

## **CHAPTER-6**

### **MAJOR FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION OF THE RESEARCH WORK**

#### **6.1 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY:**

The present study was conducted to know the socio-educational condition of the tea tribe women living in the tea gardens of Assam. Tea tribe women constitute nearly half of the total labour force in the tea industries of Assam. In Assam, majority of the tea tribe women working in the tea plantations are illiterate. Due to illiteracy and ignorance they are subject of suppression and exploitation. Owing to illiteracy their social status and living standard is significantly low even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The most important and single instrument for raising their status is education. Hence, in the present work, the investigator analysed the socio-educational status of the women working in the tea plantations of Assam. The study was undertaken on the women of both literate and illiterate groups, representing two age levels 16-30 years and 31-50 years. These two age groups are taken as they represent two different generations. The study was conducted on tea tribe women of four specific ethnic groups i.e. Munda, Parja, Orang and Kurmi. On the basis of the results and analysis and interpretation of the collected data done in the earlier chapter, the major findings found out from the study have been presented in the present chapter. The major findings found out are presented under the following headings on the basis of the objectives of the present study:

1. Findings related to age level, ethnic group and literacy status.
2. Findings related to educational condition of the women of tea plantations.

3. Findings related to economic status of the tea tribe women.
4. Findings related to social freedom of tea tribe women.
5. Findings related to the awareness of tea tribe women regarding health and sanitation.
6. Findings related to environmental awareness of the women of tea plantations.

#### **6.1.1 Findings related to age level, ethnic group and literacy status:**

The present study was undertaken on both literate and illiterate women, belonging to the age level 16-30 years and 31-50 years. The samples were drawn from the four ethnic groups of tea community. Accordingly, the findings of the study vary on the basis of these criteria.

#### **Findings related to age level**

- The present study reveals that differences in age level influences way of thinking and opinion of the women.
- The women belonging to the age level 16-30 years are of having modern attitude regarding every aspect of personal and social life.
- The women of new generation i.e. 16-30 years are more aware of the importance of education in human life. But most of the women of 31-50 years age group are not accepted the significance of education in human life.
- The women of the age level 16-30 years are health conscious and depend on modern methods of treatment, while most of the women of the age level 31-50

years are still dependent on traditional methods of treatment and comparatively less conscious on health issues.

- The women of new generation are less addicted to country beer (Haria) and tobacco. But almost all of the women of the age level 31-50 years are fully addicted to country beer and tobacco. Taking country beer is a tradition for them. But the habit is gradually diminishing among the new generation.
- The women of the age level 31-50 years have no idea regarding environmental issues and pollution. But the women of the age group 16-30 years are gradually becoming aware of environmental issues.

#### **Findings related to ethnic group:**

- In the present study samples were taken from four different ethnic groups of tea community such as Munda, Parja, Orang and Kurmi. But no significant differences have been found among these groups.
- Different ethnic groups of tea community possess different cultural aspects. Their social and cultural traditions are different to some extent from each other. But they used to speak common language known as ‘sadni’ and are not much different regarding their opinions and possess common status.

#### **Findings related to literacy status:**

- Significant differences are found between the opinions of literate and illiterate respondents regarding all the aspects associated with the objectives of the present study.
- Most of the literate women accepted the significance of formal education for improving the quality of life. They are in favour of imparting women education.

They pointed out that the girl child should be educated equally with the boy so that the girl may become self dependent in future.

- Regarding economic aspect, the study reveals that the literate respondents are having progressive opinion. Most of them are interested in seeking government job for upward mobility. But the illiterate respondents are having rigid opinion and are interested in the jobs of tea garden. Most of the literate respondents also have saving habits, while only a few illiterate respondents have this habit.
- Regarding health and sanitation, the literate respondents are more health conscious and depend on modern methods of treatment. But the illiterate respondents have superstitious believes and depend on traditional method of treatment.
- Literate respondents are aware of environmental issues, while illiterate respondents are less aware of environmental issues.

#### **6.1.2 Findings related to educational condition of the women of tea plantations:**

- From the present study it has been found that all the 5 tea gardens surveyed have only two primary schools in each division; one is managed by the Tea Garden authority and the other one is Government school. Most of these primary schools have minimum or no basic facilities required for the proper running of a school.

The tea gardens have no secondary or higher secondary schools. The provision of secondary and higher education is totally absent in the tea gardens.

- The number of girls pursuing higher education or above is very low. Most of the tea gardens have just one or two girls enrolled in the stage of higher education.

Only 2.22 percent women of new generation have completed post graduation course from the study centre of Open University.

