

PROFILE OF WOMEN LABOURERS IN TEA GARDENS OF ASSAM

BY

KALPANA GAYAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE
AND HIGHER EDUCATION FOR WOMEN (DEEMED UNIVERSITY) COIMBATORE-641 043,
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION EDUCATION

APRIL 1994

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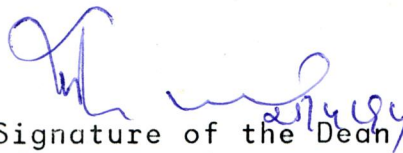
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CERTIFIED AS BONAFAIDE RESEARCH WORK



Signature of the Head
of the Department



Signature of the Dean
of the Faculty



Signature
of the Guide

Acknowledgement

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The investigator wishes to express her ardent sentiments and reverence to **DR. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS, M.A., M.Sc., Ph.D., (OHIO STATE), D.Sc., (MADRAS), VICE — CHANCELLOR,** Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, for the permission granted to conduct this study.

The investigator places on record her deep sense of gratitude and heartfelt thanks to her **GUIDE DR. N. S. NARAYANASWAMY B.Sc., (Hons.), B.T., M.Ed., Ph.D.,** **READER IN HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION EDUCATION,** Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore for his invaluable guidance, continuous inspiration and undaunted encouragement and timely help throughout the study.

The investigator is greatly indebted to **DR. S. SITHALAKSHMI, M.Sc., Ph.D., (MADRAS), PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION EDUCATION,** Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore for being the source of inspiration and guidance throughout the period of study.

The investigator wishes to acknowledge her thanks to **DR. LAKSHMI SANTA RAJAGOPAL, M.S. (TENNESSE), Ph.D., (MADRAS),** **DEAN OF HOME SCIENCE,** Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science

and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore for ^{the} help rendered indirectly through the institute for the conduct of the study.

The investigator further thanks the Women Labourers who had cooperated exceedingly well and provided responses which formed the data for the study.

The investigator is highly indebted to her parents, family members, relatives and her friends for their encouragements and co-operation.

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APPENDIX

I INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TO ELICIT INFORMATION WITH
REGARD TO PROFILE OF WOMEN LABOURERS IN TEA GARDENS
OF ASSAM

Introduction

I INTRODUCTION

"O Woman; lovely woman

Nature made thee to temper man

We had been beasts without you".

- Otway.

Womenfolk constitute half of our total population and their gainful employment adds to the income generation of the society and reflects its progress too. The status of women in a society is measured in terms of level of income, employment, education, health, community and society. The position of women in labour market is governed by their state of education along with factors like social, cultural practices, taboos and employment attitude. Women labour and their exploitation was found since historical times in our country. Women were employed to work as wine servers and as spies to get the secret of the drunkards without arising any doubt in their minds (Tripathy and Das, 1991).

The level of exploitation of women can generally be measured by the level of oppression and exploitation of working class in a society (Gupta, 1986). According to 1991 census, the female literacy rate of India is only 39 per cent (Manorama, 1993).

Neglect of womenpower in our society is perhaps the most important cause of our backwardness. Most of the illiterate women live in the remote parts of the country, they are not even aware of the rights to which they are entitled. Thus, they do not demand the enforcement of their rights within the family, community or nation. Though women constitute half of our population, without proper education and training they can hardly become partners in the development around them. Education to a woman means educating the whole family. This will result in eradication of poverty as well as removal of inequalities between men and women. Employment and income of women are greatly emphasised in contemporary India as a social objective. To some they are a key determinant of status of women in society (Kalbagh, 1991).

In the rural areas female workers mostly act as helpers to men in agricultural activity. They do such work as harvesting, weeding, planting, threshing, manuring etc. Plantations provide job outlets to a number of female labourers in the organised sector. Women find it convenient to work in plantations because they provide conditions of settled labour force to all members of the family (Kalbagh, 1991).

Tea industry is one of the most important export-oriented industries which gave impetus to the growth and

development of our national economy. India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of black tea. Women have worked in this industry since very early times. The tribal population of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa has been recruited in the tea gardens of Assam and West Bengal. There was heavy emigration of labour to the tea gardens in the middle nineteenth century. Recruitment was on family basis as men could not be expected to leave their families behind. When they reached tea gardens, they accepted the work there, in addition to their domestic work. To-day one cannot think of tea plantations without women labour (Gupta, 1990).

Assam is the 'tea country' of India. Tea is the principal cash crop of the state and one of the main export items of India. At present, there are 774 tea gardens in Assam (Biswas, 1982). Lakhimpur district is the largest in terms of area under tea cultivation, production alone employs 90,000 women in tea garden while Sibsagar has 66,000 women employed in 270 gardens. Other districts which have fairly a good number of women employed in tea industry are Cochar, Nagaon, Gualpara and Kumrup. Lack of education, poverty, lack of social consciousness, under-employment and similar other drawbacks still haunt the majority of the working women. There is no hard and fast rule in regard to duration of work; they work in double and triple shifts. Most of them work either on daily wages or on adhoc basis (Badruddin, 1990).

Those people who had migrated long back from the different parts of the country, now have made Assam their motherland and converged in the main stream. They are still maintaining their cultural identity in dress, dance, music, rituals, beliefs and customs. Time to time they celebrate colourful festivals like Tushu puja, Karam puja, Saharai puja, Deewali, Durga puja, Phagua etc, apart from other rituals. On every festival occasion whether marriage ceremony or the funeral day, they drink their cherished wine 'Hariya' (rice beer) and express their nostalgic past in Thumoir songs and dance. On moonlite night to be in a Tea Garden means an unforgettable experience of life (The Assam Tribune, 1994).

