads

The condition of the roads for majority (26 Nos.) villages is gravelled roads while 15 villages have *Katcha* fair weather motor able road and the rest 9 villages have *Katcha* All Weather Motor able Road. Details are shown in Table-3

TABLE – 3
Condition of the Roads

Sl No	Category	No Of Villages
1	<i>Katcha</i> Fair-weather Motor able Road	15
2	<i>Katcha</i> All Weather Motor able Road	9
3	Gravelled Road	26
Total		50

Mode of Common Conveyance

Bicycle and motor bike are the common mode of conveyance in all the studied villages. In 45 villages, the villagers use car. The other modes of transport are bus and tempos. 12 villages each use bus and 15 villages also use tempo. Details are shown in Table-4

TABLE – 4
Mode of Common Conveyance

Sl No.	Category	No Of Settlements/Villages
1	Bicycle	50
2	Motor cycle	50
3	Car	45
4	Motor Bus	12
6	Tempos	15

Medical facilities

Medical facilities in villages signify the status of health of population of the villages. Table no. 5 reveals that 46 settlements are within Tea Garden areas and in all the 46 settlements the people have access to the Tea Garden hospitals provided by the garden managements. All are within 2 kms.

Public Health Centres (PHCs) are located within 2kms. for 8 villages. 12 villages have PHCs within 2-4kms., 13 villages have the same within 4-6kms, 4 village gets the PHC benefits located at a distance of 6-10kms., while 13 villages get PHC benefits at a distance of above 10kms.

Twenty seven villages get the Medical Sub Center facilities at a distance of less than 2kms. and 6 village gets the same facilities at a distance of 2-4kms. 6 villages have medical Sub Centers at a distance of 4-6kms. and 2 villages get the same facilities at a distance of 6-10 kms. Nine villages gets such facility at a distance of above 10kms .

State Dispensary facility is available for 4 villages within 2kms., 5 villages get such facility within 2-4kms, and 4 villages at a distance of 6-10kms, and 32 villages at a distance of above 10kms.

Most of the private hospitals are located beyond 10kms. and 31 villages get such facility at that distance while one village gets the same facility at a distance of

less than 2 km. Private hospitals for 7 villages are located within 2-4kms , for 6 villages it is within 4-6 km and for 5 villages it is within 6-10 km.

Private medical doctor are available within 2 kms for 16 villages, 10 villages each have the same at a distance of 6-10kms and above 10kms. Five villages have that facility at a distance of 2-4-kms and 9 villages have the same at a distance of 4-6 kms respectively.

Forty villages have Village guides within 1 km and 47 villages have trained birth attendant within 2kms.

As regards private pharmacy / medical shop 8 villages get such facilities within 1km, 21 villages get the same within 2kms, 13 villages get such facility within 2-4-kms and 5 villages gets such facility within 4-6kms and 3 villages get such facility above 10kms respectively.

Twenty one villages have traditional healers within a distance of 1 km. The rest of the villages do not have knowledge about presence of traditional healers in their locality or within vicinity. Details are shown in Table-5

TABLE-5
Medical facilities in the Surveyed Settlements/Villages

Sl.No.	Health Facilities	Distance of the Settlements/Villages (in km.)						
		NA	<1	1-2	2-4	4-6	6-10	>10
1.	Garden Hospital	4	40	6				
2.	PHC		1	7	12	13	4	13
3.	Medical Sub Center		19	8	6	6	2	9
4.	State Dispensary		1	3	5	5	4	32
5.	Private Hospital		-	1	7	6	5	31
6.	Private Medical Practitioner		2	14	5	9	10	10
7.	Village Health Guide		40	2	8			
8.	Trained Birth Attendant		46	1	3			
9.	Private Pharmacy/ Medical shop		8	21	13	5	-	3
10.	Traditional healer		21					

General health of the population

The general health of the people shows variation from village to village and from person to person. Some people were found in good health while some others were found suffering from diseases like- tuberculosis, back pain, respiratory problem, malnutrition, etc. A very common disease in settlements of all the surveyed districts is tuberculosis. In every settlement visited in all the districts it has been found that at least one or two persons suffers from tuberculosis.

Generally the health conditions in a few settlements in Bishwanath Chariali as observed are poor. Cases of people suffering from Diarrhoea, Malaria, Dysentery, Scabies etc were reported. But in Shakomoto village the inhabitants are found to be in good health. The villagers have access to the garden hospital, PHC and Pharmacies which provides good services to the people.

A few differently abled children and adults were found in different plantations of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts. In Nagadhuli and Nimona settlements in Jorhat district too, differently abled children and adults were found. The example of a girl of eight years suffering from polio is mentionable. Her parents were not able to treat her when she was diagnosed with the disease. A few others also did not to take any medical treatment and accepted it as their destiny.

The general health of the people of the settlement in Morigaon district is in good state as informed by the garden *mohari*. Cough, cold and fever are common among the people of the garden. There are few people who have suffered from tuberculosis. They have received the facilities (DOTS) provided by the government for tuberculosis patients. The other diseases like malaria, diarrhoea, dysentery, and scabies are common. There are also three differentially abled individuals in the settlement.

From the visits in the settlements in Kamrup, Nagaon and Sibsagar districts, it was seen that most of the children suffer from skin diseases. A few adult individuals were also found to have skin problems. There are cases of tuberculosis and cancer. In case of Rajmai tea estate, most of the children looked weak and thin. Almost in all the gardens of Sibsagar tuberculosis is common among the people. Skin infections and other seasonal diseases like dysentery and malaria are also not

uncommon. There are differently abled persons in the district of Nagaon and Sibsagar also.

General health of people in the tea gardens of Golaghat shows the same situation like other districts. Due to unhygienic condition and lack of proper medical facilities, people suffer from many diseases. Tuberculosis is the most common disease noticed among the aged people of tea tribe people in this area also.

Civic facilities

Regarding civic facilities 7 villages have the post office within 1km. and 27 villages have post offices within less than 2kms, 8 villages have the same within 2-4kms and 6 villages has post offices at a distance of 4-6kms and 2 villages have the same within 6-10kms.

Veterinary hospitals are located within 1kms. for 4 villages and 12 villages have the same at a distance of 2-4kms, 6 villages each have the same at a distance of 1-2kms and 4-6kms respectively while 5 villages have veterinary facilities at a distance 6-10kms. Seventeen villages have the same at a distance of above 10kms.

Only 3 villages have banks within 1kms from the villages and 21 villages have banks within 2kms. Sixteen villages have the same at a distance of 2-4kms, 4 villages have the same at a distance of 4-6kms, and 3 villages each have banks at a distance of 6-10kms and above 10kms respectively.

Twenty one villages have Co-operative societies within 1kms from the villages and the same is located at a distance of 2-4kms for 6 villages, 6 villages each have the same at a distance of 4-6kms and above 10 km respectively, 7 villages have co-operative society within 2kms and 4 villages have the same at a distance of 6-10kms.

Cinema halls are located above 10kms for 30 villages and within 2-4km and 6-10 km for 6 villages each. For 5 villages it is within 2km.

All the villages have religions institutions within 1kms. Details are shown in Table-6

TABLE – 6**Civic facilities in the Settlements/Villages**

Sl. No.	Civic and other Facilities	Distance of the Settlements/Villages (in km.)					
		<1	1-2	2-4	4-6	6-10	>10
1	Nearest Post Office	7	27	8	6	2	-
2	Nearest Veterinary Dispensary/Hospital	4	6	12	6	5	17
3	Nearest Bank	3	21	16	4	3	3
4	Nearest Cooperative society	21	7	6	6	4	6
5	Nearest Cinema hall	1	4	6	4	6	30
6.	Religious institutions	50					

Educational Facilities

Education is an important indicator of development. Table no. 7 states that all the pre primary schools are located within less than 1km from the villages and all 50 lower primary schools are located less than 4kms from the villages. Thirty six villages have middle Elementary schools within less than 2kms and 32 villages have High schools within less than 2kms. Fifteen villages have colleges within less than 2kms.

Fourteen villages have Middle Elementary schools within less than 2-6kms ; 12 villages have high schools within 2-4kms and 6 villages have the same within 4-6km. Sixteen villages have colleges within 2-4kms, 5 villages have colleges within 4-6kms and 7 villages have the same within 6-10km. Adult Education Centre are not found in any of the settlements surveyed. Details are shown in Table-7

TABLE – 7**Educational facilities in the Surveyed Settlements/Villages**

Sl. No.	Educational facilities	Distance of the Settlements/Villages (in km.)					
		<1	1-2	2-4	4-6	6-10	>10
1	Pre-primary school	50					
2	Lower primary school	46	3	1			
3	Middle E School	24	12	9	5		
4	High school	9	23	12	6		
5	College	3	12	16	5	7	

Educational status of the children of the tea workers

The children of the tea gardens workers of the districts of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia often leave their studies halfway due to several reasons, of which the following finds precedence,

Due to poor financial condition of the family, the parents find it difficult to pay fees for school going children. It is also seen that the parents find it more beneficial if the children are engaged in various jobs for earning money and thus helping in supplementing the income of the household.

In some households the parents were not aware of the importance of education for their children.

Some children left school to look after their younger siblings, as the parents goes out to work. In some cases, the children left the school after failing in their school examination.

It has also been reported that the educational enrolment in Lower and Middle Level schools levels in many settlements of Jorhat district and its sub-division have higher rate of enrolment than High school and college levels. This may be due to the fact that that in primary level government largesse in the form of funds, school uniforms, and mid day meal attract students

Regarding the issue of school drop outs , the main reason for leaving school in the district of Nagaon is similar to what is found in the other districts surveyed. Due to lack of money, most students have to drop out from the schools. The family could not provide the money required for payment of fees and purchase of school books. As a result, students lose interest for academics and develop the urge to work in the garden factories after a certain age. The need to support the family in terms of money is the main issue for students leaving schools before they attain a certificate.

Regarding other reasons for leaving school, in some cases, it is found that children left schools because of family issues concerning disputes between parents. Although they wanted to attend school, they were not able to.

In other districts where the survey was conducted similar reasons for children leaving school are found. Many of the respondents are of the view that poor financial conditions impede their desire to send their children to schools and

colleges. The workers are paid very less so they cannot afford expenses for education of their children.

Educational schemes implementation for school dropouts

In Mohanbari tea garden in the district of Dibrugarh, a NGO is working for the school dropouts motivating them to go back to school.

In Sealkotee tea garden there is a hostel for the school dropouts, where free food, accommodation and books are provided to the students .

In Monkhooshi garden an NGO named AIDA worked for school dropouts around two years ago. In a few districts it has been reported that till the year 2013 the Sarba Sikshya Abhiyan made attempts to bring school drop outs to classes. This endeavour slowed down due to lack of interest from parents working in the tea gardens. The non formal education of Sarba Sikshya Abhiyan has not covered all the drop outs as far as both lower primary and middle primary level schools are concerned.

At present, in almost all the districts no educational schemes are being implemented for school drop outs by government authorities.

Books, uniforms and Mid day Meal Scheme

By and large, the provision of Sarba Sikshya Avigyan is available in most schools attended by the children of the Tea workers in the tea gardens under study.

The school buildings were found to be built by the government. The children are provided with free uniform and books.

Mid day meal scheme has also been implemented in schools set up within tea garden areas in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. The school children are given *khichdi* everyday and egg is given once a week. Sometimes a meal consisting of soya bean is also given in the mid day meal.

It has been reported that the Sarba Sikshya Avigyan is in operation in the schools attended by the students of the tea garden communities in Bishwanath Chariali Golaghat and Jorhat districts . The tea tribes students are provided good quality food. Rice, pulse, vegetable and egg form their mid day meal. In other districts also, there are provisions for mid day meal for the school children in the settlement. They are provided *khichdi*, rice, lentil, vegetable curry and egg. Some people also opined that quality of food provided for their children is poor.

Kinds of commodities sold and purchased by the villagers

The population working in tea gardens do not have the scope for other kind of economic activities. Never the less, there are some villagers who try to supplement their income by selling their poultry and livestock products. They also sell seasonal vegetables and *haria* (locally made rice beer). Some Ex-tea tribe people of Sadharu and Holmari make bamboo and cane products for sale. They also sell grains which they cultivate in their agriculture fields. Markets are almost available in all villages in all the surveyed areas.

There are few shops in each settlement, where villages can buy necessary food and other items. Moreover there are weekly markets held on Saturday/Sunday/Thursdays where people can buy clothes, meat, fish, cosmetics etc.

In Jorhat District, markets are found near the settlements. There are markets in all the settlements. The weekly market provides all the necessary grocery items to the people. The Fair price shops are also found in most of the settlements, for which each of the house hold possess a ration card.

In Kamrup district, at Sonapur there is a daily market near the gate of the garden. A fair price shop is also present there. Amchong garden has its weekly market and has the daily daily market at Digaru which is 4 k.m away from the garden. In Amchong the people from the garden sell betel nut, vegetable, meat, savouries, etc. to supplement their income.

Generally the market within the settlement is held fortnightly when the salary is handed to the workers.