For pursuing secondary and higher education, the girls have to go outside the tea estate, which is not possible for everyone. Besides due to poor home environment and lack of educational facilities they are unable to receive higher education. Their financial problem is another major obstacle in the path of receiving higher education.

- It is evident from the present study that the highest percentage of literates is in the primary level. A very less number of women belonging to the age group 16-30 years received higher education. The number of women of the age group 31-50 years having the qualification of secondary and higher education is very less.

No post graduate respondents have been found in this age group.

- There are no provision of middle and secondary school in the tea garden and therefore only a few girls are educated to secondary level and above secondary level. Higher education is not possible for most of them.

At present, only a few girls are pursuing secondary and higher education in the nearby schools and colleges of outside the tea gardens. Due to the long distance to the educational institutions, they are unable to attend the institutions regularly. As a result, they cannot succeed in this aspect.

- The study shows that most of the parents of the tea gardens are not interested in girls' education. Most of the girls drop out from school due to poverty, engagement in house hold works and early marriage. Some other causes reported

by the respondents are central academic factors such as absenteeism, poor performance, teachers' harsh behaviours etc.

The parents are of the opinion that girls' education is a kind of wastage as they will marry someone and will leave the parental home. So they prefer education of their boys as the boys will look after them in their old age. Besides it is difficult for the educated girls to find out good husband. The study explicates that 75.19 percent literate women are in favour of girls' education, while 24.81 percent women of them viewed negatively. Among the illiterate women, only 22.14 percent are in support of the importance of girls' education. But a majority of them i.e. 77.86 percent women viewed negatively.

- It has been found from the present study that despite of the efforts made by Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) Assam and availabilities of primary schools in all tea gardens, the problem of non enrolled and dropout is still exist in the tea garden areas.

The number of drop out is high in the tea gardens due to different reasons. The tea garden schools are lacking minimum educational facilities. Lack of trained teachers, poverty, prevalent prejudices, unfavourable home environment all are contributing towards non enrolment and dropout of tea tribe children.

- Regarding the modern sanitary facilities, the study reveals that most of the tea garden schools are lacking of modern sanitary facilities. Toilets are not available in all the schools. In some schools, toilets are available but their condition is very bad and the students are unable to use those toilets. Only 30 percent

respondents viewed that modern sanitary facilities are available in the primary schools of their tea gardens, while 70 percent respondents viewed negatively.

Free text books and mid day meals are regularly provided in all the tea garden schools. Under the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, study materials and mid day meals are provided to the tea garden schools free of cost.

- It has been found in the present study that most of the tea tribe women, particularly the illiterate women are not aware of the importance of formal education in improving the quality of life. Most of the illiterate respondents are of the opinion that to improve the quality of life just they have to earn money; quality of life is not dependent on education. But almost all of the literate respondents are aware of the significance of formal education. Among the literate respondents, 84.11 percent respondents are accepted the fact that formal education is needed to improve the quality of life, while 15.89 percent of them are of negative opinion. Among the illiterate respondents, only 24.05 percent respondents have accepted the significance of formal education. Majority of them i.e. 75.95 percent respondents are of negative opinion.

The present study reveals that the opinions of the tea tribe women are changing gradually, as a large number of the respondents of the age level 16-30 years viewed that formal education is needed to improve the quality of life. Both literate and illiterate respondents of the new generation have realized the significance of formal education.

- In the present study, the literate respondents viewed that during their study period they faced different problems. Due to various problems, they could not continue education and had to leave their study before completion. Due to

parental illiteracy and ignorance, poverty and addiction to country beer, the parents are unable to provide favourable environment and proper guidance to their children.

The tea tribe women reported that during their study period, their parents and family members created different problems for them. Majority of the respondents i.e. 94.19 percent respondents reported that they faced different kinds of obstacles from their family members during their study period. Only 5.81 percent respondents viewed negatively. The respondents further reported that they mostly faced problems from their fathers. 65.43 percent respondents reported that their fathers created problems in their study, while 28.81 percent respondents reported that they faced problems from their mothers and 5.35 and 0.41 percent respondents reported that they faced problems from their brothers and sisters respectively.

- The study also reveals that only 59.69 percent literate women are aware of the government policy, SSA. Among the illiterate women, only 10.69 percent women have the knowledge of SSA and the rest of the illiterate respondents are not aware of SSA. Regarding Right to Women Education, only 37.6 percent literate women are aware of this while among the illiterate, only 6.11 percent women are aware of this.
- It has been found that after marriage majority of the tea tribe women are interested only in maintaining their family life. Most of them have no interest to continue education after marriage. Besides working in the tea gardens, they just want to perform the household chores and to play the roles as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law etc.