Indian female workers still operate under certain limitations and hardships. One of the most common problems faced by a woman is the dual role she has to play on the domestic front and the shop floor. Particularly, the married working women with small children find this dual responsibility, a source of great mental and physical strain. (Aggarwal, 1991).

Since the involvement of women in tea gardens of Assam as labourers has been there for more than 5 decades, it is worthwhile to investigate the life of the women labourers in terms of certain parameters with the following objectives:

To study,

1. In detail the profile of women labourers in tea gardens of Assam
2. The employment and nature of work of women labourers in tea plantation of Assam, and
3. The time management pattern in household activities and the problems of women labourers.

Due to the limitation of time, the investigator confined her study to tea gardens in Assam State. It is hoped that the findings of the study will help to improve the working conditions of the women labourers of Tea Estates.

Review of Literature

II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literatures pertaining to the study on "Profile of Women Labourers in Tea Gardens of Assam" are reviewed under following headings:

- A. Social Status of Women in India
- B. Women Employment and Women Labourers
- C. Women Labourers in Tea Plantations
- D. Highlights of the Researches Related to the Study

A. SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN IN INDIA

According to Jawaharlal Nehru, "In order to awaken the people, it is the women who have to be awakened. Once she is on move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves".

According to Kochar and Pandya (1992), the term 'STATUS' denotes relative position of persons in a social system or sub-system which is distinguishable from that of others through its rights and obligations. Each status position is expressed in terms of role.

Monohar (1983), exhorts that the status and position of women, naturally differ from region to region, class to class, caste to caste, from one religion to the other and

from one occupation to the other. The level of exploitation of women can generally be measured by the level of oppression and exploitation of working class in a society.

Chaurasia (1992) expresses that in Indian Society, the socio economic status of women is usually determined by the position of her family and individual's achievements were rarely considered. For example, a wife of a well placed man enjoyed higher status than a woman who was highly qualified and competent in her job.

Kumar and Singha (1993) state that the scriptures have already gone ahead by recognising the women as the sacred JANAN (The mother). In the Hindu scriptures she is dubbed as DEVI and SHAKTI the most cherished symbol of love and creation. She is said to be the power, behind the plough, the force behind the machine and the creative inspiration for the poet and artist.

Maurya (1988) quotes that it is claimed that women's position was considerably better during the Vedic period than during the later period. Manu long ago declared that "Where women were adored gods frequented that place".

According to Mishra (1988), women who constitute half of the world's population, by virtue of an accident of birth

perform two thirds of the the world's work, receive one tenth of its income and own less than one hundrendth of its property, admits the Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations at the World Conference on Women at Nairobi in 1985. It is an endless source of power, it is a formidable force which can change the complexion of growth, rejuvenate the factor resource of development, absorb the strains of modernization and fight the force of destruction and destablization at work. It can play a more creative, positive and challenging role in nation building.

According to Mohapatra and Pattanaik (1988), Education plays a positive role in the eradication of rural poverty and unemployment. It enhances the knowledge and skill of the workers, the chance to expand non-farm activities, helps better understanding and rational use of farm resources and make one confident to adopt new farm technology. Education also helps women to be aware of their rights and responsibility for the development of the nation as well as the region in which they live.

B. WOMEN EMPLOYMENT AND WOMEN LABOURERS

According to Punia (1991), there was a great discrimination between men and women employment in the past. Women were exploited in low paid jobs or part-time jobs

seasonally. After independence a handful strata of our learned who supported women education also stressed that employment discrimination between men and women must be eliminated and they should be offered reasonably good jobs so that they can become economically independent and productive.

Aggarwal (1991), says that an increasing number of women are entering the job market. The Indian Constitution provides for equal rights and privileges for women and men. On the employment scene also a number of social legislations have been enacted to raise the status of women, and eliminate discrimination in remuneration against them. Especially, the women of the lower and lower middle classes take up work to meet their financial needs and thus share the strain of feeding their families.

(Nair (1990), feels that there a number of studies to show that women work for longer hours and contribute more than men in terms of total labour energy spent by the family members. On account of deeply entrenched social customs, taboos and prejudices, women's work seemed to be invisible and confined more to non-monetary activities.)

According to Gaonkar (1992), it has been noted that the impact of unemployment has fallen more heavily on women than

men in India. It has been felt that this decline in women's employment is likely to have serious and far reaching effects on fertility, mortality and nutrition.

Kiran (1985) says that the forces which have affected adversely the role of women in the Indian economy are: the general decline of handicrafts; increasing pressure of population on agriculture, increase of poverty in the rural sector resulting in migration; development of modern industry with its increasing technological advances, the spread of education and the increasing cost of living, particularly in urban areas.

According to International Labour Organisation Survey (1982), women's place in the labour market, away from an exclusively domestic role, has been more firmly established over recent years.

A set of factors which has reduced the demand for female labour especially in the blue collar jobs in industries are as follows: (1) Protective Labour Legislation (2) Demand for Equalisation of wages for men and women doing similar work (3) Certain structural and technological changes in the processing goods through household industries (4) High rate of illiteracy or semi-literacy in this category with improved or unfavourable labour market. In India, as in other

countries with low employment potential and high cost of production, the employers have been reluctant to employ women due to legislation restricting certain kinds of jobs and hours of working for women, special monetary and other benefits for working mothers because these involve extra cost and administrative changes, unless they are specially suited for certain jobs such as its plantations (for plucking coffee seeds or tea leaves). In factories and mines, for instance, there has been a steady decline of employment of women from the year 1951 to 1971, but in the plantations it has been either remained steady or increased as a whole. This has happened in the organised sector.