In Golaghat district, markets are available in all the tea gardens, and a few shops are situated in each settlement. The weekly markets also provide all the necessary grocery items for the villagers. The tea workers of Gopal krishna Tea Estate in Morigaon purchase almost every item of their daily needs from weekly market. They even purchase poultry from the markets. Other cosmetics and clothing items are also purchased from the same. They do not sell any items in the markets. In Nagaon, it has been found that cow, goats, pig, duck, hen and vegetables are sold by the people during emergencies or special occasions. They do not sell the products on a regular basis.

The people from the surveyed villages in Sibsagar sell vegetables and meat products in the market. They purchase food items, utensils, clothes and other items

required, from the nearby markets. Most of the market takes place at an interval of 15 days when the people get their salary. Apart from this market there are other market areas where they can purchase their daily needs.

Self Help Groups (SHG) in the surveyed villages

The formation of SHGs has become very popular in recent years, and its presence is also felt in the surveyed areas. The SHGs are found in the settlements in Bishwanath Chariali. Some of the SHGs working in the area are Jibanjyoti SHG in Shakomato and Debadutta SHG in Baghmari. In other areas like Dhulia inhabited by Ex-tea tribe, SHGs like Sadaru are functioning actively. They rear pig and goat for sale.

The SHGs in Jorhat are also working actively. Some of the SHGs are Maa Bhavani SHG in Nagadhuli, Barnali SHG in Bukhahulla, Barnali, Juti SHG in Nimona tea estate, etc.

Two numbers of SHGs are present in Sonapur T.E and are run by women. In Amchong garden there is one SHG which is also run by women.

In the studied area in Morigaon there is a self help group in the settlement which are run by women. The group provides loan and earns profits by interest in the year end which is again distributed equally among each member of the group. Similar is the situation in Sibsagar and Nagaon.

There are a few SHGs found in Monkhooshi in Tinsukia district. The Jyoti SHG and Monkhooshi SHG are managed and run by male. Both received power tillers from government schemes. There are female SHGs groups, where in only money is deposited by members every month and they provide loan on the basis of interest.

In Hatimara, the SHG named Monmilan received grants and chicks from the government to start a poultry unit. In Nahorchapori, the Surjya SHG and Kishan SHG received Power tillers from government schemes. The other gardens also have SHGs.

In Golaghat, the Sunali SHG in Butulikhua village is running a Crèche, on the other hand Rose SHG in Jamuguri has taken agriculture land on lease and is engaged in farming.

Self Help Groups are found in all the settlements, except Ida T.E, Mohanbari T.E, and Dirial T.E. in Dibrugarh district. In Tinsukia district all the tea

gardens studied, have SHGs. In both Dibrugarh district and Tinsukia district it is found that all these SHGs are managed by women, and deals with preparation and sale of different food products.

Cottage industries

A few Cottage industries are found in the settlements of Mancotta, Muttuck, and Koilabari village in Dibrugarh district. The cottage industries are run by individual families and mostly make bamboo products. In Tinsukia district, bamboo products are produced by tea workers of Hapjan tea garden.

Mass communication

Mass communication facilities like television, internet facility, telephone/mobile etc. are found in all the villages. Twenty seven villages have radios and 31 villages have newspapers. It has been reported that due to poor connectivity people in the other villages do not use the radio. Details are shown in Table -8

TABLE – 8

Mass Communication facilities in the Surveyed Settlements/Villages

SI No	Facilities Available	No Of Settlements/Villages
1	Television	50
2	Radio	27
3	Newspaper	31
4	Internet	50
5	Telephone/mobile	50

Electricity

It is worth mentioning that that all the 50 (fifty) villages under survey have been electrified.

Drinking Water

Safe drinking water is very important for the better health of the people. In the Tea gardens tube wells are the main sources of drinking water .The garden management provides one tube well among every 5- 6 households . The tube wells are situated on the sides of the lanes and by-lanes. A few households have their individual tube wells for personal uses. Table -9 reveals that majority of the surveyed villages, numbering 23 uses water from tube well. Five villages each use

well and piped water. Sixteen villages each use water from wells and tube wells respectively. Seventeen number of villages use water from more than one source. In 1 village there are several sources of water like well , tube well , river , water supply scheme and reservoir use ponds. Water supply scheme and well are extended to 6 villages. Three villages use water from reservoir.

TABLE – 9

Sources of Drinking water in the Surveyed Settlements/Villages

Sl.No.	Sources Of Drinking Water	No. of Settlements/Villages
1	Well	5
2	Tube well	23
3	Piped water	5
4	Well+ Tube well	2
5	Well+ Water Supply Scheme	4
6	Tube well+ Water Supply Scheme	6
7	Well+ Tube well+ Water Supply Scheme	2
8	Well+ + Tube well +River + Water Supply Scheme	1
9	Pond +Well+ Tube well	2

Recreation centre/ Community centre etc

It is revealed from Table No. 10 that Children club is present in only 9 gardens while youth club is found in 17 gardens. There are 40 gardens which have worker Union. The tea gardens have ample space for children to play around. All the tea gardens, except one have playgrounds for children. There are 23 gardens which have community centre facility. Art and craft Centre are found in 5 gardens and in only 3 gardens there is provision for a library.

Children club

No specific children's club are found in most of the surveyed Districts. A Children club in Shakomato village co-existed with a mothers club. In this club, children perform various sports and cultural activities. Sometime, competitions and games are held among children.

Youth club

A few youth clubs exist in the surveyed areas which are not fully active. In the youth clubs of Monabari, Shakomato, Gopalkrishna tea estates, youth of the village gather in the afternoon time and play some indoor and outdoor games like carom, football, volleyball, etc.

Workers Union

In most of the Tea gardens, Workers Union have been formed to serve the interest of the Tea workers. Some of the permanent workers of the tea garden are members of the worker union. The temporary workers are generally not members of the union because they only work during seasons when required for plucking tea leaves and spraying of pesticide.

The main purpose of the union body is to maintain unity among the workers during critical periods. They work as a group when they have particular issues to put up before the garden management (mostly regarding increase of salary). Each Union has a president who is selected.

Community centre

Community centres are present in Deohal, Chotatingrai, Athabari, Maskara and Sonapur, Hatimara, Khongea, Rajmai tea estates. The main purpose of the centre is to organise meetings and functions for the garden people. Also in the community centres they hold the saptahik (weekly) market on the day of receipt of salary.

Art and Craft centre

In Hatimara and Chotatingrai Tea gardens, children get the opportunity for learning art and crafts. They get training for sewing, art and other craft works. Most of the girls from the nearby tea gardens come to attend classes in the centre.

TABLE – 10
Availability of Recreation Centres

Sl.No.	Facilities	No. of Settlements/Villages
1.	Children club	9
2.	Youth Club	17
3.	Workers Union	40
4.	Community Center	23
5.	Art and craft Centre	5
6.	Library	3
7.	Playgrounds	45

Facilities provided by Garden Management for Tea workers and their families

The tea garden management are governed by the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 which ensures the socio-economic development of the tea workers and their family. The act has several provisions for their welfare which also includes providing health facilities, provident fund, insurance, maternity leave for women, ration, housing facility, drinking water, crèche, canteen, sanitation, etc, among others. From the study it has been found that all the Tea gardens have facilities for providing health, maternity leave for permanent women workers, provident fund, ration, housing, drinking water, crèche, electricity, etc.

Maternity leave for women

Maternity leave for women is provided in all most all the tea gardens of the surveyed areas. Maternity leave is basically for the permanent workers but it varies from one garden to another. In some gardens leave is also given to the temporary workers, but may not be same as given to a permanent worker, i.e if a permanent worker get 3 months leave; a temporary worker will get 45 days. The initial period of leave was for 3 months in every garden but at present the time period has been extended to 6 months for women workers in some gardens.

Crèche

The facility of crèches for tea garden workers varies from place to place. In some of the tea garden, there is the facility for crèche where workers can keep their children while the parents work in the tea garden. Some of the crèches are managed by SHGs, as found in Golaghat district. In some places, the provision of crèche is there but is not functioning and some have been closed down. Students of crèche are taught rhymes; alphabets etc. and the garden management have employed women workers to look after these children. In some cases, it is found that though crèches are available for children, the workers do not send their children there; instead they leave them at home. In Amchong and Monkhooshi tea estates, there are no crèches. In Tinsukia, most of the gardens do not have the facility for crèches. Deohal, Chotatingrai and Maskara tea estates have facility for crèches. Students of crèche are provided milk and biscuits and the garden management have employed

women workers to look after these children. Crèches are also found in Shakomato village of Biswanath Chariali.

Table 11 shows that in all the 46 Tea Gardens which were surveyed, the Tea Garden management provides the following facilities like health, Provident fund, and Maternity leave for women, Ration and Housing. Drinking water facility is provided in 44 gardens. Six Tea gardens have Insurance facility. Twenty two gardens provide housing rent for its workers who stay outside the tea gardens. There is canteen for workers in 10 gardens and crèche in 26 gardens. Schools for children are present in 28 gardens. Recreational facilities like sports, dance and music, craft are found in 21 gardens.

TABLE – 11

Facilities provided by Garden Management for Tea workers and their families

Sl.No.	Facilities	No. of Settlements within the Tea Garden
1.	Health facilities	46
2.	Provident fund	46
3.	Insurance	6
4.	Maternity leave for women	46
5.	Ration	46
6.	Housing	46
7.	Drinking water	44
8.	Housing Rent	22
9.	Crèche	26
10.	Canteen	10
11.	Educational facilities	28
12.	Recreational facilities (sports, Dance and music, craft, etc)	21

CHAPTER - III

An account of the Surveyed Households

Names of Caste/ tribal groups of the surveyed settlements

The Tea community is not an endogamous unit. It is a conglomeration of numerous ethnic groups, each having its own distinct cultural traits. They are bonded together by a common thread- working in the Tea estates. In the village under survey, different tribes and castes are found and together they are given the nomenclature of Tea and Ex- Tea tribes. The tribes and castes which came under the study are Barai, Baishnab, Bauri, Bihari, Bhumij , Bhuyan, Chowdha , Ekka, Gamang , Ghatowar , Gonju, Gorh, Gowala, Hogda, Kumar, Karmakar, Kherwar, Kisan, Logar, Lohar, Maal, Majhi, Malikh, Mirdha, Modi, Mohanon, Mukhi, Munda, Mura, Naidu, Nayak, Nepali, Orang, Oriya, Paharia, Parja, Patro, Pradhan, Rails, Rajowar, Rajput, Roito, Sautal, Saura, Sobor, Tanti, Tasha, Teli, Telenga.etc.

Besides the traditional tribes and castes mentioned above, other ethnic groups have also started to work in the Tea gardens as Tea workers. There are Bengali speakers as well as different caste and tribal people with titles like Baruah, Bodo, Bora, Neog, Pator, Rajbanshi, Sonowal.

Household population by Age and Sex

A total number of 700 households were taken as sample for a micro level study having total population of 3441, male 1680 (48.82%) and female 1761 (51.18%). The percentage of female is found to be more than male in the study.

Out of total population of 3441, 784 persons belong to the age group 20 to 29 years. Next higher population of 696, male 332, female 364 is in the age group 10-19 years.

There are 33 persons, male 14, female 19 in the age grade of 70-89 years. In the lowest age category below 10 years there are 516 persons, male 267 female 249. Details are shown in Table-1

Table-1
Household Population by Age and Sex

Sl. No.	Age	Male	Female	Total
1	<10	267	249	516
2	10 to 19	332	364	696
3	20 to 29	364	420	784
4	30 to 39	267	278	545
5	40 to 49	234	235	469
6	50 to 59	145	149	294
7	60 to 69	57	47	104
8.	70 to 89	14	19	33
Total		1680	1761	3441

Marital Status

The marital status of the population under the study as shows that 50.04% are married. There are 1501(43.62%) who are unmarried. Two hundred and sixteen, of which 69 male and 148 female are widowed. There is a single case of divorce. Details are shown in Table-2

TABLE- 2
Marital Status

Sl. No	Un-married	%	Married	%	Widowed	%	Divorced/ Separated	%	Total	%
Male	779	22.64	832	24.18	69	2.05	-	-	1680	48.82
Female	722	20.99	890	25.86	148	4.30	1	.02	1761	51.18
Total	1501	43.62	1722	50.04	217	6.30	1	.02	3441	100

Marital Status by Age and Sex

Table -3 shows that, 832 male persons are married and 779 are unmarried. The highest number of married males (231) is in the age 30 to 39.

There are 890 married females against 722 unmarried females. From the age grades 50-55 years to above 85 years there are no unmarried female persons,

except one in 70 to 89 years. A large number of females (117) in the age group 20-29 are unmarried. There are 41 married females below the age of 19 years.

There is one female who is separated or divorced from her husband in the age grade 30 to 35 years.