The opinion of the tea tribe women are also changing gradually. At present, the married women are also becoming interested to continue education. A few of the married women are also found continuing education through the distance modes of learning.

The study reveals that 43.89 percent respondents belonging to the age level 16-30 years are interested in continuing education after marriage, while 56.11 percent respondents of the same age level are of negative opinion. Among the respondents of the age level 31-50 years, 29.49 percent reported that they wanted to continue education after marriage but their family was not supported them. Most of them i.e. 70.51percent respondents of the same group are of negative opinion.

- It has been found that most of the tea tribe parents are illiterate and their illiteracy is the main cause of educational backwardness in the tea garden areas. But there are no adult education centers functioning in any of the 5 tea gardens under study. 100 percent respondents of all the tea gardens reported that there is not a single adult education centre in their tea gardens.

Vocational training facilities are also absent in the tea gardens. Most of the women under study do not know about vocational training schemes. Regarding vocational training facility, it was found that only 2.88 percent respondents of Monabari Tea Estate reported that vocational training facility for tea tribe women is available in their Tea Estate, which was provided by Tea Employees Welfare Board. But majority of them i.e. 97.12 percent women mentioned that they have not found any kind of vocational training facility in their tea garden. The study depicts that only 0.96 percent respondents reported

that they are availed vocational training facilities in the tea gardens, while majority of them i.e. 99.04 percent respondents are of negative opinion.

- The tea tribe students are provided stipend schemes from time to time. The present study reveals that in Borgang Tea Estate, only 5.77 percent women reported that they are benefited from the stipend schemes of tea gardens. But 94.23 percent respondents viewed negatively. In Behali Tea Garden, 4.81 percent respondents mentioned that they were taken benefit from the stipend schemes provided for the tea tribe students, while 95.19 percent respondents viewed that they were not taken benefit from such kind of stipend schemes. In Sakomatha and Pabhoi Tea Estate, only 6.73 percent women were benefited by such schemes while 93.27 percent women viewed negatively. The Tea Board of India and Tea Employees Welfare Board have some stipend schemes for tea garden students. But the implementation of these schemes is a matter of concern. As a whole, the study reveals that only 5.38 percent respondents were benefited from the stipend schemes of tea gardens.

Illiteracy and lack of awareness about the outside world are the causes of their backwardness and inadequacy for availing benefits from the schemes provided by the government.

- The main problem of the tea tribe community is illiteracy and ignorance. Due to illiteracy, the community remains backward even till the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For the progress of the community, educational awareness must be created among them. In this regard, the educated and literate members of the community have to take proper steps. But the study depicts that only 13.18 percent literate women are of the opinion that they can create educational awareness among the tea garden

workers. But most of the literate women are of negative opinion. 86.82 percent literate women do not think that they can create any kind of awareness regarding education among the tea garden workers.

In the present study, it has been found that the respondents viewed differently regarding the ways of creating educational awareness. The study displays that 44.12 percent women are of the opinion that they can create educational awareness by individual encouragement, while 55.88 percent women believe that to create educational awareness they have to organize meetings with the illiterate people.

#### **6.1.3 Findings related to economic status of the tea tribe women:**

- The tea garden workers are paid low wages. They get a fixed wage which is nearly half of the government- fixed minimum wage of Rs. 169. Sundays are considered unpaid holidays. In some tea gardens, the workers get only Rs. 96 per day. In Monabari, Borgang and Behali Tea garden the labourers get Rs. 119 as their daily wage (from March 2015).

The tea leaf pluckers have to pluck minimum 30 kg per day to get the full wage of the day. They get extra money if they can pluck more than 30 kg.

- At present the women workers are paid equal remuneration with their male counterparts. Earlier the women workers were paid lower wages than their male counterparts. But after the passing of the Equal Remuneration Act 1976, the women are also getting equal remuneration with men. But most of the women express that they are not satisfied with their wages as the cost of living has

increased day by day. However tea garden workers are provided cereals at concessional rate. But the quality of these cereals is very poor.

- It has been found that the number of casual labourers is higher than the permanent labourers. Because legal provisions pertaining to wages, working hours and amenities apply only to permanent labourers.

The casual labourers are employed only during the peak plucking season (April-October). The rest of the months they have no earnings. Hence, they are spending their lives with dare poverty.