(According to Saikia and Gogoi (1981), in India one fifth of the total labour of a family comes from women. One third of the women labour of the family is engaged in agriculture.) The general trend is that both educated men and women become averse to manual labour. Now-a-days in rural societies, most of the educated women of the rich families are exempted from agricultural labour. Besides women, some particular castes or communities are not allowed to work in the field in spite of their deplorable economic conditions.

Rao (1992), establishes that the 1991 census provides data regarding the number of workers among our population and

their distribution. Among males, more than half are workers while among females, only one in four or five is engaged in some kind of work. The work participation rate in the rural areas is higher than that of urban areas. In the case of females, the work participation rate in rural areas is nearly thrice that of urban areas. The work participation rate in India (37.67) is higher than in Sri Lanka (33.42), Bangladesh (30.09) and Pakistan (27.93). The following table presents the work participation rate for males and females in India separately with rural and urban break up as the 1971, 1981 and 1991 censuses.

TABLE I
WORK PARTICIPATION RATE IN INDIA 1971 - 1991

Year	Workers	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5
1971	Total	34.17	52.75	14.22
	Rural	35.33	53.78	15.92
	Urban	19.61	48.88	7.18
1981	Total	36.70	52.62	19.67
	Rural	38.79	53.77	23.06
	Urban	29.99	49.06	8.31
1991	Total	37.68	51.56	22.73
	Rural	40.24	52.50	27.20
	Urban	30.44	48.95	9.74

C. WOMEN LABOURERS IN TEA PLANTATIONS

(Punia (1991), narrates that in the organised sector

plantation occupies a unique position due to its agro-industrial features and a large number of women in employment. Women are more preferred by the plantation authority because they can be employed on low wages and are more committed. Also they can be easily convinced for the unauthorised deduction from wages, as well as delayed wages because of their subservient nature and low level of education and awareness. Plantation is the only non household sector where employment is made on family basis and women's employment is increasing. At present women work participation in tea plantation is almost 50 per cent. It is also seen that the women work participation is generally high in all types of plantations, the highest being in the tea plantation. In comparison to other industrial sectors, tea industry experiences regular increase of women labourers since its establishment. Several factors work behind it. As the tea industry requires limited mechanisation, there is a constant rise in the number of women workers. The limited mechanisation in tea industry always suits to the physical strength of women labourers. In 1961, the plantations work was a major women employment occupation in Assam, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. In Assam, more than 95 per cent of the women workers in the organised sector were plantation labourers. In North Indian tea plantations, the work system of men is that of 'task work' which means that they can leave when the task set for the day is done, normally after four to five hours of

work. A woman's day begins at 4 to 5 a.m., with cooking for the family. Then after seven to eight hours of plantation work she must fetch water and firewood and cook another meal. Children are often brought to the field, the small are strapped to the back of the mother. Women workers in other industries face much more difficulty at home than at the work place. In plantation most of the women workers are accommodative and their work demands can be fitted into their family requirements. They integrate work and family in their life without any visible strain. In plantation industry work schedule and working hours help the women to adjust with their domestic duties. In tea industry both the residential and working sectors are within the same areas. Thus a woman can with strain fulfil the roles as wife, mother and worker. Their children are socialised in such a way that they never demand more of their mothers' attention. Women out of home employment is something natural in time with the traditional ethos.

According to Saxena (1986) the plantation workers have got their own problems. Most of the workers are recruited from distant areas and are migrant in character. The work is generally seasonal in character. The earnings of workers are small as compared to the earnings of workers in other factories. The sectors of the national economy in which

women are employed in large numbers are (i) agriculture (ii) Plantation (iii) mines (iv) factory industries (v) Small scale industries (vi) Social services and (vii) white collar job. The plantation employ more women in the aggregate than any other organised industry. In the plantation, a large number of women workers are found because the system of work on plantations is on a family basis. All the members of the family, except very small children and invalids, are at work, and it is seen that, on an average, in a family on plantation workers in Assam there are about 4.15 persons of whom no fewer than 2.44 are earners, 1.17 men, 0.96 women and 0.31 children.

Saxena (1986), exhorted that the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme Act 1955; the Act, which came into force from the 5th June 1955, makes provision for the framing of compulsory Provident Fund Scheme for labourers employed in the Tea Plantation in Assam.

Sincar (1994), quotes that the first tea estate in India was established at Chabua in Assam in 1837. This was the beginning of the plantation industry in the organised sector. Tea is grown today in a number of states, but Assam still accounts for more than half of the country's tea production. Other plantation crops like coffee, rubber and

spices are also grown in the country but the plantations are located mainly in the Southern states. Over the years the plantation industry has grown bigger and stronger in many respects; in planted area, production, productivity, revenue generation, foreign exchange earnings and very importantly in providing employment. It has also given a lead in research, innovation and adaptation.

Bhadury (1994) explains, that in National Perspective, Tea occupies an ideal position. It is employment-oriented and environment friendly. The pattern of family basis employment to economically backward people in remote rural areas has provided work to a million workers, both men and women directly and has created the source of livelihood to twice as many indirectly. In tea plantation one worker employed per acre which is far greater a land labour ratio compared to the engagement of labour per acre of arable land in the agricultural sector which is just 0.4 worker.