Table 3

Marital Status of the surveyed Population by Age and Sex

Age	Un-married	Married	Widowed	Divorced/ Separated	Total
Both Sexes					
<10	516	-	-	-	516
10 to 19	638	58	-	-	696
20 to 29	272	506	6	-	784
30 to 39	55	469	20	1	545
40 to 49	18	410	41	-	469
50 to 59	1	220	73	-	294
60 to 69	-	49	55	-	104
70 to 89	1	10	22	-	33
Total	1501	1722	217	1	3441
Male					
<10	267	-	-	-	267
10 to 19	315	17	-	-	332
20 to 29	155	206	3	-	364
30 to 39	31	231	5	-	267
40 to 49	10	212	12	-	234
50 to 59	-	121	24	-	145
60 to 69	-	36	21	-	57
70 to 89	1	9	4	-	14
Female					
<10	249	-	-	-	249
10 to 19	323	41	-	-	364
20 to 29	117	300	3	-	420
30 to 39	24	238	15	1	278
40 to 49	8	198	29	-	235
50 to 59	1	99	49	-	149
60 to 69	-	13	34	-	47
70 to 89	-	1	18	-	19

Occupation

With regard to occupational pattern of the members of the studied households it has been found that a total of 865 members (50.94%) of whom 422 male and 443 female are engaged as tea workers on permanent basis in the tea gardens. Moreover, 525 (30.92%) members, 244 male and 281 female are engaged as casual tea workers. Thus, it has been seen that Tea workers (both primary and Secondary) constitute 81.96 % of the total working population of the studied households. There are 202(11.90%) 152 male and 50 female working as daily wage labour.

In business as primary occupation only 43 members are engaged and in agriculture also 12 of whom, 8 male and 4 female are engaged. There 12 members, male 7 female 5 in the Govt. Service as primary occupation and 19 members , 15 male, 4 female are engaged in private service. Nineteen members are engaged in different kind of occupation including working in political parties and workers of non Government organisations, etc.

Thus, from the survey, it has been found that majority of the people from the tea community works as tea pluckers on permanent or temporary basis.

There are a few individuals who are engaged in different occupations. Some work as daily wage labours outside the garden in the town areas and a few are engaged in agriculture and farming. There are others who work as carpenters, ASHA workers, Shopkeepers, traditional healers, bus drivers, welders, etc.

The youths are now searching for other avenues to earn a livelihood. They have set up small shops, piggery farms, broiler farms, and does contract work in tea gardens. There are people engaged in SHGs. Some young girls sew clothes and are taking this craft on a commercial basis. Some people are also involved in petty political activities which are proving to be quite lucrative for them. Some ex-tea

tribes people are engaged in agricultural work and they do farming work on their lands. Details are shown in Table-4

Table – 4
Gender-wise Occupation of the surveyed population

Sl. No.	Occupation	Primary				Secondary			
		Male	Female	Total	%	Male	Female	Total	%
1	Tea worker (permanent)	422	443	865	50.94	-	-	-	-
2	Tea worker (casual)	244	281	525	30.92	-	-	-	-
3	Agriculture	8	4	12	0.71	3		3	75.00
4	Govt. Service	7	5	12	0.71	-	-	-	-
5	Business	36	7	43	2.53	-	-	-	-
6	Ex- serviceman	1		1	0.06	-	-	-	-
7	Daily wage labour	152	50	202	11.90	1		1	25.00
8	Private Job	15	4	19	1.12	-	-	-	-
9	Others	17	2	19	1.12	--	-	-	-
Total		902	796	1698	100.00	4		4	100.00

Educational Status

As regards educational status of the members of the studied households it has been found that 225 (6.54%) are below 6 years of age. In lower primary standard (Class I-V) there are 704 persons, 347 males and 357 female. In Class VI-VIII level there are 605 persons of whom 321 are male and 284 are female and in High School level (Class IX-X) there are 564 persons, male 322 female 242. In Class XI-XII there are 148 persons male 88, female 60. There are 61 graduates, of whom 40 are male and 21 are female. There are three post graduates, all male.

It is disheartening to note that as many as 1129 members, 429 male and 700 female are illiterate accounting for 32.81 percent of the studied population. It is

also been found that women are lagging much behind men in all categories of educational standard. Details are shown in Table-5

TABLE – 5

Educational Level of the Household Members

Sl.No	Education qualification	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
1	Below 6 years of age	129	3.75	96	2.79	225	6.54
2	Illiterate(above 6 years of age)	429	12.47	700	20.34	1129	32.81
3	Class I-V	347	10.08	357	10.37	704	20.46
4	Class VI-VIII	321	9.33	284	8.25	605	17.58
5	Class IX-X	322	9.36	242	7.03	564	16.39
6	Class XI-XII	88	2.56	60	1.74	148	4.30
7	Graduate	40	1.16	21	0.61	61	1.77
8.	Post Graduate	3	0.09	-	-	3	0.09
9	Others	1	0.03	1	0.03	2	0.06
Total		1680	48.82	1761	51.18	3441	100.00

Land ownership

Of the total number of studied households , it has been shown in Table-6 that 162 households(23.14 %) owns land of whom 55 households (7.86%) owns homestead land and 107 households (15.28%) owns Agricultural land.

TABLE – 6
Ownership of land by the Households

Sl No	Type of land owned	Number Of Households	%
1	Homestead	55	7.86
2	Cultivation	107	15.28
Total Number of households		162	23.14

Household Income

One hundred and fifty six households(22.28 %) of the household members monthly income is above Rs. 9000.00. The monthly income of 146 households is in the range of Rs. 5001 – 6000 while 79 households earn Rs. 6001 – 7000 monthly and 71 households earn Rs. 3001 – 4000 monthly. There are 64 households whose monthly income is Rs. 4001- 5000 and 63 households whose monthly income is Rs. 2001 – 3000. There are 4 households whose monthly income is below Rs. 2000. Details are shown in Table-7

TABLE – 7
Income of the Households

Sl No	Average household income (monthly)	Number of households	%
1	Less than 1000	1	0.14
2	1001 – 2000	3	0.43
3	2001 – 3000	63	9.00
4	3001 – 4000	71	10.14
5	4001- 5000	64	9.14
6	5001 – 6000	146	20.86
7	6001 – 7000	79	11.29
8	7001-8000	66	9.43
9	8001-9000	51	7.29
10	More than 9000	156	22.28
Total Number of households		700	100.00

Religion

Table -8 reveals that the religions of 660 numbers (94.29 %) of the surveyed households are followers of Hinduism. Forty (5.71%) households follow Christianity.

Table-8
Religion of Households

Sl.No.	Religion	No. of Households	%
1	Hinduism	660	94.29
2	Christianity	40	5.71
Total no of households		700	100.00

Gender of Household Head

The heads of 569 (81.28%) households are male and head of 131(18.71%) households are female as revealed in Table -9

Table – 9
Gender of Household Head

Sl. No .	Total No Of Households	Male	%	Female	%
1.	700	569	81.28	131	18.71

Age of Head of the Households

Table -10 reveals that there are 293 (41.86%) heads of households in the age group 45-59 years followed by 214 (30.57%) the households heads are in the age group 30-44 years, 141 (20.14%) households heads in the age group of 60 years and above while 52 (7.43%) heads of households are in the age group below 30 years.

Table-10
Age of Household Head

Sl.No.	Age of Household Head	No. of Households	%
1	< 30 years	52	7.43
2	30-44 years	214	30.57
3	45-59 years	293	41.86
4	60 years+	141	20.14
Total no of households		700	100.00

Household type

In the present study, out of 700 households, 400 (57.14) households are nuclear type and the rest 300 (42.85) households are non nuclear type as revealed in Table - 11.

Table – 11
Household type

Sl. No .	Household type	No of household	%
1.	Nuclear household	400	57.14
2.	Non-nuclear household	300	42.85
Total		700	100.00

Family Size

Table -12 reveals that in a majority of households numbering 456 (65.14%) the size of family is between 4-6 members, in 126 households (18.00 %) the size of family have 4-6 members and in 113 households (16.14%) the size of family is 7-9 members . There are only 5 households with 10-12 members.

Table – 12
Size of family

SI No	No of household members	No of households	%
1	1-3	126	18.00
2	4-6	456	65.14
3	7-9	113	16.14
4	10-12	5	0.71
Total		700	100.00

Electricity

Electricity facility is available in all the settlements/ villages taken up for the study, but it reveals from Table-13, that 627 (89.57%) households have electricity while 73 (10.53%) households do not have electricity.

Table – 13
Electricity

SI No	Electricity	No of households	%
1	Yes	627	89.57
2	No	73	10.53
Total		700	100.00

Drinking Water

Figures presented in Table-14 that Well, Hand pump, pipe water are the common source of drinking water of a majority of households in the studied villages. There are a few households who use water from the river and pond. The households mainly depend upon wells and hand pump as hand pumps are used by 343 households and well by 132 households. Hundred and eighteen households use water from both the sources. Thus it is seen that a total of 593(74.72%) use water from hand and well. Pipe water is extended to 86 households, including 1 household also using pond and 4 households also using water from well. Fourteen households use water from river, including 2 household also using water from well. Use of pond is limited to 7 which also include 4 households using water from other sources in addition to pond. Details are shown in Table -14.

Table – 14
Sources of Drinking Water

Sl. No.	Sources Of Drinking Water	No of households	%
1	Hand Pump + well	118	16.86
2	Hand Pump + Pipe water	2	0.29
3	Well	132	18.86
4	Well+ Pipe water	4	0.57
5	Pond	3	0.43
6	Pipe water	81	11.57
7	River	11	1.57
8	Hand Pump	343	49
9	Pond + Pipe water	1	0.14
10	Well + Pond	1	0.14
11	Pond + Hand Pump	1	0.14
12	Well + River	2	0.29
13	Pond + River	1	0.14
Total no of households		700	100.00

Sanitation facilities

Table -15 reveals that 425 (60.71) households uses sanitary latrine without water facility. Sixty nine (9.86 %) households use sanitary latrine with water.

As many as 144 (20.57) households use open field for defecation and 36 households use *Kutcha* latrines. Common sanitary latrine is used by 26 households.

TABLE– 15

Sanitation facilities in the Households

Sl. No.	Sanitation Facility	Number of Households	%
1	Open field	144	20.57
2	Sanitary latrine per household with water	69	9.86
3	Sanitary latrine per household without water	425	60.71
4	Common Sanitary latrine	26	3.71
5	<i>Kutcha</i> latrine	36	5.14
Total Number of households		700	100.00

Drainage system

Table -16 reveals that majority of the households 631(90.14%) under survey has no drainage system facility in their compound, while only 69 households have the same.

Table-16

Drainage system facility in their compound

Sl.No.	Drainage system	Number of Households	%
1.	Yes	69	9.86
2.	No	631	90.14
Total No. of Households		700	100.00

House Type

Table -17 reveals that there are 449 (64.14%) *Pucca* Assam Type houses in the studied villages. Besides there are 236 (33.57%) *kutcha* Assam Type houses; 1 R.C.C houses and 15 thatched houses from the surveyed households.

Table -17

House Type

Sl. No.	Type Of House	Number Of Households	%
1	Thatched	15	2.14
2	<i>Kutcha</i> Assam Type	236	33.57
3	<i>Pucca</i> Assam Type	449	64.14
4	R.C.C.	1	0.14
Total no of households		700	100.00

Nature of House

Table -18 reveals that an overwhelming 602 (86 %) houses are provided by the tea Garden company where the members of the households work. There are 96 (13.71%) households who have constructed on their own. Three households stay on rent.

Table -18

Nature of House

Sl. No.	Nature of House	No of households	%
1	Owned by self	96	13.71
2	Provided by Company	602	86.00
3	Rented	3	0.42
Total no of households		700	100.00

Size of House

Table -19 reveals that majority of the households, 356(50.86%) are two room quarters and 301(43%) are quarters with extensions. Nine households live in one room quarter. Thirty four households have built their houses on their own land.

Table -19

Size of House

Sl. No.	Size of House	No of households	%
1	One room Quarter	9	1.28
2	Quarter with extensions	301	43
3	Two room Quarter	356	50.86
4	Others (house built on own land)	34	4.85
Total no of households		700	100.00

Fuel Used by Households

Wood as fuel is used by a majority of the households, accounting for 660 (94.29%) of the total household studied. Moreover, 24 uses wood along with LPG, 3 uses wood with kerosene and 1 uses wood, coal and LPG. There are 12 households who use only LPG as revealed in Table-20.

Table -20

Fuel Used by Households

Sl.No.	Type of fuel	No of households	%
1	Wood	660	94.29
2	Wood + LPG	24	3.43
3	LPG	12	1.71
4	Wood+ kerosene	3	0.43
5	Wood + Coal + LPG	1	0.14
Total no of households		700	100.00

Livestock

Two hundred and seven households own cattle and 118 households owns goat. There are 44 households which own pig. Three hundred and fifty eight households do not own any livestock as revealed in Table-21.

Table-21

Particulars of Household livestock

Sl.No.	Livestock	No. of Households
1	Cattle	207
2	Goat	118
3	Pig	44
4	No Livestock	358

Poultry

The household survey shows that fowl, duck, pigeon are reared by the households. Three hundred and one households do not own any kind of poultry as revealed in Table-22.

Table-22

Particulars of Household poultry

Sl.No.	Poultry	No. of Households
1.	Fowl	358
2.	Duck	129
3.	Pigeon	11
4.	No poultry	301

Properties owned by Households

Regarding properties owned by households, it has been found that 527 households possess bi cycles, televisions are found in 471 households and 226 households possess mobile phones.

As regards other items, 51 households possess motorcycles, 46 households possess sewing machines, 43 households possess water filter, 13 households have

radios, 7 households possess power tiller, 1 household each possess a loom and taxi cab, and 4 household possess vehicle as revealed in Table-23.