- In case of job satisfaction, it is found that most of the tea tribe women are satisfied with their jobs in the tea garden. The tea tribe women love tea gardens and like to perform their traditional task. Lack of education and awareness leads them to confine in a limited traditional outlook in case of job preference. But the literate women of the new generation (16-30 years) shows progressive attitude towards this aspect.
- It has been found that 70.93% literate respondents and 32.06 percent illiterate respondents have the habit of saving a portion of their income for future. But without proper knowledge of saving in reliable agencies, they are failed to get benefit which could have been got from saving in bank or post office.
- The study shows that the women labours of the tea plantation are actively engaged in the wage earning jobs and are also to perform all the household works. In the tea garden society, the female are equally earning with their male counterparts. But despite their economic self sufficiency, they are suppressed

and exploited especially in social life. In family life, majority of the women are generally given equal status with men.

#### **6.1.4 Findings related to social freedom of tea tribe women:**

- In the present study it has been found that only 9.04% tea tribe women have secured higher scores which indicate greater social freedom. Majority of the tea tribe women i.e. 57.5 % have secured average scores in women social freedom scale, while a large number of the respondents i.e. 35.38 percent respondents have secured low scores which clearly indicates that these women have less social freedom.

Hence, it is distinct that most of the tea tribe women have less social freedom. Only handful women possess greater social freedom.

- The difference of scores of Women Social Freedom scale between literate and illiterate respondents is highly significant.

From the present study, it is distinct that literate women have greater social freedom, while most of the illiterate women have less social freedom.

- The women are generally free in selecting their life partner. A large number of the respondents reported that they selected their life partners according to their own choice.

### **6.1.5 Findings related to the awareness of tea tribe women regarding health and sanitation:**

- It has been found that all the 5 tea gardens under study have medical facilities. But the study reveals that hospital and medical facilities of the tea gardens under study are not satisfactory.

All the sample tea gardens have hospitals in each division. But the treatments provided by these hospitals are not satisfactory at all. The study reveals that only 13.14 percent literate respondents viewed that they are satisfied with the treatment provided by the tea garden hospitals, while almost all of them i.e. 86.82 percent viewed negatively. Among the illiterate respondents, 37.79 percent respondents reported that they are satisfied with the treatment provided by the garden hospital. For major physical problems they have to go outside for better treatment.

- In the garden hospitals, doctors are not always available. The divisional hospitals are generally running by the compounder and nurse. Regarding the availability of doctors, 55.19 percent respondents reported that doctors are available in the hospitals of their tea gardens.
- Medical facilities and hospitals in tea gardens differ from estate to estate. Though disparities exist, hospitals and medical facilities on tea plantations have generally improved to a great deal. ASHA workers are available in all the gardens.

- The study reveals that outbreak of epidemics like malaria; diarrhea, T.B., cold & cough is a common feature in the tea gardens. Poor nutrition, lack of proper hygiene and unclean drinking water etc are the major causes of such diseases.

It has been found in the present study that the respondents regarded poverty as their major health hazard. 95.35 percent literate respondents regarded poverty as their major health hazard and among the illiterate, 94.66 percent respondents regarded poverty as their major health hazard.

- Regarding the provision of drinking water in the tea gardens, the study reveals that only 9.42 percent respondents reported that supplied water is provided to them by the management. These are the quarters of sub-staffs and staffs. They are permanent workers. But 27.12 percent and 63.46 percent respondents reported that they are using ground water well and tube well respectively, which is mainly responsible for different water borne diseases.

Most of the respondents are not aware of the importance of clean drinking water. Hence only 18.08 percent respondents reported of using water filter, while 81.92 percent are of negative opinion.

- The habit of defecation of the tea tribe people in the open field is also a major responsible factor for different health problems of the community. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, most of them are not using sanitary latrines. Defecation in the open field is a common practice among them.

The study reveals that 43.02 percent literate respondents used to defecate in the open field, while among the illiterate respondents, 70.99 percent respondents used to defecate in the open field.

- The study also reveals that the tea tribe women have the tendency to drink excessive quantities of liquor and taking tobacco which is harmful for their health. Country beer (Haria) is a part of tradition of the tea tribe community. No ceremony is completed in their society without ‘haria’.

It has been found that 39.92 percent literate and 71.37 percent illiterate respondents accepted that they have the habit of drinking country beer. Though there are some nutritious components in ‘haria’ but due to lack of proper food, excessive drinking of ‘haria’ is causing ill effect to their body and mind.

- Regarding the method of treatment, the study reveals that most of the respondents viewed that they are dependent on modern allopathic system of treatment. But 3.49 percent literate respondents and 13.74 percent illiterate respondents depend on traditional mode of treatment.

Regarding the causes of diseases, 5.43 percent literate and 70.23 percent illiterate respondents reported that due to witch act they are suffering from different diseases. Superstitious believes are common in the tea tribe community. Because of such believes, many murders of innocent women took place in their society, suspecting them as witches.