Gupta (1990), submits that the Plantation Labour Act came into existence in 1951 but was enforced by the State Governments concerned, with effect from 1st April, 1954. The state Government framed their rules under this Act from September 1955 to April, 1959.

This Act and the rules made there under provide for the welfare of the plantation labourer and regulate the conditions of work in plantations. To remove ambiguities and difficulties, Plantation Labour (Amendment) Act was promulgated by the Parliament in 1981 and brought into force with effect from 26th January, 1982. The Amendment Act provided for compulsory registration of plantations. Under this Act all plantations have to provide accommodation to their resident workmen and their families and also to those residing outside who have put in six months of continuous service and express a desire in writing to reside in plantations.

D.HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESEARCHES RELATED TO THE STUDY

A research study conducted by the Madurai Institute of Social Work in 1979 on the problems and living conditions of women labourers in tea plantations of Kerala State, has manifested the following:

- (i) Some women labourers had been serving for 36 years or more and they were forced to absorb their children in their work
- (ii) Most of the women were married in the age groups of 13 to 16 years since early marriage relieved pressure on crowded families
- (iii) the average income of the labourers being low, indebtedness and poverty were the sequel.
- (iv) the women toiling hard in plantations hardly got leisure time.

Rohini (1991) studied on women workers in manufacturing industry in India found that women have always been a disadvantaged minority within the manufacturing work force in India. The participation of women in the industrial work force opens up possibilities for collective action which can substantially improve the position of all women in society. However, the possibilities often remain unrealised due to the limitation of the trade unions.

Jain (1988) studied on sexual equality of workers in an Asian Plantation system in Assam on Nimari tea gardens at Sibsagar District. The salient findings were:

(i) Women on Nimari are classed along with men in an asexual category because the 'world view' of the workers does not permit treating women on the tea garden primarily as agents of human reproduction (ii) in production activities they also share the 'labour' identify of the male proletarians (iii) the wage level of the labourers is composed on a family basis.

Unni (1992) studied women's participation in Indian Agriculture over a period 1961 - '88 and found that unlike men, women's supply behaviour and response to demand for their labour are not necessarily determined by market mechanisms. Specific agro climatic conditions and crop

cultural practice are associated with female labour use and women belonging to different classes in these regions respond differently to these opportunities for work. Various social, cultural and ideological factors condition women's work participation.

(Shrivastava (1988) studied participation of women in various economic activities in India taking the 1971 - 81 decade as a focal period. He analysed women's participation in terms of rural/urban work force; primary/secondary/tertiary workers; and agricultural / industrial workers. There are 44.973 million women workers in India (1981) or 19.76 per cent of the total female population of India, compared with 14.15 in 1971.)

Kamalraj (1990) who had conducted a study with regard to women labourers in salt industry in Tamil Nadu State had found that men and women labourers perform the same type of work, except scrapping of salt. Men workers are paid Rs.11 and women workers Rs.9 on daily wages. The services of women in the salt works are specially needed to supply drinking water for all the workers; they have to walk to far off places to fetch pots of drinking water.

Kannan and Ilango (1990) studied the health hazards of

women labourers in Beedi Industries of Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu State. The findings revealed that

(i) The beedi workers are more prone to allergic bronchities and sinus problems; it may be probably due to the dust of the tobacco leaves which includes allergy (ii) The girls are malnourished about 60 per cent of them are anaemic coupled with abject poverty. They also suffer from diseases of uterus and other gynace problems and even cancer.

A study conducted by Sundari and Manimekhalai (1990) on women Labour in paddy processing Industries of Trichirapalli in Tamil Nadu State had brought out that Ninety per cent of women workers live below the poverty line. Added to the low income, the high level of expenditure and lack of assets and indebtedness further ruined the economic life of these women workers. There is no job security and there is complete denial of welfare measures.)

Sundari and Manimekhalai (1989) investigated the problems of women workers in unorganised handloom industries in Vengamedu village of Tamil Nadu State and had found out that the most common mode of wage payment is piece rate wage; 66 per cent of household income is spent for food items, low income, high level of expenditure, high rate of indebtedness are the characteristics of the women workers.

A study conducted by Thippaiah (1989) on women workers in urban unorganised sector in Bangalore has shown that women labourers are suffering from poverty, unemployment, under employment, insecure employment, exploitation, harassment etc. Most of such labourers are in the age group of 18 - 32 years, with a low level literacy and live in slums and shanty towns.

Methodology

III METHODOLOGY

The procedure for carrying out the study "Profile of Women Labourers in Tea Gardens of Assam" is discussed under the following headings:

- A. Selection of the Area
- B. Selection of the Sample
- C. Selection of the Method
- D. Selection of the Tool
- E. Preparation of the Tool
- F. Collection and Analysis of Data

A. SELECTION OF THE AREA

The area selected for the study was Nagaon District in Assam. This place was selected for the convenience of the investigator as she was interested in finding out the profile of women labourers in Tea Gardens of Assam. Investigator had selected five tea gardens namely, Lungsung, chapanala, Jiyaiuri, Khanajan and Matiyapahar. (Figure 1).

B. SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

Sample is that part of the universe which we

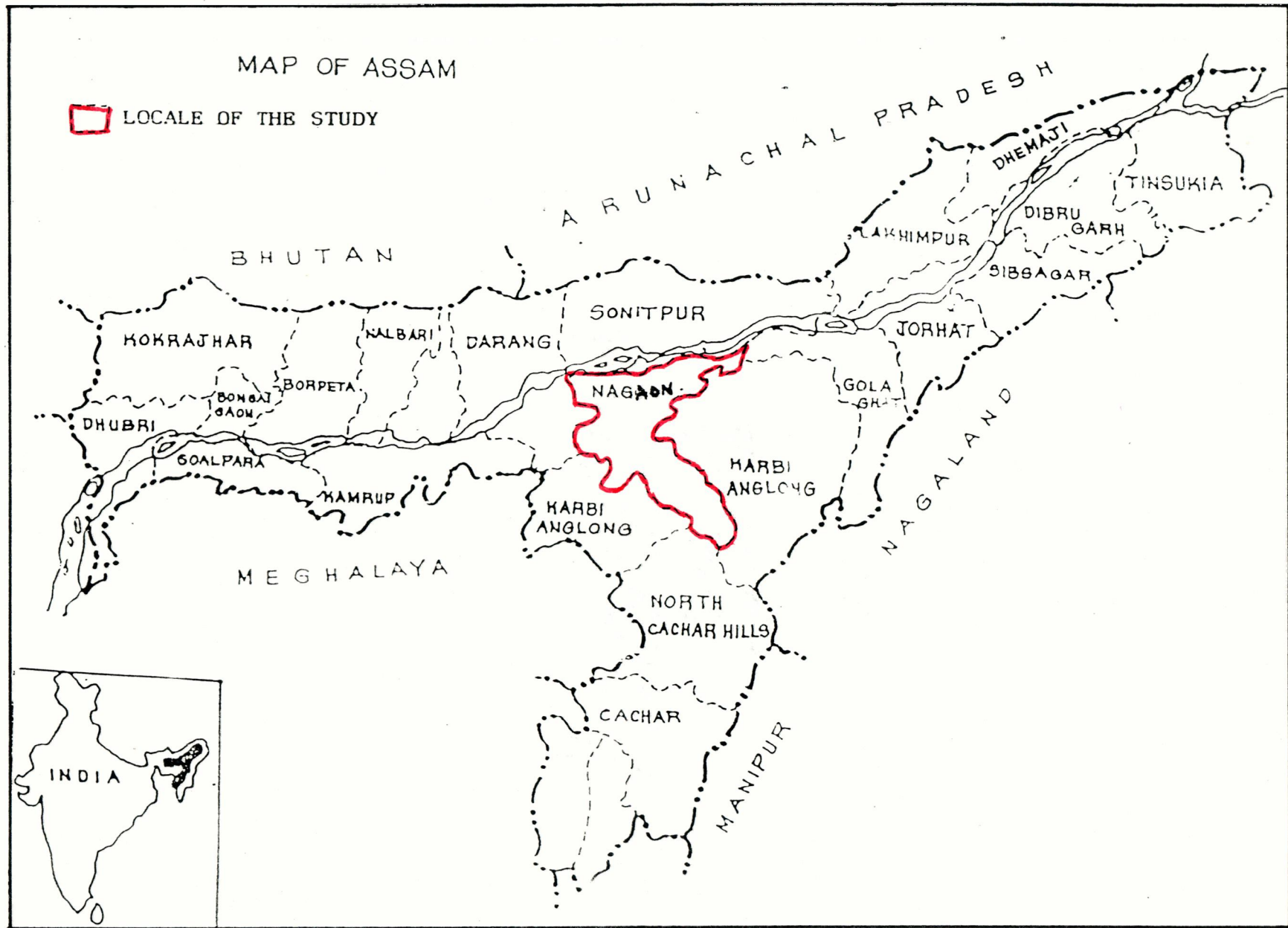


Figure.1

select for the purpose of investigation. A sample should exhibit the characteristics of the universe (Gupta, 1991).

Random sampling methods are those in which every item in the universe has a known chance or probability of being chosen for the sample (Gupta, (1990).

The universe of the present study consisted of 100 women labourers, working in five tea gardens of Assam at the rate of 20 women labourers from each of the 5 Tea Gardens.

C. SELECTION OF THE METHOD

The method of study used was survey method.

Survey refers to the method of securing information concerning a phenomena under study from all or a selected number of respondents of the concerned universe (Kothari, 1990).

Survey research is nothing but a type of descriptive research only. Such a research does not involve the use of experiments. It seeks to uncover the factors involved in a given situation and determine the degree in which they exist (Best, 1977).

Survey method was chosen by the investigator to study the profile of women labourers in Tea Gardens and interview was considered appropriate to draw the needed information.

D. SELECTION OF THE TOOL

The tool which was selected for the study was interview schedule to be administered to women labourers.

An interview schedule refers to a set of statements and questions to be answered by the respondents in a face to face interview and filled in by the interviewer himself (Chaudhari, 1986).

E. PREPARATION OF THE TOOL

An interview schedule was evolved to elicit information from the women labourers with regard to general family background, socio economic condition, nature of work of women labourers, time management pattern and problems of working, recreation, marriage, career employment, relationship with the authority etc.

The finally formulated interview schedule is appended as Appendix I.

F. COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The investigator personally visited the areas and met

the women labourers in order to understand the actual condition of their homes and tea gardens where they work. Likewise 100 women were personally interviewed by the investigator after creating good rapport with them and their responses were recorded accurately then and there in the Interview Schedule. It took nearly 60 minutes to interview each woman and the investigator collected data through interview from the 100 women labourers within 20 days.

The data thus collected were consolidated, tabulated and analysed and are presented in the next chapter.