Table -23
Properties owned by Households

Sl.No.	Properties owned	No of households
1	Plough	7
2	Loom	1
3	Radio	13
4	Mobile phone	226
5	Television	471
6	Sewing Machine	46
7	Water Filter	43
8.	Bi-cycle	527
9.	Motor cycle	51
10.	Taxi Cab	1
11.	Other vehicles (specify)	4
12.	Power Tiller	7

A majority of the households have habits of chewing tobacco. Smoking is also popular. Locally brewed liquor called as *haria* is consumed by both men and women. Domestic conflict is not uncommon and couples have quarrels, mostly due to the habit of drinking liquor by the males in the households.

Savings and Investment

Saving is rarely found among the tea workers of the settlements due to their poor economic condition. However few households are managing to save by working in the plantation or by working outside the garden as wage laborers. Some of the tea workers save from the amount of salary which they receive. They keep their savings in banks and some save in SHGs. Provision of provident fund also there. But in some gardens provident fund is only for permanent workers, and not available for temporary workers.

Reasons for liabilities

It is found that most of the families do not have many liabilities. Those who have debts are due to several reasons. They regard their monthly salary as insufficient for meeting their household expense. Some borrow money for the purpose of medical treatment of illness, or at the time of admission of children, extension of business like small shops whereas some for the purpose of marriage or other rituals and ceremonies. They borrow money mostly from friends and relatives. They also borrow money from SHGs. One of the families had liabilities for purchase of land.

Political activities

The people from the Tea community are slowly making their presence felt in the political spectrum of their locality and region. There are members in the Panchayat and other bodies. In the studied area of Shakomato, an individual of the community is the president of Zilla Parishad. He has been involved in various welfare activities of the tea tribes in Biswanath Chariali. In Jorhat and Golaghat district also, educated members of the community are holding positions of secretary and ward members in the panchayats .

No political activists were found from the settlements visited in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. When the political meetings were held during the last election, people from the community attended the meetings on invitation.

Civil rights

A majority of the households have Voting cards and ration cards. Six hundred and forty seven have Voting cards and six hundred and fifty have ration cards.

CHAPTER IV

Beneficiary Schemes and facilities

The survey conducted in the nine districts of Assam and covered 700 households belonging to Tea and Ex Tea tribes. Interviews were conducted with respondents who were beneficiaries of different schemes and programmes implemented by government and other organizations working for the welfare of the community. The Directorate for Welfare of Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes, Assam, since the year 1983-1984 has implemented several schemes for their socio-economic development. Similarly ABITA and SAI have also taken up schemes on different issues. (The details of the schemes are given in the Introduction Section of the study). In addition, other Non Government Organisations have from time to time taken up programmes to create awareness on several vital issues plaguing the community. ABITA has collaborated with UNICEF since the year 2000, through their education, Crèche Development and Nutrition Programme. Over the years the programme has intervened in diverse areas to promote health, nutrition, sanitation, and child right among the Tea community.

Awareness and Benefits received under various schemes

The study tried to find out whether the people belonging to the Tea and Ex-tea Tribes have awareness on issues like health, child /human trafficking, family planning, legal rights, etc. In this regard, the role of government and non government organizations is crucial.

A majority of the respondents reported that they have heard about provision of different schemes provided by the government or Tea Welfare Board for people belonging to tea tribes. But most of them have not been able to avail the facilities due to lack of proper knowledge and information regarding the schemes. In some cases as they did not get any benefits even after applying for a scheme, they slowly lost interest in availing the benefits.

It has been found that awareness camps on health and hygiene, family planning, cleanliness, ill-effects of liquor consumption, etc. were conducted in some of the surveyed villages.

In Mancotta Garden, awareness camps are held by BCP in collaboration with UNICEF. In Sessa tea garden UNICEF held awareness program. In Sealkotee tea garden ABITA in collaboration with UNICEF held awareness camp. In these three tea gardens and all the other tea gardens except Jalan Nagar South, Ida and Mohanbari tea garden, AASA held awareness camps on different issues.

In Tinsukia district, ABITA in collaboration with UNICEF held awareness camp in Hapjan tea garden. AASA also held awareness camp in Hapjan, Kehang and Hatimura tea gardens. Moreover in Deohal tea garden awareness camp was held on diarrhoea. In Hatimura tea garden, the Child Protection Center conducts awareness on menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.

Two years preceding this survey, a street play on Malaria was held at Sonapur tea garden by nurses from the government hospital.

In Bishwanath Chariali, in some gardens, awareness programmes on family planning and cleanliness were conducted by the garden hospital of the respective Tea gardens.

In Jorhat District, awareness programme on health of children and women were conducted by tea gardens authorities in hospitals and in tea garden schools. Sometimes they conduct awareness programme on health and hygiene and general cleanliness. Some NGOs also arrange awareness programme on health and hygiene.

Similar is the case in Morigaon and in Nagaon districts. An awareness camp was held on Witch hunting and superstitious beliefs by ATTSA in the tea gardens in Nagaon.

Awareness camps were held in Rajmai and Kongea garden in Sibsagar district on domestic violence, alcoholism, child marriage and menstrual hygiene by certain NGOs in collaboration with UNICEF which also gives cultural training to the girls of the settlements.

Some of the respondents of the study admitted that they have been benefitted by the schemes. Some households have received mosquito nets, water filters, electric meters, bicycle, sewing machine, etc. A few households benefitted from government schemes which distributed power tillers, grants under the scheme of FOIG, etc. In the districts of Dibrugarh, Bishwanath Chariali, Nagaon, Morigaon, Kamrup, Tinsukia, and Sibsagar, people have been benefitted from schemes when they received water filters, bicycles, sewing machines, power tillers, books and uniforms, low cost sanitation, mosquito net, etc. People from the surveyed tea gardens in Dibrugarh district have received bicycles and mosquito nets in almost all the areas under study.

Awareness programme

Awareness programme on “Literacy and Health issues” were conducted in 20 settlements/ villages during the preceding year. Different organisations both from government and non- government sector conducted those programme.

Health and hygiene condition of the Tea garden workers are very poor because of which many of them suffer from high rate of morbidity and mortality. Various departments of the government of Assam are working together to increase the level of health and hygiene of the community. In this context, State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLMS), Food and Civil Supply and National Health Mission (NHM) are working together for improving health and hygiene of the Tea Community. The tea garden workers suffer from nutritional deficiency because of lack of supply of nutritious food, proper drinking water and poor poverty resulting in the rise of maternal and infant mortality rate. To solve this problem, the nutrition shops, locally called as Bagan Bazar have been set up . On 2nd October 2015, 24 number of nutrition shops were inaugurated in the Tea gardens across Assam. These shops stock nutritious food including green leafy vegetables and fruits .It also sells grocery items, soaps and disinfectants at reasonable price. A SHG by women owns and run this nutrition shop.

Adolescent girls groups

The Adolescent girls groups, an initiative of UNICEF is slowly being implemented in tea Gardens in a few districts of Upper Assam. One such group is

functioning in Khongea Tea estates, where girls from Tea Gardens were found practicing traditional dances as a part of a summer workshop organised by the district administration. The girls were also given lessons on menstrual hygiene, evil of child marriage, etc. Another group in Deohal tea estate undergoes similar life skill classes every Sunday. They are taught about women's issues, evils of early marriage of girls, protection and safety measures for girls, etc .

Mothers Club

Shakomato Village, Biswanath Chariali

During the survey in the different Tea Gardens, it has been found that a few Mothers Clubs are functioning in the tea garden areas. Mothers Clubs are also found in Hatimara and Rajmai Tea Gardens. The Clubs are primarily associated with welfare of the Tea garden workers. Discussions about nutrition, hygiene, disease etc, are conducted among the people who stay in the garden lines. It has been trying to spread awareness against alcoholism, child marriage and promoting good health practices.

The said organisation is in Shakomato Village in Biswanath Chariali . The Mothers Club has been set up for the welfare of the tea-tribe people and looks after many aspects of their lives.

The Mothers Club in Shakomato village was set up in 2013. There are total 10 members in the Mothers Club. The present President and Secretary are Christiana Nag and Sanmoti Tanti. These members of the Mothers have to wear a uniform of blue and white *Mekhala Sador*. The Mothers Club at Shakomato do not have a building of its own and operates from a member's residence. The main functions of Mothers Club are –

Children Issues: The main function of the mother's club is to look after the children of their settlements. They see that the children follow cleanliness in their day to day lives. They take the children to school. If any boy or girl stay absent in school for many days, a member goes to the child's house and make an effort to bring him/her to school.

Health Issues: The members of the Mother's Club look visit the houses and when they find that someone is suffering from any disease, they give advice and suggestions, and also take the patients to the hospitals.

Cleanliness: Mother's Club keeps the settlements and the surroundings clean and teach people the importance of cleanliness.

Literacy awareness: The Club holds literacy awareness activities and programme every month and try to make the people aware about the importance of education.

Awareness against alcohol: This Mother's Club works for creating awareness against addiction to alcohol.

Mothers Club/ *Mahila Samittee* are found in 15 gardens and Adolescent Girls Groups are found in seven gardens during the survey.

Bagan Bazar

Though the Govt. of Assam opened a large number of Bagan Bazar in the tea gardens of Assam, but it has been observed in the study areas that Bagan Bazars are present in very few places. These are run by the workers union of the respective tea gardens. These Bagan Bazar outlets provide good quality food like rice, dal, packets of nutritious food on reasonable price. Bagan Bazar in Bokaholla, Amluckie and Oating are examples of these nutritious food shops. The Rajmai garden also has a Bagan Bazar in the garden area. Some informants said that quality of commodities is good and the commodities are cheaper than the market price, but tea workers hardly go there.

Several schemes have been implemented by the government of Assam in collaboration with the Tea companies or different agencies like the UNICEF for bring socio-economic changes for the Tea and Ex- tea tribe people. The study tried to find out the number of gardens and villages benefited by the schemes. The children of persons directly employed in registered Tea Estates and governed by the PLA are eligible for several educational schemes provided by the Government of Assam. It has been found out from Table-1 that in 47 settlements/ villages' students have received Text Book and Uniform and Bi-cycles. Workers in 40 Garden / villages have received impregnated Mosquito nets. Grant-in-aid to

patients suffering from Cancer, tuberculosis and Other malignant diseases and Installation of Electrical Meter at the residence of tea workers have been found in 21 settlements each respectively. Financial Assistance for Higher education, Sports and Youth welfare (including sports goods to club) and Grant for Cultural Activities including educational Tour have been found in 4 settlements. Drinking Water Filter in 19, Sewing machines in 20 and solar lamp to needy students (HSLC level) in 9 settlements were distributed. Low cost sanitary latrine and Water Supply (both jointly executed with UNICEF) was found in 22 and 5 settlements respectively. Training and Training materials were received in 6 settlements. ANM/GNM/BSc Nursing including Para-Medical Training for Women Empowerment and Financial Subsidy for Taxi-cab.

Gramya Taxi Scheme was found in only 1 settlement each respectively. Pre-Matric Scholarship and Post Matric Scholarship was found in 7 and 10 settlements respectively. Seven settlements had beneficiaries of Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme (FOIGS) and 14 settlements had beneficiaries of Power Tiller.

TABLE -1

Availability of different Schemes

Sl.No.	Name of Schemes	No. of the Settlements/Villages
1.	Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme (FOIGS)	7
2.	Power Tiller	14
3.	Pre-Matric Scholarship	7
4.	Post Matric Scholarship	10
5.	Financial Assistance for Higher education	4
6.	Grant for Cultural Activities including educational Tour.	4
7.	Grant-in-aid to patients suffering from Cancer,	21

	T.B. and Other malignant diseases.	
8.	Provision of Text Book and Uniform.	47
9.	Installation of Electrical Meter at the residence of tea workers.	21
10.	ANM/GNM/BSc Nursing including Para-Medical Training for Women Empowerment	1
11.	Financial Subsidy for Taxi-cab <i>Gramya</i> Taxi Scheme	1
12.	Bi-cycle to students	47
13.	Low cost sanitary latrine(Sanitation jointly executed with UNICEF)	22
14.	Water Supply(Jointly executed with UNICEF)	5
15.	Training and Training materials	6
16.	Sports and Youth welfare (including sports goods to club)	4
17.	Drinking Water Filter	19
18.	Solar lamp to needy students(HSLC level)	9
19.	Impregnated Mosquito nets	40
20.	Sewing machines	20

Welfare Schemes

The Tea Board has also been implementing schemes for the welfare of Tea workers and their families .Some of their programmes concerns family welfare, scouting and guiding activities, eradication of illiteracy,etc. From Table-2, it has been found that in only 3 settlements in Tea Gardens activities related to Family

welfare scheme and Eradication of illiteracy schemes have been implemented by the Tea Board.

The Sport Authority of India (SAI) implements schemes for Tea and Ex- tribe community youths and encourages and promotes talents who show prowess in sporting activities. In the study, 2 settlements have benefitted from schemes implemented by the said organisation.