- The tea tribe women are less conscious in pregnancy related issues. Most of them are not aware of the need of nutritious food during pregnancy. They are of

the opinion that pregnancy is a natural process. Hence, no need of taking special care.

With regard to the place of birth, 15.12 percent literate and 40.08 percent illiterate respondents prefers delivery at home.

- During the pregnancy period, the tea tribe women are not interested in regular medical checkup. Only due to the ASHA workers, most of them are doing checkup during pregnancy. It has been found that 6.59 percent literate and 24.81 percent illiterate respondents are not doing pregnancy check up even today.
- The present study reveals that most of the respondents ignore medical checkup mainly due to the negligence of their husbands. 52.94 percent literate and 46.15 illiterate respondents reported that due to their husband's negligence they are not doing medical checkup. Their parents in laws are also not co-operative in this aspect.
- 32.56 percent literate and 50 percent illiterate respondents reported that they have the experiences of miscarriage or abortion due to different reasons. Regarding the number of miscarriage, the study reveals that 38.93 percent literate respondents and 40.48 percent illiterate respondents experienced abortion for more than two times.
- The family size of the tea tribe people is generally large. Most of the respondents expect more than two children. It has been found that 59.69 percent literate and 88.44 percent illiterate respondents expect more than two children.  
It has been also found that the tea tribe women don't have proper knowledge of birth control measures. It is unfortunate that 34.88 percent literate

and 57.63 percent illiterate respondents reported that they don't have knowledge of birth control measures. Though the rest of the respondents have the knowledge of birth control measures but all of them don't apply such measures in their practical life.

#### **6.1.6 Findings related to environmental awareness of the women of tea plantations:**

- Most of the tea tribe women rear domestic animals such as pigs, cows, goats etc. They also rear poultry such as hen, duck etc. But they don't emphasize on maintaining cleanliness, which are causing health problems and pollution. 91.86 percent literate and 92.37 percent respondents reported that they are rearing domestic animals. Hence, it is clear that almost all of the respondents are rearing domestic animals.
- It has been found in the present study that a large number of the respondents are not maintaining hygienic methods in keeping the animal dung. 51.16 percent literate and 54.96 percent illiterate respondents reported that they used to keep the animal dung in pit. The rest of the respondents used to keep the animal dung near house and near road.
- It has been found in the present study that though the tea tribe women are not conscious about environmental issues and pollution but a large number of the respondents used to dispose the waste material in proper way.

Among the literate respondents, 25.97 percent reported that they dispose waste material by burning, while 49.22 percent reported that they dispose waste material by damping in pit. Among the illiterate respondents, 18.7 percent reported of disposing waste material by burning and 42.37 percent respondents

reported that they dispose waste material by damping in pit. The study displays that the differences in age level and literacy rate do not influence much the habit of waste material and garbage disposal.

- The present study reveals the fact that the tea tribe people are less conscious about the fact that waste materials in open and the smoke coming from the tea factories may cause harm to the environment. Therefore, the habit of defecation in the open is prevalent among them. They also used to split and urinate here and there. Only 12.02 percent literate and 8.78 percent illiterate respondents accepted that waste material in the open field may cause pollution.
- It has been found in the present study that the respondents are not aware of environmental protection from pollution. Only 18.99 percent literate and 8.4 percent illiterate respondents reported that they are thinking of protecting the environment from pollution. And the rest of the respondents viewed that they don't have any idea of environmental protection and they are unable to protect the environment.
- Fertilizers and pesticides are using in large amount in the tea estates. These chemicals are extremely harmful for environment and are causing health hazards. But only 22.48 percent literate and 4.2 percent illiterate respondents accepted that the uses of these are causing health problems.
- In the present study, it has been found that in a few tea estates environmental awareness programmes are organized by the management. But most of the respondents are not aware of the fact. Among the respondents, 44.57 percent literate and 16.03 percent illiterate respondents reported that environmental awareness programmes are organized by the management.

The study reveals that though the management organizes such awareness programmes from time to time but most of the respondents are not aware of this. Most of them are not participating in such programmes.

- Regarding the fuel used for cooking, the study reveals that only 7.75 percent literate and 8.02 percent illiterate respondents viewed that they are using LPG for cooking purposes. Most of the respondents i.e. 92.25 percent literate and 91.98 percent illiterate respondents reported that they are using fire wood for cooking purpose.

It is distinct that almost all of the tea labourers are using fire wood as fuel. Though fire wood is environment friendly but the use of fire wood in large number is responsible for cutting huge number of trees which is harmful for the environment.

- The study further reveals that majority of the respondents have no idea about the ill effects of polythene. Only 8.91 percent literate and 0.76 percent illiterate respondents accepted that polythene is harmful for both health and environment and therefore should be banned.