Results and Discussion

IV RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study "Profile of Women Labourers in Tea Gardens of Assam" are presented and discussed under the following headings:

- A. Background Information of the Sample
- B. Details of Work in the Tea Gardens
- C. Assistance Provided to the Women Labourers
- D. Entertainment and Savings

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE SAMPLE

TABLE 11
AGE DISTRIBUTION

S.No	Age range in Years	Number N = 100	Percentage
1	16 - 20	12	12
2	21 - 25	21	21
3	26 - 30	24	24
4	31 - 35	17	17
5	36 - 40	17	17
6	41 - 45	4	4
7	46 - 50	5	5
Total		100	100

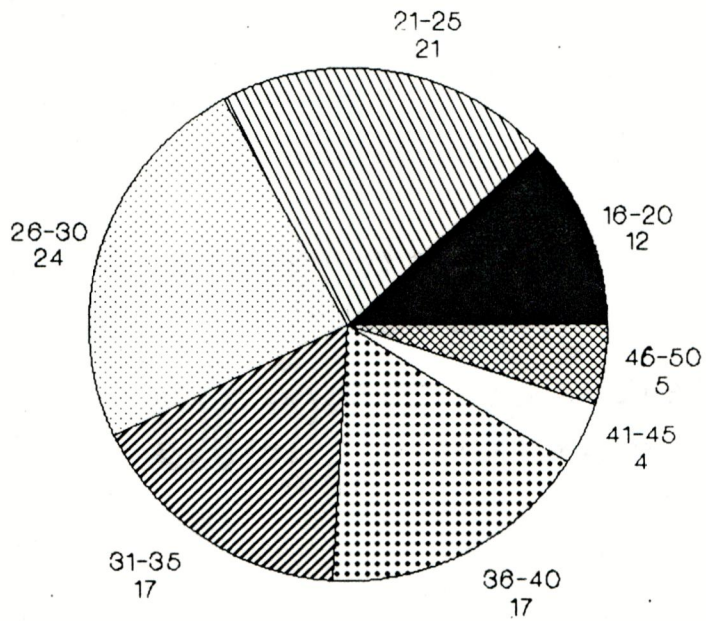
From the table, it could be seen that out of 100 women labourers working in the tea gardens taken for the study, 24 per cent were in the age range 26 - 30 years; 21 per cent in the range 21 - 25 years, 17 per cent each in the age ranges 31 - 35 years and 36 - 40 years. There were only 5 per cent who were above 46 years. This is diagrammatically represented in the form of Pie Diagram (Figure 2).

There were 46 per cent Hindus and 54 per cent belonged to Christian religion taken for the study.

TABLE III
EDUCATION DISTRIBUTION

S.No	Education	Number N = 100	Percentage
1	Illiterate	53	53
2	Upto 6th standard	12	12
3	Upto 7th standard	9	9
4	Upto 8th standard	9	9
5	Upto 9th standard	10	10
6	Upto 10th standard	7	7
Total		100	100

The above table shows that the educational



AGEWISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SAMPLE

FIG. 2

qualification of the 100 women labourers taken for the study; 53 per cent were illiterates whereas 12 per cent had studied upto 6th standard, 10 per cent upto 9th standard. Only 7 per cent had studied upto 10th standard.

Of the 100 women labourers, 59 per cent were living in nuclear families and 41 per cent belonged to joint families.

All the 100 women labourers in the tea gardens of Assam taken for the study were living in rural areas.

TABLE IV.
MARITAL STATUS

S.No	Marital status	Number N=100	Percentage
1	Unmarried	23	23
2	Married	59	59
3	Widows	18	18
	Total	100	100

The table reveals that 59 per cent of the sample were married, 23 per cent unmarried and 18 per cent were widows.

72 per cent of the sample were living in thatched houses whereas 28 per cent had concrete houses.

TABLE V
NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN THE FAMILIES

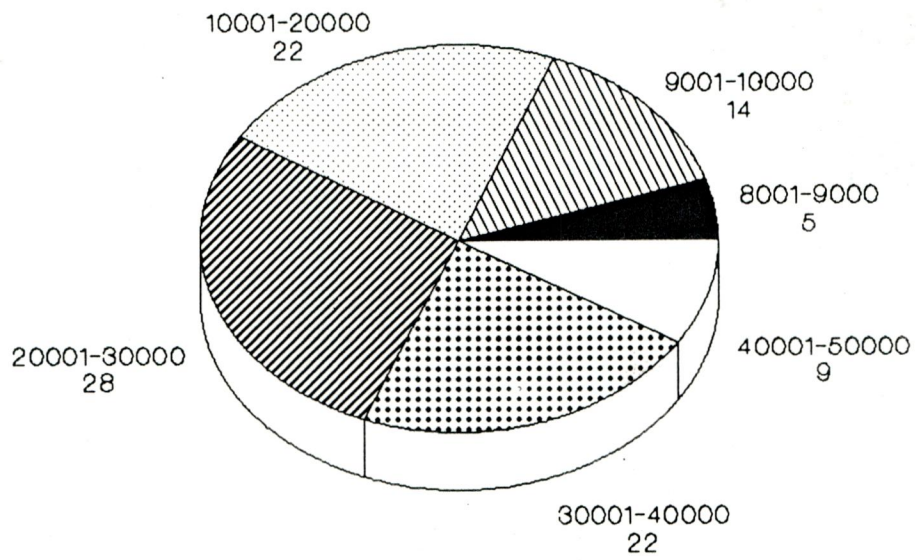
S.No	Number of members	Number N=100	Percentage
1	8	5	5
2	7	8	8
3	6	12	12
4	5	26	26
5	4	34	34
6	3	15	15
Total		100	100

The above table gives a clear picture of the number of members in their families; 5 per cent had 8 members in the families, 8 per cent had 7 members, 34 per cent had 4 members and 15 per cent had 3 members in their families.