TABLE – 2

Schemes

Sl. No.	Name of Organisations implementing the Schemes	Name of Schemes	No. of the Settlements/Villages
1	Tea Board	Family welfare	3
		Eradication of illiteracy	3
2	Sport Authority of India(SAI)	Sports related scheme	2

CHAPTER V

Case Studies

This chapter is a collection of case studies based on interviews with beneficiaries of different schemes and programmes. Several schemes which have benefitted individuals from the Tea community are Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme (FOIGS), Power Tiller, Grant for purchase of Text Book and Uniform, Installation of Electrical Meter at the residence of tea workers, Bi-cycle to students, receiving Training and Training materials, water filter, Solar lamp,, Mosquito nets, Scholarships for Higher Studies , Sports Schemes, etc.

Case Studies

Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme (FOIGS)

Name of the Beneficiary: Katiram Orang

Age: 30 years

Sex: Male

Occupation: Farmer

Shakomato Village, Biswanath Chariali

Katiram Orang has received an amount of 10,000 during the month of January, 2014. He collected this money from the Block Development Office. He invested this money for the purpose of starting a piggery farm on his homestead land. He did not divert the money for other purpose. But this money was not sufficient to meet the expenses of his small enterprise. So he collected a loan from Gramin Bikash Bank and also borrowed money from a friend. After that, he gave his attention on his piggery farm .At present, he is earning a profit from his business and is investing the money in other businesses.

Name of the Beneficiary: Umesh Nag

Age: 27 years

Sex: Male

Occupation : Shop owner

Shakomato Village, Biswanath Chariali

mesh Nag has received a FOIG loan of 10,000 in the month of January 2014. He collected this money from HDFC bank. He did not face any difficulties while collecting this money. He opened a grocery shop with this money. But this money was not sufficient for him to start a business. So his father gave him another Rs.50, 000/-. With this monetary help he was able to run his shop. Now he is earning a good profit and is able to maintain his family well. According to him, the FOIG money did not give him much monetary support, but gave a spirit to develop his economic condition.

At Shakomato village there are two other beneficiaries under FOIG who received Rs.10000 /- each. They opened small enterprises and are doing well.

Name of the Beneficiary: Gita Tanti

Age: 28 years

Sex: Female

Occupation: Housewife

Hatimara T.E, Tinsukia

Gita Tanti is a member of Monmilan SHG and stays at Hatimara T.E, Tinsukia district. On 1st April, 2016, Monmilan SHG got Rs.20000/- as one time fund and 1000 chicken. The amount was withdrawn from UCO Bank, Bordubi, Tinsukia. She faced no difficulties while withdrawing the money. The money was invested for purchasing poultry feed and was enough for the said purpose. She also underwent training which was provided by the SID office authority.

Unfortunately, the chicks did not survive for more than 3 months. So no additional income could be generated and they failed to achieve anything. It was presumed that the SHG members did not learn how to look after the chicken. Due to inability of the members, and training being not provided beforehand, the chicken did not survive.

Power Tiller

Name of Beneficiary: Gyanjyoti SHG

Borbheta, Nimona Tea Garden

Bishwanath Chariali

The Gyanjyoti SHG was established in 2012 and was registered in 2013. Sri Binod Naidu is the president of this SHG. Initially, this SHG emphasized on saving money from its members on a monthly basis. There are 11 members in this SHG. But in 2014, this SHG got a power tiller from the Govt. of Assam. Now they are engaged in ploughing of land on contract basis. They have employed 4 persons in this ploughing work. People who require ploughing in their agriculture land, take the service of the SHG and pay them for the use of the power tiller and the workers. The president of the SHG takes the earning of this power tiller on a monthly system.

Name of Beneficiary: Nilkantha SHG

Doyang Tea Estate,

Golaghat

Arup Ganju , age-23 and Kumar Mohanon ,age-24 are the President and Secretary of Nilkantha SHG. They got a power tiller in 2015. They engaged this power tiller for ploughing work on contract system. For this, they have hired a driver, whom they pay a monthly salary. They reported that they have benefitted very much from this scheme. They are earning good profit from ploughing work. They earn 20,000 per annum.

Their economic conditions have improved, and have seen an increase in their purchasing power also. They also save a part of the profit in the bank.

Name of Beneficiary: Lakhmi Narayan SHG

Shakamoto,

Bishwanath Chariali

Nirmal Marar and Nitesh are the President and Secretary of this SHG. This SHG received a power tiller in 2015. The members equally share the ploughing work with the power tiller. They said they have benefitted very much from this scheme. They have engaged 2 more persons for this work. They earn Rs.20, 000 /- per annum.

Name of Beneficiary: Ma Bhavani SHG

Nagadhuli T.E.

Jorhat

Ma Bhavani SHG in Nagadhuli was established in the year 2013. Sharmila Puram is the president of this SHG. First, they were involved in petty saving by contributions from members. After that, they started doing planting work (Ruwoni) on contract basis. In 2015, they received a power tiller from the State Government. With that power tiller, they started taking ploughing work on contract. They engaged few male employees to run the power tiller. Since that time, they are earning profit. They save the money in the nearby S.B.I.

Name of Beneficiary: Bonomali SHG

Bokahulla Tea Estate

Jorhat

Janu Malik is a female tea worker of 27 years age in Bokahulla tea garden. She is the president of Bonomali SHG. She got a power tiller in 2014 in the name of their SHG. They have given this power tiller to another person for

the purpose of agriculture. They members divide the profit among themselves.

Name of Beneficiary Juti SHG

Nimona Tea Estate

Jorhat

This SHG was established in 2012 and was registered in 2013. Sri Binod Naidu is the president of this SHG. Initially, this SHG saved money from monthly contributions of the members. There are 11 members in this SHG. But in 2014 this SHG got a power tiller from the Govt. of Assam. Now they are engaged in ploughing of land on a contract basis .They have employed 4 persons in this ploughing work. The President takes the earning of this power tiller on a monthly system.

Name of Beneficiary: Jyoti SHG

Monkhooshi Tea Garden,

Tinsukia.

Gangarm Urang, primarily a tea worker and a farmer stays in Monkhooshi tea garden, Tinsukia. He has 5 members in his family. In 2013, Jyoti SHG got a power tiller and Gangaram Urang was president of that SHG during that period. There are 12 members in the SHG. Every member use the power tiller when required. No difficulties were encountered in getting the power tiller.

The beneficiary has benefited from the scheme. Before implementation of the scheme his annual income was approximately Rs.70000 annually. After receiving the power tiller and using it, his income has increased. He is able to increase his agricultural produce which feeds him and his family for 5-6 more months in a year. In addition, he is able to spend more money on his daughters' education.

The beneficiary said that the introduction of the scheme of Power tiller is a good step by the Government. It takes less time for ploughing and betters

economic condition of the household. But he opines that maintaining the power tiller is expensive and suggests that the cost of repairing should be met by the government.

Name of Beneficiary: Surjya SHG
Nahorchapori village, Borhapjan,
Tinsukia.

Upen Urang, age 27, primarily a factory labor and a farmer stays at Nahorchapori village, Borhapjan, Tinsukia. In 2015, Surjya SHG got a power tiller under FOIGs from the government. Upen Urang was the president of that SHG during that period.

(Sukhiya Urang, another member of Surjya SHG said that, although there are 12 members in the SHG, the other members cannot use the power tiller because the president paid Rs.7000 in the office of the SDW from his own pocket for the power tiller. And that is why he considers the power tiller to be his property.

The beneficiary has benefited from the scheme. Before implementation of the scheme his annual income was approximately Rs. 50000 annually. But after owning the power tiller, his additional income is Rs.10000 – 15000. He uses the amount to spend on food items.

No beneficiary card has introduced. The beneficiary said that the introduction of the scheme of Power tiller is a good step by the Government. It takes less time for ploughing and betters the economic condition of the household.

Name of the Beneficiary: Jyoti SHG
Monkhoosi Tea Garden,
Tinsukia

The name of the self-help group is Jyoti SHG and Sri Pairoo Urang and Sri Elia Urang are the president and the secretary of the SHG. He along with his male group members received the power tiller under FOIG scheme. The date of commencement of the scheme was on 20th June, 2015. The group

members are tea workers both permanent and casual who have their own plot of land for cultivation.

According to Pairoo, the power tiller has benefitted the group for agriculture purpose. The power tiller is used alternatively where each member keeps the tiller for a time period. The respondents said that every harvesting season they get an additional benefit of around Rs. 10,000 since using the power tiller. The crops cultivated are for consumption only. According to the respondents, they had to invest Rs. 6000 for receiving the power tiller where each member gave an equal amount to the officials for receiving the power tiller.

Name of the Beneficiary: Kishan SHG

Naharsaporigaon,

Tinsukia

The name of the SHG is Kishan SHG from Naharsaporigaon of Tinsukia district. The SHG received a power tiller in the year 2015. The group consist of 15 members. Sakib Urang, age 30, is the President and Sri Rameswar Bhumij is the Secretary of the group. Most of the members are farmers by nature and deals with secondary works as wage labours during planting and harvesting seasons. They have been benefitted by the power tiller. As the group has many members, so each member uses the tiller for a specific period of time and the cycle continues. According to the respondent, they had to contribute Rs.18, 000/- to avail the facility provided by the government. They have not received any training nor has any beneficiary card been given to them.

Bi-cycle to students

Name of Beneficiary: Golapi Kurmi

Age – 17 years

Sex- Female

Holmari Tea Garden (ex tea-tribe area)

Golapi Kurmi of Holmari Tea Garden (ex tea-tribe area) got a bicycle in March 2017. She is a student of class eleven. She is very happy on receiving the bicycle which has helped her to travel to her college situated quite a distance from her hamlet.

Water Filter

Name: Mina Bhumij

Age: 50 years

Sex: Female

Sessa Tea Estate, Dibrugarh

Mina Bhumij got a water filter from government scheme through the Block Development Office. She came to know about the scheme by chance, when one day while she was on her way to a relative's house. She happened to see a large number of people in front of the Tea Garden office. On enquiring, she came to know about the distribution of water filter for people belonging from her garden. She quickly came back home and collected her Voter ID card and ration card and went back to apply for the water filter. In due course, she received a water filter for her household.

Solar lamp to needy students (HSLC level)

Name: Mrinal Donor

Age: 27

Sex: Male

Mancotta Tea Garden, Dibrugarh

Mrinal Sobor got a solar lamp from the Government when he was a student of Class X. He is now working as an accountant in a private firm. His father is a school teacher in a Tea Garden and knew about the scheme and applied for the same in the Panchayat office.

Two more boys and a girl from Mancotta also received solar lamps from the government.

Sewing machines

In most of the studied villages, there are beneficiaries of sewing machines.

Name: Sebelina Bara

Age: 26

Sex: Female

Monkhooshi Tea Garden, Tinsukia

Sebelina Bara stays at Monkhooshi tea garden, Tinsukia. In 2016, Sebelina got a sewing machine from the government as she had received training in sewing and tailoring from an NGO called as 'The Brahmaputra & North-East Development Society' in connection with the scheme. Sebelina is a housewife and she spends her leisure time to sew clothes. After completing her training she applied for a sewing machine. She got the machine but unfortunately her sewing machine was not working properly. So, at present she is unable to continue sewing and making dresses.

She said that the machine she received is of low quality as it is free of cost.

Name of the Beneficiary: Monalisa Tanti

Age: 21

Sex: Female

Chota Tingrai Tea Garden, Tinsukia

Monalisa Tanti stays at Chota Tingrai tea garden, Tinsukia. In 2013, Monalisa got a sewing machine from the government as she had received training in connection with the scheme. She got the machine and is earning money by sewing clothes. She manages to earn Rs.10000-12000 in a year and spends the money for purchase of household goods.

She states that this scheme is a positive step for welfare of girls in the Tea Garden areas, as the girls can use their leisure time in pursuit of a fruitful venture.

Name of the Beneficiary: Mousumi Gonju

Age: 21

Sex: Female

Athabari Tea Garden, Sibsagar

Mousumi Gonju stays at Athabari tea garden, Sivasagar. In 2015, Mousumi Gonju got a sewing machine from the government as she had received training from the tea garden authority in connection with the scheme. After training, Mousumi applied for a sewing machine. She got the machine and is earning through it although it does not work well. She is trying to make use of her skill by taking orders. She hardly manages to earn Rs.4000 in a year and spends her earning on purchase of household goods.

Name of the Beneficiary: Sonia Lohar

Age: 22

Sex: Female

Chota Tingrai Tea Garden, Tinsukia

Sonia Lohar is from Chota Tingrai Tea Garden of Tinsukia district of Assam. Sonia had received the scheme under FOIG. She had applied for the scheme and also received training from the Tea Plantation Art Centre in Tinsukia. She had to face a problem in receiving this scheme. The problem which she faced was due to her marriage. Because she was married to a different garden, she was having trouble in receiving the machine due to change of residence and hence a different address given when applied for the scheme. Later, after some efforts from her end, she was able to get the sewing machine. The machine did benefit her in a small way with an amount of 1000 per month. She is using the machine for both domestic and commercial purposes. She received the machine in the year of 2012-2013.

She did not get any beneficiary card nor did any officials pay a visit to check the machine later. According to her, she has been benefitted by the scheme which helped her to be independent and earn on her own.