## **6.2 IMPLICATION OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

In the present study, an attempt has been made to find out the existing socio-educational status, economic condition, awareness of health and environment and social freedom among the women workers of the tea plantations. The study is conducted in the five tea estates of Biswanath sub-division of Sonitpur district. The study revealed the actual socio-educational status of the tea tribe women. The findings of the study have

some significant implications for the social workers, educators, researchers, policy makers, administrators and personnel working in the tea gardens.

- The present study reveals that the tea tribes are backward section of the society. Most of them are landless and their condition is very miserable. They are economically, educationally and socially backward. Hence, special emphasis should be provided to this section of people for improvement of their overall condition. In this regard, the government should be provided them Scheduled Tribe status as originally these labourers belong to S.T. categories.
- The female workers of the tea plantations are playing significant role not only in the tea plantations but also to the economic development of the entire country. They have to work hard the day long but they are neglected, avoided and faced variety of problems. Hence, some special facilities should be provided to the female workers. Provisions should be made for the promotion of the female workers.
- The tea labourers should be made conscious about the ill effects of drinking alcohol in excessive quantity. Many of their health and social problems can be solved by reducing the habit of drinking 'Haria' (rice beer).
- Healthy and congenial living condition has to be provided to the labour lines of the tea gardens. Poor residential and unhealthy living condition is creating different health problems among the tea labourers. In this regard, the tea garden management should provide proper facilities.
- Environmental awareness has to be created among them. The use of fertilizers and pesticides in huge amount is responsible for serious health problems among the tea garden workers. They have to impart proper information in this aspect.

- The economical condition of the tea tribes particularly of their women made them powerless. They are unable to fulfill even the basic needs of the family. Due to poverty, many problems arise in their family and social life. Inspite of their day long hard work, they are getting less wages. To improve the economic condition of the tea labourers, their daily wages should also be increased.
- Education is the main instrument for raising the status and for upward mobility. Lack of proper education is mainly responsible for all kinds of problems faced by the tea tribe women. Proper steps should be taken both by the government and by the tea garden management for imparting education to the tea tribes. Special emphasis should be provided for the expansion of girls' education.
- Adult education is needed in the tea garden areas as it can help the parents to treat the girl child equally with the boy. Adult education can also change the attitude of the parents towards girls' education. They can realize the significance of girls' education.
- Provisions should be made for providing secondary and higher education within the tea gardens. Therefore, both, the government and management should co-operatively establish secondary and higher educational institutions in the tea gardens.
- Training should be provided to the tea tribe girls on some vocational subjects so that they can become self dependent in future. To raise their status, they have to engage themselves in some progressive tasks other than just tea leaf plucking.
- To remove superstitions and social evils from the tea labourer's community, proper steps should be taken both by the government, management and by the N.G.O.s. Awareness programmes have to organize to make the people aware regarding the

prevalent social evils of their community so that witch hunting can also be stopped and the people can think rationally.

- The tea garden workers and their families need to be educated properly so that they can use their medical facilities properly. The female workers should be taught to look after their health and consume balance diet as the health of the families depends upon them.
- The teachers of the tea garden management run schools should be appointed keeping in view the proper qualification of them. Emphasis should be provided on providing training to such teachers from time to time.
- Proper infrastructural facilities should be provided to the tea garden schools. Proper sanitary facilities are also needed in the tea garden schools. These are essential to attract them towards formal education.

Due to ignorance, illiteracy and superstitious beliefs, the tea tribe women are suffering even till today. The scope of their employment in the tea gardens needs to be extended as they are spending their lives just as tea leaf pluckers till their retirement. They also have to employ in the official works of the tea gardens. Some welfare schemes were taken by the government for raising their condition. These schemes have to be implemented in proper way so that they can take benefit from such schemes.

### **6.3. SUGGESTIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The following recommendations are offered from the findings of the present study for the welfare of the tea tribe women:

1. The tea labourers have contributed significantly to the economic growth of the state. But it is unfortunate that they are still backward. Poverty and lack of proper education have made them backward. So, proper emphasis should be given on the educational improvement of the tea tribe community. In this regard, government and garden management should work co-operatively.
2. The tea garden schools are lacking in basic educational facilities. Hence proper educational and infrastructural facilities should be provided to the tea garden schools. Besides, in the tea gardens, there are no provisions of high or higher secondary schools. Therefore, upper primary and secondary schools should be established within the tea gardens.
3. Efforts are needed to be made for the expansion of adult education programmes within the tea garden areas. Adult education is needed to create educational awareness among the parents of the tea tribe children. So that the parents can understand the significance of girls education.
4. Proper crèche facilities should be provided in the tea gardens. In the tea gardens, more than half the work force is female. So, most of the children of the tea labourers' are engaged in taking care of their younger siblings which is badly affecting the educational status of the tea labourers. Hence, proper crèche facilities should be provided to take care of the younger children of the working women.
5. Some special provisions should be made for girls' education and different incentives should be provided to the girls students of the tea tribe community.