TABLE VI
ANNUAL INCOME

S.No	Annual Income (Rs)	Number N=100	Percentage
1	8,001 - 9,000	5	5
2	9,001 - 10,000	14	14
3	10,001 - 20,000	22	22
4	20,001 - 30,000	28	28
5	30,001 - 40,000	22	22
6	40,001 - 50,000	9	9
Total		100	100

The above table shows the annual Income of the 100 women labourers taken for the study. 28 per cent were getting an annual income in the range of Rs.20,001 - 30,000; 22 per cent each in ranges Rs.30,001 - 40,000 and Rs.10,001 - 20,000; 14 per cent in the range of 9,001 - 10,000; 9 per cent in the range of Rs.40,001 to 50,000. There were only 5 per cent who were getting an annual income in the range of Rs.8,001 to 9,000. This is diagrammatically represented in the form of Pie Diagram (Figure 3).



ANNUAL INCOME OF THE SAMPLE

FIG. 3

TABLE VII
PERIODS OF RESIDENCE IN THE AREA

S.No	Period of Residence	Number N = 100	Percentage
1	11 - 20 years	29	29
2	21 - 30 years	41	41
3	31 - 40 years	23	23
4	41 - 50 years	7	7
Total		100	100

The table reveals the period of residence of the 100 sample. 41 per cent were residing in the area in the range of 21 - 30 years; 29 per cent for 11 - 20 years and 23 per cent in the range of 31 - 40 years and only 7 per cent were residing in the area for more than 41 years.

Of the 100 women labourers, 53 per cent were illiterates and 47 per cent had discontinued their studies in the middle of the course.

TABLE VIII
STANDARD AT WHICH THE SAMPLE HAD DISCONTINUED

S.No	Standard of discontinue	Number N = 47
1	10th standard	7
2	9th standard	10
3	8th standard	9
4	7th standard	9
5	6th standard	12
----- Total		47

There were 47 out of 100 who had discontinued their studies in the middle for various reasons. The above table gives a clear picture of those who had discontinued their studies and the standards at which they had discontinued. 12 out of 47 had discontinued at 6th standard, 10 at 9th standard, 9 each at the 8th and 7th standards and 7 had discontinued at 10th standard.

TABLE IX
REASONS FOR DISCONTINUANCE OF STUDIES

S.No	Causes	Number * N=47
1	Willingly	22
2	Marriage	9
3	Financial problem	9
4	Parents' persuasion	20

* Multiple responses

The above table reveals the reasons for the discontinuance of studies; out of 47, 22 had willingly discontinued their studies in order to take up tea garden work as labourers; 20 were persuaded by the parents to discontinue and 9 each had given the reason for their discontinuance of studies due to their marriage and financial problem.

All the women labourers taken for the study did not feel shy to go for work in tea gardens.

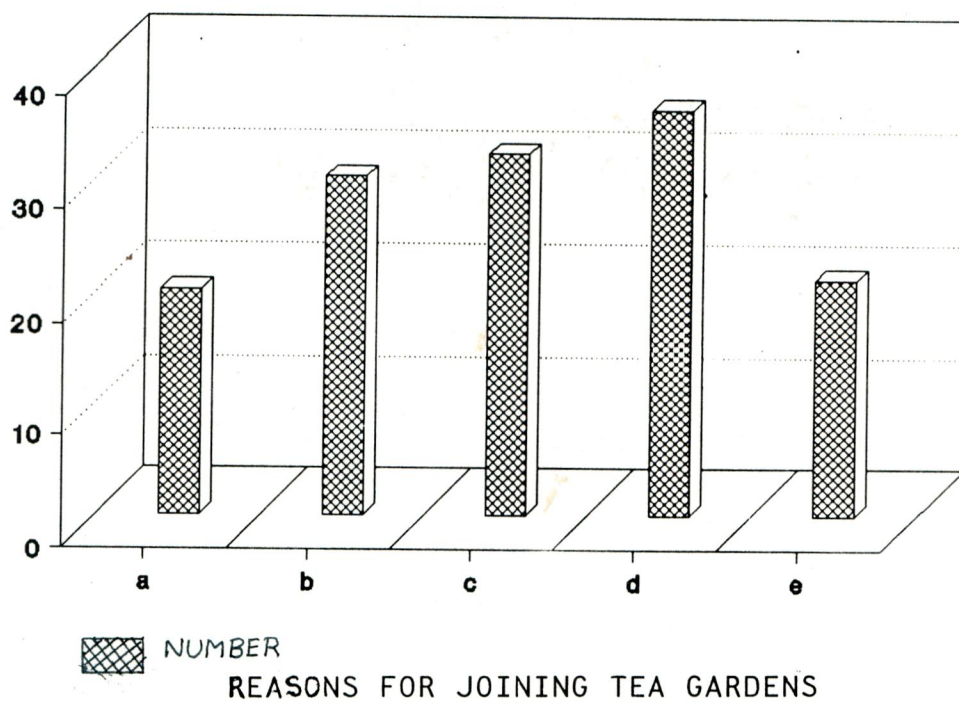
TABLE X
REASONS FOR JOINING TEA GARDENS

S.No	Reasons	Number * N=100
1	Financial problems	20
2	To become independent	30
3	Family burden	32
4	To increase family income	36
5	To earn money	21