Name of the Beneficiary: Maria Urang

Age: 30

Sex: Female

Monkhoosi Tea Garden, Tinsukia

Maria Urang is from Monkhoosi tea estate of Tinsukia district. She received a sewing machine under the FOIG scheme in the year 2016. She also received training in sewing as part of the scheme. She did not have to contribute any form of materials or amount to receive the machine. According to Maria, the sewing machine is of low quality which soon after she brought home, broke down, so she was not able to make use of the sewing machine even after availing the training. No officials paid a visit to check the machine. She has also not received any beneficiary card. According to her, she has not been benefitted after receiving the scheme because of the poor quality of the machine.

Name of the Beneficiary: Bobita Gamang

Age: 35

Sex: Female

Ida Tea Garden, Dibrugarh

Bobita Gamang is a married woman from Ida Tea Garden . She came to know about distribution of sewing machines in the Block Development Office from her brother. She then went to the Panchayat office to apply for it. After receiving the sewing machine now she is getting training in cutting and tailoring. After the completion of her course in tailoring, she will start taking orders for sewing dresses.

Name of the Beneficiary: Anita David

Age: 25

Sex: Female

Ida Tea Garden, Dibrugarh

Anita is a young, unmarried woman of 25 years. She has received a USHA Sewing machine from the government. She had already undergone a course in tailoring and now has taken tailoring as an occupation. She takes orders and earns approx. Rs.1200 per month. Very recently she has signed a contract to stitch the uniforms for the students of Lahoal College, for which the college will pay her for her service.

Name of the Beneficiary: Anjali Bhumij

Age: 19

Sex: Female

Kehyung Tea Garden, Tinsukia

Anjali Bhumij is a resident of Kehyung Tea Garden. She is a beneficiary of a sewing machine. She knew that the government distributes bicycles to students and other things like sewing machines to the needy. So, she enquired from another individual about this particular scheme. Moreover, she was always interested in stitching and doing other crafts rather than school studies. So, she approached Raju Bhumij, who is an employee at ACMS of Tinsukia district, who advised her to go to Bordubi Block Office and get the required information. There she applied for the sewing machine. Finally, in the year 2015 she got the sewing machine.

Again, on being enquired whether the sewing machine had any impact on her life or change her life, she replied in the following manner. "Yes, a lot, I already told you that I do not have much interest in studies and after I failed in HSLC exam I left studies. Since then I was idle, I asked my mother to let me go to a tailor shop in Bahadur Charali(6 km from Kehung) and stitch clothes. But there also I needed a sewing machine to stitch. But due to financial problem I was unable to do so. So I applied for a sewing machine and got it. Now I always come here and stitch clothes and the money I get is sufficient for me. I can support my family too. I am self-dependent now and feel very good about it".

Grant for purchase of Text Book and Uniform

From the survey in the Tea gardens, it has been found that the students belonging to the Lower Primary schools and Upper Primary Schools have received text-books and uniforms free of cost. But, it is not clear whether these children have benefitted under special schemes implemented for welfare of Tea and Ex- tea Tribes children or general scheme for all students studying in Government run schools where children are provided with free textbooks and school uniforms.

Beneficiaries

Name: Rina Sobor

Age: 40

Sex: Female

Mancotta Tea Garden, Dibrugarh

Rina is a nurse attendant in the Tea garden hospital . She has received a LPG connection through Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. She applied for it in the Panchayat office. She had to pay Rs. 600 for the LPG connection, which she received from the local Randhan Gas Agency, Dibrugarh.

Name: Akoni Lohar

Age: 24

Sex: Female

Sessa Tea Garden, Dibrugarh

Akoni has completed her graduation and is now working with UNICEF. She is a volunteer worker with UNICEF and works for free. She has got training from UNICEF workers and now holds meetings in the garden to educate the people of her area on various issues. She is working under Young Reporter quota of UNICEF. She delivers training on issues of health, cooking, safety protection, child protection, against human trafficking and life skills. She distributes iron capsules for anaemia to the garden girls under a program of UNICEF.

Name: Rumi Raika

Age: 39

Sex: Female

Ida Tea Garden, Dibrugarh

Rumi Raika has studied upto IXth standard. She has received free training from Barbaruah PHC and is now working as an AASA worker. She came to know about the training from her friend. They are trained to take care of pregnant women before and after delivery, and to take care of the newborn. They go from house to house to give vaccination. They also accompany the

pregnant women for checkups and during delivery of babies. They hold public meetings in their respective area to educate people about family planning, hygiene, etc. They are given an honourarium of Rs. 600 per delivery case.

Name: Kamala Sahu

Age: 42

Sex: Female

Muttuck Tea Garden , Dibrugarh

Kamala Sahu from Muttuck Tea Garden attend meetings organised by the Block. Through these meetings she has come to know about AASA. After that, she went to the PHC to gather more information about AASA. Kamala gave an application to the PHC, Lahoal, expressing her desire to undergo training for AASA. It was a five day training conducted in the PHC, after which she joined AASA in 2007. Since then, she is working as an AASA worker. They get a 5 day training every year in the PHC.

Health Case Study

Name of Informant: Atul Malik

Age- 48 years

Sex- Male

Bokaholla T.E., Jorhat

He is suffering from cancer (cell carcinoma) since 2016, October. At first, he went to the garden hospital for treatment and later to Jorhat Civil hospital. They referred him to B. Baruah Cancer Institute, Guwahati. He underwent an operation in March 2017. He met the expenses for the treatment and operation from his own finance. He had to sell his plot of agriculture land to meet the medical expenses. He has applied for government aid. He is expecting to get financial help from the government.

Name of Informant: Basanta Malik

Age- 30 years

Sex- Male

Bokaholla T.E., Jorhat

He has been suffering from disease of the nerves since the last 5 years. His left hand and leg have become paralysed. But in spite of his disability, he runs a small shop. He underwent treatment at Jorhat Civil hospital, which referred him to Assam Medical College Hospital (AMCH), Dibrugarh. He has 4 members in the family and his wife works in the tea garden.

Name: Sewali Maal

Age: 8 years

Nimona T.E., Jorhat

***Sewali Maal** is a girl of 8 years. She had Polio when she was one year of age. The doctor from the Garden Hospital advised her family to take her to Gauhati Medical College Hospital (GMCH). But due to the family's negligence, she did not get the required medical treatment.*

Name ;Lina Bakti

Age :32

Sex : Female

Designation : ASHA Worker

Mrs. Lina Bakti from Muttuck Tea Estate is an AASA worker. She came to know about AASA in a meeting she attended at the Block Office at Lahoal. Later along with her friend Kamala Sahu she visited the PHC and met a doctor by the name of Dr.Gohain who gave her information on how to become an ASHA worker. Dr.Gohain asked them to organize a meeting with tea garden workers and Anganwadi workers. In the meeting, both Lina Bakti and Kamala Sahu were chosen to be trained as ASHA workers. Afterward, they both went to the PHC for 5 day training.

Lina has been working as an ASHA worker for ten years approximately. When she comes to know that a woman is pregnant, she takes the woman to the PHC for checkups. There, the pregnant woman is registered and a Nutrition Councillor gives her advice on diet and various health issues

related to pregnancy. Lina said that the would be mother remains under her supervision during the period of pregnancy. She is also provided with the essential medicines like calcium, iron supplements, etc,. At the time of delivery, Lina takes the woman to the doctor. Moreover, after delivery of the baby, the mother and the baby must have proper care. She gives necessary advice to the mother with regard to the importance of breast milk, hygiene, keeping the baby warm, and protection from mosquitoes, etc. After 7 days of birth, Lina has to make further visits to measure the weight and temperature of the baby. She provides the required medicines too.

Besides, the above duties, Lina also has to attend to people suffering from different diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhoea, etc.

Installation of Electrical Meter at the residence of tea workers

In most of the quarters, where the tea workers live, the Garden management provides Electricity. Regarding the installation of electrical meter at the residence of tea workers, it is not clear, if these are provided by the Tea companies themselves or in collaboration with Government under certain schemes for welfare of Tea and Ex- tea Tribes. Some of the respondents claim that they have personally paid for expenses required to install Electric meters in their residences.

Impregnated Mosquito nets

Impregnated Mosquito Nets from Assam Government have been distributed in almost every tea gardens of Assam. In our surveyed areas also we found many beneficiaries of this scheme.

More on FOIG Schemes

It is worth mentioning that in many cases as found during survey, the FOIG schemes of Rs. 10,000 for each beneficiary (individual or group) were divided into Rs 5000 for two beneficiaries (individuals or groups). This was done due to the fact that, there were more beneficiaries available then the amount for the schemes. There were some beneficiaries who received Rs. 5000 each. In Jorhat district, at Murmuria village, Biswajit Tasa got a FOIG loan of Rs. 5000 in 2014, which he

invested in taking contract in the tea garden as Rs.5000 was not enough to start a business. Some beneficiaries reported that they spent the money in buying household needs. In Golaghat district, Arup Ganju utilized this money judiciously. With the Rs.5000 he bought 2 cows and started a dairy. He has benefitted in this small business and has bought more milch cows. At present he is happy and successful in his enterprise.

Bi-cycles to students

There are Beneficiaries receiving bicycles in Biswanath Chariali district. In Pratabgarh, Shakomato and areas inhabited by Ex-Tea Tribe people, students studying in high school level have received bicycles. Many opined that the quality of the bicycles is poor.

Beneficiaries receiving Training and Training materials

A young boy named Ganesh Sona from Pratabgarh garden has received training on Financial Management . He underwent the training at an Institution in Guwahati. The course duration of the training was 6 months. He got a certificate from that institute which ensured him a job after the completion of his job. He has informed that he is very satisfied with the Training course.

Sewing machines

Two more girls from Muttuck Tea Garden also got sewing machines. Five women from Koilabari village and two from Hukanpukhuri Tea Garden also got sewing machines. At Jopoubari village (Tea and Ex-Tea tribe area) Lipika Orang got a sewing machine in 2014. Since that time she has been engaged in making dresses and selling those in the market. She is an expert tailor and is earning a good income.

Schemes from SAI

At Pratabgarh Tea Garden of Biswanath Chariali, SAI (Sports Authority of India) selected three boys from New line hamlet for undergoing training in football. After completion of the training, they were sent to take part in a football tournament. The Elder of the village reported that every year SAI selects one or two boys for undergoing training in sports.

Schemes from Tea Board

The Tea Board offers scholarships to meritorious student of the Tea community. From the survey, two beneficiaries have given their feedback.

Rajiv Baroi, 28 years, is an Instrumental Engineering student. He received Rs 35,000/- as one time scholarship from Tea Board of Assam in 2015. His parents reported that the money helped him to continue his study. He was able to buy his study material and instruments.

Amrit Baroi, a student of M. Sc of Gauhati University, received Rs 60,000/- from the Tea Board of Assam in 2015. With the money he was able to complete his Master Degree and take admission in PhD.

An analysis of the findings of schemes implemented in the study area

FOIGs- As the name of the scheme indicates, Family Oriented Income Generating Schemes or popularly known as FOIGs are implemented for creating enterprises among economically weaker section of the society. The schemes would result in income generation for the family. From the case studies, it has been found that youths having a zeal for setting enterprises have benefitted from FOIGs scheme. Funds utilised properly by them have led to success in their businesses.

On the other hand, it has also been seen that sometimes, the amount of money received under the scheme was also not sufficient for some beneficiaries. They had to supplement the finance by taking additional loans from other sources.

In some cases, FOIG schemes of Rs. 10,000/- was divided between two individuals or SHGs. In a majority of such cases, it is found that the money was not enough to set up any enterprise and the beneficiaries spent it to meet their daily needs. A few enterprising youths like Ganju used the amount of Rs.5000/- he received to buy milch cows. He has been able to supply milk and is slowly earning a profit by starting a small dairy unit.

Formation of SHGs is being encouraged, as many schemes from Government are given to groups who come together under SHGs.

Power Tiller is generally given to a SHG, whose members own agriculture land. From the survey, it has been found that most of the households working in the tea gardens lack agriculture land. Only a few households, mostly belonging to Ex Tea tribes own agriculture land. Hence, very few people of the community have been able to take advantage of this scheme. Never the less, from the study areas in Biswanath Chariali, Golaghat, Jorhat,(Bokahulla), and Tinsukia, it has been found that SHGs have received power tillers. In some cases, the power tillers were given on rent by the beneficiaries to other cultivators who own agriculture land. In return, they received payment, a part of which was given to the drivers of the power tillers, and the rest distributed among the SHG members.

It is also found that in some cases, the earning from the use of the power tiller is amassed by the influential member of the SHG- generally the President of the group.

Although most of the SHGs do not use the power tillers for ploughing their own land and rents it out, there are a few SHGs, whose members use the tillers to plough their own agriculture land and are being able to increase their agriculture outputs.

The economic condition has improved when members share the work and profits earned from the use of the power tiller.

For receiving the power tillers, some of the beneficiaries have alleged that they had to grease the palms of the government officials.

Under the scheme for distribution of bicycles to school students, many students, both boys and girls have benefitted from the Tea garden areas. They have admitted that this scheme has helped them to travel to their schools and colleges situated at a distance from their settlements.

The households have received water filters and solar lamps. Many alleges that the solar lamps are of poor quality and hence became unusable after a few days.

Impregnated Mosquito nets have been supplied for eradication of mosquito related diseases. Many households from the Tea garden have over the years received these articles.