This will encourage girls' education and reduce drop out rate of the girls of tea tribe community.

6. The garden management and government should take proper steps for raising the economic and social condition of the tea tribe community. As the tea tribe women are neglected in their family and social life, steps should be taken for raising their status.
7. Proper medical facilities should be provided in the tea gardens. Most of the tea labourers especially their female partners are subject of malnutrition. As they are suffering from different health problems, they should be provided special facilities in this regard.
8. Awareness should be created regarding birth control measures among the tea labourers. Most of them have more than two children and they are not conscious about the advantages of small family size.
9. Regarding health problems, a large number of the tea labourers are dependent on witchery and other kinds of superstitious treatments. Hence, they should be made aware by organizing different awareness programmes related to health issues. So that they may become conscious regarding their health, modern and scientific methods of treatment and food habit.
10. Poor living condition of the tea labourers and lack of proper sanitary facility are mainly responsible for different health problems among the tea labourers. The garden management should provide proper sanitary and residential facilities to the tea labourers.

11. The garden management as well as different organizations should organize environmental awareness programmes from time to time. Environmental awareness is also essential to maintain proper health and hygiene.

While analyzing the findings of the present study, it is distinct that there can be a number of areas in which research can be undertaken on tea tribe community. A few of such areas are mentioned here.

1. To derive a more comprehensive result, another study can be undertaken on the entire tea tribe community including both the male and female members of the tea community. In the present study, efforts were made only to find out the socio-educational status of the tea tribe women. But from wider perspective, another study can be undertaken on the socio-economic and health status of the entire tea tribe community.
2. In the tea community, both the parents are working. Hence, the elder brothers and sisters are engaged to look after their younger siblings. This fact is mainly responsible for drop out and non-enrolment in the tea garden areas. Therefore, a study can be undertaken on the child rearing practices of the tea tribe women.
3. The problem of child labour is a major aspect of concern in the tea gardens. Due to poverty, most of the parents engage their children in money earning jobs which is responsible for poor educational condition of the tea labourers. Hence, a separate study can be undertaken on the problem of child labour in the tea gardens and its influence on education of the community.
4. A separate study can be undertaken on educational facilities and different welfare schemes taken by the garden management and government for the development

of the tea tribe community. The study should include implementation of such schemes and benefits received by the tea labour community.

5. The tea labourer's community is dominated by different superstitious believes and social evils. Due to such social evils, the community is still remains backward. Witch hunting is a major problem for the entire community. Therefore, another study can also be undertaken on the superstitious believes and witch hunting of the tea tribe community.
6. The present study reveals that the female workers of the tea community enjoy more freedom in their family life. Most of them are free to choose their life partners and can take part in decision making process. Hence, a comprehensive study can be undertaken on the decision making power of the tea tribe women or the desire of social freedom among the female workers of the tea gardens.
7. Another important and interesting area to conduct research is the emotional and psychological condition of the female workers of the tea gardens. The women are exploited in their work place and are dominated in their family life too. Hence, a study should be conducted to know their emotional and psychological conditions which are influencing their behaviour pattern.
8. Another study can be conducted on the emotional and psychological attachment of the tea labourers with the tea gadens. The study can be confined on the willingness of the tea labourers to come out from the isolated areas of the tea gardens to the wider social life. The socio-economic and educational status of the tea labourers is lower and they remain as backward section till today. But due to

their emotional and psychological bondage to the tea gardens, they are happy with their poor condition and well adjusted with the colonial type of work culture.

9. Another important area to conduct research on tea labourers is on their habit of drinking excessive alcohol. Both male and female workers of the tea gardens are addicted to rice beer known as ‘haria’. Their habit of drinking haria is mainly responsible for most of their family and social problems and mainly health problems.

#### **6.4 CONCLUSION**

Education is considered as the major component of national development. It is the most important tool for human resource development and socio-economic and political development of the society. Hence, education is our fundamental right. Many provisions are made in our constitution for free and compulsory elementary education. But tea garden labours are deprived of educational opportunities. The right to education has not still reached the greater section of the tea tribes’ community. It is unfortunate that the socio-economic status and educational status of the tea tribes’ community particularly of their women is at a backward stage. Women education is needed for the education and upliftment of the whole family. Mother’s education has significant role in attaining the children’s education and exerts positive influence on children’s education.

The tea-tribe people in Assam have made substantial contribution to the economy of Assam as a tea garden labour force. Tea production is the mainstay of the state’s economy. Assam produces 15% of world tea and 55% of India’s output. It is a labour oriented enterprise. Tea requires huge number of labourers at every stage of its

work from clearance of jungle, making the land suitable for plantation, work for the nursery, giving manure in the tea garden area, spraying of pesticides; drain cutting, path making, plucking, manufacturing and then finally dispatching it to different places. Hence, without tea garden labourers not a single tea plant can survive. Tea tribes are the heart and soul of tea plantations.

Wikipedia describes that the tea tribes of Assam are among the backward and most exploited tribes in India. Though the younger generation of tea tribes is comparatively more educated and now they have intellectuals and professionals in various fields. The tea tribes being basically labourers, devoid of the basic amenities of life live in impoverishment and die in obscurity. They live in labour lines inside tea estates. These estates are located in interior places and this contributes to the backwardness and exploitation of them by their planters. There are many problems associated to their backwardness. Poverty, illiteracy, addiction to ‘haria’ (country beer), poor standard of living and health facilities are the immutable problems in their live.

The tea tribe community has been playing a great role in shaping the socio-economic life of Assam. But the life of these tea garden labourers is full of various deprivations and miseries. Poor socio-economic condition, illiteracy, over-crowded and unhygienic living conditions in the labour lines makes the tea garden workers helpless to various communicable diseases and malnutrition.

It is found that illiteracy and lack of proper education is the major obstacle in the path of all kinds of progress of the tea garden workers community. Their children are living in very poor and unhygienic environment and have severe physical and psychological problems. Poor home environment, economic problem, physical and

psychological disadvantage has adversely affected their cognitive abilities. So, the tea tribe children fail to make achievement in academic, social and political fields. They have low levels of enrolment and high rate of drop out. This is perhaps because both parents work in the tea gardens and the elder children, especially girls have to stay at home to take the responsibility of the family from household work to taking care of younger sibling setting aside her study and attending school. It results poor performance and low achievement in the examination which ultimately results in drop out.

The tea tribe labours are much reluctant of sending their children to school. The rate of receiving both primary and secondary education of the tea tribe children is very low; particularly higher education is unthinkable for majority of the tea tribes in Assam. Only a few permanent workers having rather sound financial condition send their children to outside the garden for receiving secondary or higher education. It is found that no arrangement has been made by the management or government till today for secondary or higher education of the tea tribe children within the tea garden area.

To make the garden workers conscious about health and hygiene and to raise their status, proper education must be provided to them. There is need to create consciousness for education among the adults so that they may send their children to school. In this regard, non formal education will also be beneficial to them. This will give them necessary information and skill to improve their health, quality of life and ensure an overall physical and mental progress. Only education can make them conscious about their rights regarding medical amenities and sanitation facilities. Education can also make them aware about the needs and various ways to maintain health and hygiene. Some urgent steps need to be taken to remove the wide disparity between male and female literacy. Because low literacy among the women labour force

is a major hindrance for successful implementation of the welfare schemes granted to them. The illiterate women workers are unable to understand the benefit of the family welfare and other welfare schemes which are formulated for their benefits. They are unable to understand their rights and duties. So, education is the only instrument which can make them conscious and can help in the over all development of the community.

Majority of the tea labour population lacks socio-cultural adjustment with the local people. The reasons behind this were both physical as well as man-made. Besides lack of proper communication and transport facilities, the planters also did not want that the labourers should contact with the local people. Even today visitors' movement in the tea estate is controlled by the management. All these were done to keep the labourers isolated from the mainstream of society. But the situation gradually changed after the end of the colonial rule and with the development of transport facilities. The horizon of awareness among the tea labourers gradually expanded. Though they migrated to Assam about 150 years back, still their social adjustment has not been developed significantly. They do not show much interest to adjust with the local people. This might be due to their infirity complex. Besides their 'basties' (labour lines) are located in remote places. They are provided all the necessary goods of their day to day life within the tea estate. So it has been well remarked that each tea estate is a township by itself. Hence, the influence of outside world over the tea garden life is rare.

Now-a-days a few among the new generation of the tea labourers are coming out from the isolated area of tea estates to the wider social life. They come outside for educational purpose. They participate in different cultural functions and festivals of Assamese community. In the process, they interact with the people of different cultural and personal background. On the whole, all these exposures seem to have broadened

their world view; and the younger generation of the tea labourers no longer seems to live in islet communities.