A few women from the households under study have received sewing machines. Women who have completed a course or undergone training on cutting and sewing were considered for these schemes. Some have benefitted and are earning livelihood by making dresses. A few have complained that the machines have been lying idle as it did not work and is of inferior quality.

Educated youths from the Tea community have been given scholarships for pursuing higher studies by Indian Tea Board. One is a student of Instrumentation Engineering who is currently undergoing PhD degree.

The Sports Authority of India has provided training in football to three youths from the Tea community. They were later sent to play in a football match.

Tea Garden youths have also availed training on such courses as Financial Management. After completion of the course the youth received a job offer.

Young women of the Tea community have come forward to work as volunteer for UNICEF. There are also a few ASHA workers from the studied households.

In 15 gardens there are Mothers Club/ *Mahila Samittee* and these organisations have been trying to bring socio- economic changes by creating awareness on several vital issues plaguing the tea community. The Mothers Club is functioning in only a few Tea Gardens in Upper Assam districts and are nonexistent in the tea gardens of lower Assam districts.

The Adolescent Girls Groups, an initiative of UNICEF is slowly being implemented in tea Gardens in a few districts of Upper Assam. From our survey, it has been found that Adolescent Girls Groups are present in seven gardens. Like the Mothers Club, the Adolescent Girls Groups is also functioning in only a few Tea Gardens in Upper Assam districts and are nonexistent in the tea gardens of lower Assam districts.

Though the Govt. of Assam opened a large number of Bagan Bazar in the tea gardens of Assam, from the survey of the studies areas, it has been that Bagan Bazars are present in very few places. These are also nonexistent in the gardens under survey in Lower Assam.

CHAPTER-V

Summary and Recommendation

Summary

The tea community in Assam is a large and vibrant community whose presence in Assam has added to the beauty of the state. They form an important segment of the greater Assamese society. They have a long association with the state when the first group of people of different communities were brought to Assam to work as labourers in the tea gardens.

Over the last 175 years, the people belonging to the tea community have increased number fold. In Assam they account for around 20 percent of the total population of the state. The tea community is a conglomeration of a number of tribes and castes. According to one study, there are 96 ethnic groups who are listed 'Tea Tribes' in Assam. In Assam these Tea Tribes are listed as OBC/MOBC.

There are around 1000 tea gardens in Assam spread over all the districts of Assam. The tea community is spread throughout the tea gardens in all the districts of Assam. Over the years, many former tea workers and their offspring have settled in areas close to tea gardens giving rise to villages, concentrated by people of the tea community.

The tea tribe community is regarded as one of the most backward and exploited tribes in India. They are faced by a number of problems like poor standard of living, lack of education and health facilities. Considering the poor socio-economic condition of the community, the Government of India has over the years, passed several acts for improving their condition. In Assam also, the government has taken up several schemes for their upliftment. Along with Governmental intervention, efforts by other Institutions and organisations have also resulted in bringing socio-economic development of the tea community.

Several organizations like Tea Association of India (TAI), Indian Tea Association (ITA), Bharatiya Cha Parisad (BCP), Assam Tea Planters Association (ATPA), North Eastern Tea Association (NETA), Assam Cha Mazdur Sangha (ACMS), are also looking into issues involving the welfare of the tea workers.

The Government of Assam has implemented several schemes for the welfare of the tea and ex-tea tribes of the states. Some of the schemes are the Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme(FOIGS), Pre Matric and Post Matric Scholarship, Grants to Non Government Educational Institutions, Grants for Cultural Activities Including Educational Tours, Grants for NGO, Grants to Patients suffering from TB, Cancer and Other Malignant diseases, Grants for purchase of Uniforms . The study aimed to evaluate schemes implemented for their well being. It also examines the impact on the socio-economic lives of the tea tribes and ex-tea tribes' beneficiaries.

The study was conducted keeping in mind the following objectives:

- To understand the socio-economic conditions of Tea and Ex-tea tribes.
- To study the role of different agencies for welfare of Tea and Ex-tea tribes.
- To examine the effectiveness of different schemes on socio-economic status of the beneficiaries.
- To identify the strengths and weakness present and provide suggestions.
- To identify the constraints, if any and suggest remedial measure to achieve the objectives of the schemes.

The study is micro-study of the Tea community. The population for the study is the people belonging to Tea and Ex Tea tribes living inside the Tea Gardens and outside the Tea Gardens. From each selected Tea Garden or a Village outside the Tea Garden, households are selected by random sampling method and the sample consists of 700 households. The study was conducted mainly based on primary data collected from the field. Secondary data was collected through library work and access to the internet.

Seven numbers of investigators were engaged to collect the data. Different stake holders including Government officials, members of Non Government Organisations, student organisations of tea Tribe Community, community leaders and members from the households of the tea community were interviewed for the study.

The data collected for the study was analyzed by using simple statistical tools. The study was conducted from May 2017 to July 2017.

After the completion of the study, a one day workshop was held on 31-9-2017 for dissemination of the findings of the study.

For the study, field work was conducted in the districts of Bishwanath Chariali, Dibrugarh, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kamrup (Rural), Morigaon, Nagaon, Sibsagar, and Tinsukia .

Fifty villages/settlements under twenty eight Development Blocks of nine districts of Assam were surveyed for the study. All the settlement / villages were selected at random basis for the study.

There were eleven settlement/ villages from Dibrugarh district which have the highest number of Tea Gardens in the state. From Tinsukia , ten villages were selected. Field work in Golaghat district was conducted in eight villages. Seven villages from Jorhat district were taken up for the study. From Sibsagar and Bishwanath Chariali districts four villages, each have been selected. Three villages from Kamrup (Rural) were selected for the study. From Nagaon district, two villages were selected and one village from Morigaon has been undertaken for the study. These also include four villages inhabited by Tea and Ex –tea tribe community.

The study on ‘Socio-economic Development of the Tea tribes of Assam- An Evaluation’ covered 50 villages/settlements with 700 households under 28 Development Blocks of nine districts of Assam.

The Tea Gardens are owned by companies and private groups and individuals.

From the data analysis of village schedule it has been found

All the villages surveyed in the nine districts of Assam are located in plains areas.

As regards settlement pattern of the villages, 48 villages’ fall under the category agglomerated while 2 villages are included in the dispersed category.

Thirty villages have nearest motor able road within 1 kms. from the villages. The Bus Stand for 24 villages is located within 1-2 kms., while for 18 villages the nearest transport station is located outside 10 kms.

The condition of the roads for majority (26 Nos.) villages is gravelled roads.

Bicycle and motor bike are used in all the studied villages while 45 villages use car. The other modes of transport are bus and tempos.

Forty six settlements are within Tea Garden areas and in all the 46 settlements the people have access to the Tea Garden hospitals provided by the garden managements.

Public Health Centres (PHCs) are located within 2kms; for 8 villages.

Twenty seven villages get the Medial Sub Center facilities at a distance of less than 2kms.

State Dispensary facility is available for 32 villages at a distance of above 10kms.

Most of the private hospitals are located beyond 10kms; and 31 villages get such facility at that distance

Private medical doctor are available within 2 kms for 16 villages, forty villages have Village guides within 1 km and 47 villages have trained birth attendant within 2kms.

As regards private pharmacy / medical shop 8 villages get such facilities within 1km; Twenty one villages have traditional healers within a distance of 1 km.

Regarding the health condition of the tea community, the situation differs from place to place. Some people are found to be in good health while some others were found suffering from diseases like- tuberculosis, scabies, back pain, respiratory problem, malnutrition, etc. A very common disease in very settlement is tuberculosis. In every settlement visited in all the districts it has been found that at least one or two persons suffers from tuberculosis. In several areas patients have received the facilities (DOTS) provided by the government for tuberculosis patients. Due to unhygienic condition and lack of facilities people suffer from many diseases.

A few differently abled children and adults were also found in different plantations

Regarding civic facilities 7 villages have the post office within 1km. and 27 villages have post offices within less than 2kms

For seventeen villages veterinary hospitals are located at a distance of above 10kms.

Twenty four villages have banks within 2kms.

Twenty one villages have Co-operative societies within 1kms from the villages Cinema halls are located above 10kms for 30 villages.

All the villages have religions institutions within 1km.

All the Pre Primary schools are located within less than 1km from the villages and all 50 Lower Primary schools are located less than 4kms from the villages. Thirty six villages have Middle Elementary schools within less than 2kms and 32 villages have High schools within less than 2kms. Fifteen villages have colleges within less than 2kms.

In all the areas where the survey was conducted, it has been found that children leave their studies halfway due to several reasons. Many of the respondents are of the view that poor financial conditions impede their desire to send their children to schools and colleges. The workers are paid very less so they cannot afford expenses for education of their children.

Regarding educational schemes implementation for school dropouts, it has been found that in a few tea gardens, NGOs are working for the school dropouts motivating them to go back to school.

At present in almost all the districts no educational schemes are implemented for school drop outs by government authorities.

By and large, the provision of Sarba Sikshya Avigyan is available in most schools attended by the children of the Tea workers in areas under study.

The school buildings were found to be built by the government. The children are provided with free uniform and books.

Mid day meal scheme has also been implemented in schools set up within tea garden areas. It is very popular with both children, and parents welcome this scheme as it provides a meal to their school going children and lessen the burden of parents to feed them.

Regarding buying and selling of products for use in day to day life, it is found that the studied population is less engaged in other economic activities, apart from work connected to tea gardens. The population working in tea gardens do not have the scope for other kind of production, never the less; there are some villagers who try to supplement their income by selling their poultry and livestock products. They also sell seasonal vegetables and *haria* (locally made rice beer). Some Ex-tea tribe people make bamboo and cane products for sale. They also sell grains which they cultivate in their agriculture fields.

In the studied settlements, market or growth centres are almost available in all villages in all the areas surveyed.

The tea workers purchase almost every item of their daily needs.

Self Help Groups are popular in almost all the gardens and young men and women from the community are establishing groups. In most of the groups, members deposit money every month and they provide loan in return for interest.

A few Cottage industries are found in the settlements of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts. The cottage industries are run by individual families and mostly make bamboo products.

Mass communication facilities like television, internet facility, telephone/mobile etc. are found in all the villages. Twenty seven villages have radios and 31 villages have newspapers

It is worth mentioning that that all the villages under survey have been electrified.

Regarding sources of drinking water majority of the villages uses water from tube wells.

A few villages use water from well and piped water. One village in Morigaon use water from the nearby river.

Considering the fact, that majority of the settlements were within Tea Gardens and all the people under study are workers in these gardens, the survey tried to find about the kind of facilities provided by the Garden management for the tea workers and their family. Children club is present in only 9 gardens while youth club is found in 17 gardens. There are 40 gardens which have Worker Union. The tea gardens have ample space for children to play around. There are 23 gardens which have Community Centre facility. In 15 gardens, there are Mothers Club/ *Mahila Samittee* and in seven gardens there are Adolescent Girls Groups. Art and Craft Centre are found in 5 gardens and in only 3 gardens there is provision for a library.

The tea garden management are bound by the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 which ensures the socio-economic development of the tea workers and their family. The tea gardens in the study area have facilities for providing health, maternity leave for permanent women workers, provident fund, ration and housing. Drinking water facility is provided in 44 gardens. Six Tea gardens have Insurance facility. Twenty two gardens provide housing rent for its workers who stay outside the tea gardens. There is canteen for workers in 10 gardens and crèche in 26 gardens. Schools for children are present in 28 gardens. Recreational facilities like sports, dance and music and craft are found in 21 gardens.

Several schemes have been implemented by the government of Assam in collaboration with the Tea companies or different agencies like the UNICEF for bring socio-economic changes for the Tea and Ex- tea tribe people. It has been reported that in 47 settlements/ villages students have received Text Book and Uniform and Bi-cycles. Workers in 40 Garden / villages have received impregnated Mosquito nets, Grant-in-aid to patients suffering from Cancer, Tuberculosis and Other malignant diseases, and Installation of Electrical Meter at the residence of tea workers have been found in 21 settlements each respectively. Financial Assistance for Higher education, Sports and Youth welfare (including sports goods to club) and Grant for Cultural Activities including educational Tour have been reported in 4 settlements. Drinking Water Filter in 19, Sewing machines in 20 and solar lamp to needy students (HSLC level) in 9 settlements were distributed. Low cost sanitary latrine and Water Supply (both jointly executed with UNICEF) was reported in 22 and 5 settlements respectively. Training and Training materials were reported in 6 settlements. ANM/GNM/BSc Nursing including Para-Medical Training for Women Empowerment and Financial Subsidy for Taxi-cab Gramya Taxi Scheme was reported in only 1 settlement each respectively. Pre-Matric Scholarship and Post Matric Scholarship was found in 7 and 10 settlements respectively.

It was reported from seven settlements about beneficiaries of Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme (FOIGS) and 14 settlements about beneficiaries of Power Tiller. In this context, it is to be mentioned that beneficiaries of FOIG and Power Tiller schemes are mostly settled in areas inhabited by Tea and Ex- Tea tribes, there are a few beneficiaries residing within tea Gardens. On the other hand, the other remaining schemes have beneficiaries of the community residing both within and outside the Tea Gardens.

From the survey, it has been found that in only 3 settlements in Tea Gardens the Tea Board has taken up activities related to Family welfare and Eradication of illiteracy

The Sport Authority of India (SAI) has implemented schemes for Tea and Ex- tribe community youths in 2 settlements which are within the surveyed area.

The study also found that awareness camps on health and hygiene, family planning, cleanliness, ills of liquor consumption, child marriage, witch hunting and superstitious beliefs etc. were conducted in some of the surveyed villages.

Awareness programme on literacy and health issues were conducted in 20 settlements. In this context, both government and non government organisations have been taking active roles.

A total number of 700 households were taken as sample for this micro level study having total population of 3441, male 1680 (48.82%), female 1761 (51.18%). The percentage of female is more than male, thus corroborating similar findings conducted on Tea tribes.

The Household Population by Sex and Age shows that 34.40 % of the population is between 15-30 years. Fifteen percent of the population is below 10 years.

The marital status of the population in the study shows that 50.04% are married. There are 1501(43.62%) who are unmarried. Two hundred and sixteen, of which 69 male and 148 female are widowed. There is a single case of divorce.

The marital status of male shows that, 832 male persons are married and 779 are unmarried. The findings show that there are 17 married males in the age grade 15 to 20 years, thus indicating that marriage of boys not attending adulthood is not uncommon in the community.

There are 890 married females against 722 unmarried females. From the age grades 50-55 years to above 85 years there are no unmarried female persons, except one in 70 to 75 years. Married girls are found from the age of 15 onwards.

With regard to occupational pattern of the members of the studied households it has been found that tea workers (both primary and Secondary) constitute 81.96 % of the total working population of the studied households and also the percentage of female tea workers is more than male tea workers. There are 202(11.90%) working as daily wage labour.

Very few individuals are engaged in other occupation like Government Service, private jobs, agriculture activities, etc.

As regards educational status of the members of the studied households it has been found that 225 (6.54%) are below 6 years of age.

In lower primary standard, the percentage is 20.46 %. In Class VI-VIII level, the percentage is 17.58 % and in High School level, the percentage is 16.39 %. The percentage in Class XI-XII is 4.30 %. There are 61 graduates, of whom 40 are male and 21 are female. There are three post graduates, all male.

Illiteracy accounts for - 32.81 %(Male- 12.47% and Female- 20.34 %).

It is also found that women are lagging much behind men in all categories of educational standard.

Of the total number of studied households, it has been found that 162 households (23.14 %) owns land of whom 55 households (7.86%) owns homestead land and 55 households(15.28%) owns agricultural land.

The Monthly household income (approximately) is more then 9000- for 22.28%, between 5001-7000- for 32.15 % and between 2001-5000- for 28.28% households. There are 4 households whose monthly income is below Rs. 2000. Considering the above findings it can be indicated that the monthly income of the households does not meet the needs of the household members.

A majority of the households surveyed are followers of Hinduism. Forty households follow Christianity.

All the surveyed households follow the rules of patriarchy. The heads (81.28%) households are male and the rest are female. The female headship is an outcome of absence of adult male in the households.

In the present study, 57.14 households are nuclear type and the rest 300 (42.85) households are non nuclear type.

In a majority of households, (65.14%) the size of family is between 4-6 members. There are only 5 households with large families numbering between 10-12 members.

Although electricity facility is available in all the settlements/ villages taken up for the study, only 89.57% households have electricity.

Well, Hand pump, pipe water are the common source of drinking water of a majority of households in the studied villages. There are a few households who use water from the river and pond.

Regarding sanitation facility in the households, 60.71 households uses sanitary latrine without water facility. As many as 20.14 households use open field

and 36 households use *Kutchha* latrines. More than ninety percent of the households have no drainage system facility in their compound.

A majority of the houstypes in the studied area live in *Pucca* Assam Type houses. There are *kutchha* Assam Type houses and 15 thatched houses.

An overwhelming (86 %) houses are provided by the tea Garden company where the members of the households work. The rest possess their own houses and a few stay on rented premises.

Two room quarters is the common size of households. Around 43 percent also has built extensions to their quarters to accommodate members of the households.

More than ninety four percent of the households use wood as fuel. This is due to the fact that, workers in the garden use the twigs and branches of dead and discarded tea trees which they get free from the garden areas.

The people in the villages under study, rear animals like cattle, goat and pigs. They also rear fowl, duck and pigeon. Around fifty percent of the households do not own any livestock and more then forty percent do not own any kind of poultry.

The findings from the households surveyed in the study shows that the people own very few household goods and assets. Bicycles are the most common movable property of a majority of households. Televisions also find pride of place in their houses. More than thirty percent households own mobile phones. There are households who own motor cycles, sewing machines, water filter, and radio. Some of the households own plough, taxi cab, power tiller, etc., although the percentage of such households is very negligible.

The study focussed on the schemes implemented for the welfare and development of the tea community. Interviews were conducted with respondents who were beneficiaries of different schemes and programmes implemented by government and other organizations working for the welfare of the community. The Directorate for Welfare of Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes, Assam, since the year 1983-1984 has implemented several schemes for their socio-economic development. Similarly ABITA and SAI have also taken up schemes on different issues. In addition, other Non Government Organisations have from time to time

taken up programmes to create awareness on several vital issues plaguing the community.

The study tried to find out whether the people have awareness on issues like health, child /human trafficking, family planning, legal rights, etc. Respondents reported that they have heard about provision of different schemes provided by the government or Tea Welfare Board for people belonging to tea tribes. But most of them have not been able to avail the facilities.

It has been found that awareness camps on health and hygiene, family planning, cleanliness, ills of liquor consumption, etc. were conducted in some of the surveyed villages. Awareness programme on literacy and health issues were conducted in 20 settlements/ villages during the preceding year. Different organisations both from government and non- government sector conducted those programme.

In 15 gardens there are Mothers Club/ *Mahila Samittee* and in seven gardens there are Adolescent Girls Groups.

The concept of Bagan Bazar in the tea gardens of Assam is an initiative of the Govt. of Assam. From the survey of the studies areas, it has been that Bagan Bazar are present in very few places.

Several schemes have been implemented by the government of Assam in collaboration with the Tea companies or different agencies like the UNICEF for bring socio-economic changes for the Tea and Ex- tea tribe people.

From the study, it has been found that in 47 settlements/ villages' students have received Text Book and Uniform and Bi-cycles. Workers in 40 Garden / villages have received impregnated Mosquito nets. Grant-in-aid to patients suffering from Cancer, T.B. and Other malignant diseases and Installation of Electrical Meter at the residence of tea workers. have been found in 21 settlements each respectively. Financial Assistance for Higher education, Sports and Youth welfare (including sports goods to club) and Grant for Cultural Activities including educational Tour have been found in 4 settlements. Drinking Water Filter in 19 , Sewing machines in 20 and Solar lamp to needy students(HSLC level) in 9 settlements were distributed. Low cost sanitary latrine and Water was found in 22 and 5 settlements respectively. Training and Training materials were received in 6 settlements. ANM/GNM/BSc Nursing including Para-Medical Training for Women

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From the survey, it has been found that in only 3 settlements in Tea Gardens the Tea Board has taken up activities related to Family welfare and Eradication of illiteracy

In the study, 2 settlements have benefitted from schemes implemented by the Sports Authority of India.

Recommendation

An analysis of the findings from data collected through survey in the areas inhabited by the Tea and Ex Tea tribes have given much food for thought. Based on the findings, several suggestions and recommendations are being put forward to redress the lacunae observed in the socio- economic lives of the community. Moreover, several suggestions have also come forward from community members who have attended a workshop held in the Institution as part of the study on ‘Socio-Economic Development of the Tea Tribes of Assam- An Evaluation’

Issues of Concerns

- Health and Sanitation- They suffer from various diseases. Working under the hot sun in the tea gardens, plucking tea leaves for hours has adverse effect on the health of the tea workers. Many suffer from skin infections as well as back pain.
- Cleanliness is a matter of concern, and in almost all the settlements surveyed, drainage and disposal of sewage matters is absent. Supply of clean drinking water is meagre.
- Most of the households have habits like drinking locally brewed alcohol called *haria*, black tea with salt, consumption of tobacco and smoking. In fact drinking liquor is rampant in tea garden community.
- Child labour and child marriage are issues of concern.

- Education- There is a high school drop outs among children in the tea Garden areas. Adult education should be provided which was earlier implemented and needs to be revived as there is a huge number of illiteracy among people of the community.

It has been reported that in gardens from Dibrugarh area, free tuitions are given on weekends for a period of one month by faculties from Dibrugarh University and institutions like *Jatiya Vidyalaya*. But the people show less interest in education and opine that educating themselves is a waste of time, thus failing to take advantage of this facility. The schools do not have teachers although there are vacancies in the schools.

- Lack of support from Garden management- From own experiences of the researchers in the field, it has been found that tea garden management in most of the tea gardens from the Upper Assam districts do not allow researchers to conduct any kind of research work in their respective gardens, even after submission of required papers and applications by researchers for getting permissions to visit the gardens
- Many gardens do not provide the tea workers with the basic facilities. This is specially found true in case of gardens managed by private owners. In case of gardens managed by well known companies, the situation is much better. But even, in these gardens, the management only provide the basic minimum. The relation between workers and management is not always cordial. Regarding the implementation of schemes under government banner, either the management of the Tea gardens are not aware or even if they are aware, they are not willing to share information with the garden workers.
- The various Institutions, government or others have failed to improve the quality of lives of Tea community. These institutions do not have a grasp of the ground reality of the people due to lack of close association with the tea community from grassroots level.
- Benefits from Schemes implemented have failed to reach the poor and needy, rather these benefits have been utilised to fulfil the greed of some well established and elite people of the Tea community.

- The workers unions are set up to ensure the welfare of tea workers and their families, but very often, they fail to strike a common cord with the tea workers. Tea workers complain of corruption and nepotism in the unions.
- The youths from the tea community are traditionally skilled in sports and games. There are expert archers, fencers, athletes, etc. among them. But, government or other institutions have not groomed these talents, the exception being footballers who are given support in some areas.
- One of the most important disadvantages, many people from the Tea community faces is the absence of ownership of land. As a result, they fail to take advantages of different schemes that are being implemented by the government, and which requires individual to own land.

But not all is bleak and hopeless in the Garden areas. Some organisations are quietly working on various issues plaguing the community. Child marriage and witch hunting are found in tea garden areas, and the organisations are working against these evils.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

- The living conditions of the tea workers from the surveyed gardens from Kamrup districts (M&R) are found to be very poor and reported to be worst among all the tea gardens in Assam. Housing, water, sanitation, electricity, etc are in poor condition and need to be reassessed. Cleanliness should be made a priority and awareness should be spread about hygiene and cleanliness.
- Proper and strict scrutiny of the SHGs and the members of the group should be made before sanction and release of money and kinds to the groups.
- The administration should make mandatory for the SHGs not to sell the power tiller for at least five years after receiving the same.
- The youth from the tea community should be given opportunities to seek avenues for self employment. In this context, vocational training on different areas likes beauty parlor, computer training, and hospitality sector and hotel management should be given to the youths from the community.
- Since, Youths from the tea community have aptitude and interest in football, this game should be initiated in every district.

- The tea communities have a rich cultural heritage. Their traditional dance form called as *Jhumur* needs to be popularized among people and be made more visible in Assam.
- The student organizations have an important role in improving the welfare of the community. They need to intervene on several issues, whenever necessary and need to create awareness on different issues. Since it has been found that the youths use social media, they can be catalyst for changes through use of social media. The educated mass from the community needs to play a more proactive role in their society.
- Awareness should be created to make the people understand the importance of saving their bonus money received every year, instead of wasting it in drinking and festivities. They need to learn to be economical and invest the money for better purposes.
- The government needs to seriously review the schemes and evaluate the success of its implementation and plug the loopholes.
- The introduction of the saving bank account for tea workers is a welcome step which will bring transparency in the disbursement of salary for tea workers which was for years paid in cash to them. The implementation of the Insurance scheme – “Pradhan Mantri Bima Yojna” is a step towards this end.
- There is a common thinking among the tea community that the status of the majority of the people has not changed over the years. Whatever was started by the management of the tea gardens before the advent of Independence of the country is still being practiced in the tea gardens, although now the rein of management has changed hands from the British to the Indian owners.

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PICTURES FROM THE FIELD



Residence of a Tea worker Household from Amsong Tea Estate



Residence of a Tea worker Household from Amsong Tea Estate



Collecting wood for fuel



A Tea worker Household from Amluckie Tea Estate



Collecting water from a tubewell



Tea garden workers Club in Gopal Krishna Tea Estate



Two girls from the Tea community



A Tea community household at Naharspori



Plucking tea leaves at Monkhooshi Tea Estate



An elderly woman of the Tea community



A scene from Muttack Tea Estate



Interior of a crèche



UNICEF supported programme at
Muttack Tea Estate



A crèche at Balijan Tea Estate



A Kutch road at Balijan



Anganwadi Kendra at Dowlajan



Bagan Bazar at Bokahula



Bagan bazar at Golaghat



A patient with problems of the nerves



At Sonapur Tea Estate



Performing the tradition dance of tea community



A Tea garden youth on his bicycle



Rose SHG from Jamuguri



Using a power tiller for ploughing agriculture land