* Multiple responses

The reasons as given by the sample taken for the study for joining as labourers in tea gardens are clearly shown in the above table. 36 had said that they had to increase the family income; 32 had given the reason as to relieve the family burden; 30 had to become independent, 21 had given the reason as to earn money and 20 had joined because of financial problems. This is diagrammatically represented in the form of Bar Diagram (Figure 4)

Fig.4 REASONS FOR JOINING TEA GARDENS



- a. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS
- b. BECOME INDEPENDENT
- c. FAMILY BURDEN
- d. TO INCREASE FAMILY INCOME
- e. EARN MONEY

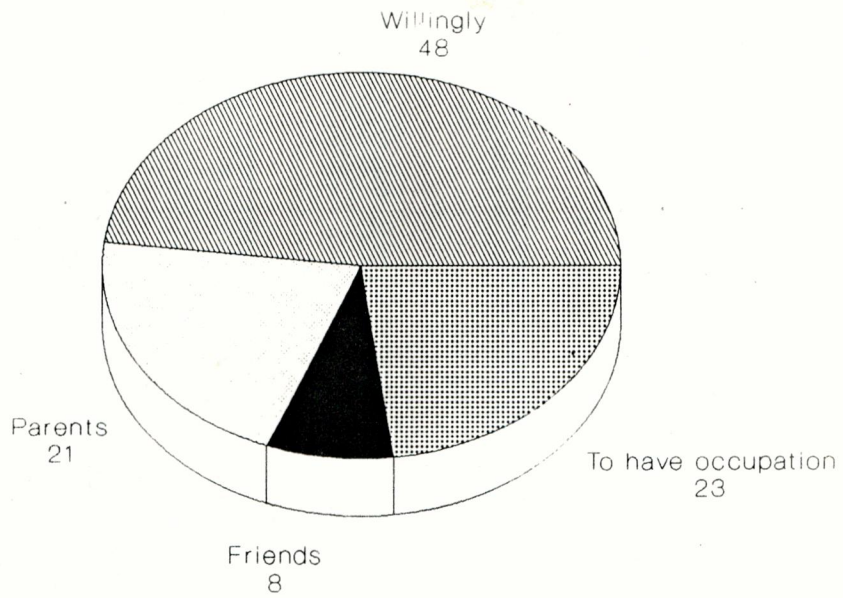
TABLE X1
MOTIVATION FORCE TO JOIN AS LABOURERS

S.No	Motivated by	Number N = 100	Percentage
1	Willingly	48	48
2	Parents	21	21
3	Friends	8	8
4	To have occupation	23	23
Total		100	100

From the above table it could be seen that 48 per cent had willingly joined the tea gardens as labourers without anybody's motivation, 23 per cent had joined to have an occupation, 21 per cent had said that their parents motivated them to join and 8 per cent were motivated by their friends. (Figure 5)

B. DETAILS OF WORK IN THE TEA GARDENS

All the women labourers taken for study had said that they were not given any skill training to do work in tea gardens.



MOTIVATING FORCE TO JOIN AS LABOURERS

FIG. 5

TABLE XII
LONGIVITY OF WORKING IN TEA GARDENS

S.No	Periods range in years	Number N=100	Percentage
1	1 - 5	20	20
2	6 - 10	25	25
3	11 - 15	18	18
4	16 - 20	22	22
5	21 - 25	9	9
6	26 - 30	6	6
Total		100	100

The above table shows the longivity of working of the sample in the particular garden. 25 per cent were working for 6 - 10 years in the same garden; 22 per cent were for 16 - 20 years; 20 per cent were working in the range of 1 - 5 years; 18 per cent were in the range 11 - 15 years; 9 per cent were in the range of 21 - 25 years and only 6 per cent had been working for more than 26 years in the same tea garden.

All the labourers in tea gardens immaterial of sex (men and women) were paid equal wages of Rs.19.93 per day at the end of the week along with their rations. Rations are as following:

1. Rice - 1Kg 600gm/head (Cost Rs.0.47 per kg) weekly
2. Wheat flour - 1Kg 600gm/head (Cost Rs.0.47 per kg) weekly
3. One family gets 600 gms tea leaves monthly free of cost

(All labourers were getting one umbrella, one blanket and one slipper every two years. Children labourers were paid daily wages of Rs.10.1).

with regard to reasonsableness of the daily wages along with the ration paid to the women labourers, 75 percent taken for the study had felt the wages to be reasonable whereas 25 percent had grumbled.

of the 100 women labourers, 52 percent were not satisfied with the wages that they were getting and 48 percent were satisfied with the wages.

Out of 100 women labourers interviewed, 57 percent had said that the amount they were receiving as wages was inadequate to maintain the family whereas 43 percent had said that the amount was enough to run the families.

All the women labourers taken for study in the tea gardens were involved in different types of activities like plucking of tea leaves, manuring, Tipping, pruning, weeding and sorting. Due to seasonal nature of work in tea gardens, women were transferable from one operation to another operation. Sirdars were employed to supervise the women's work. (Plate 1)

All the women labourers had said that their authorities treated them nicely and they felt secure to work in the tea gardens.

Their comment on the position of women labourers working in the tea garden was normal. All the 100 women labourers were doing the same type of work in the tea gardens.

All the 100 women labourers in the tea gardens of Assam taken for the study felt that they had done nothing to mention as special achievement except doing the normal routine work entrusted to them.



PLATE 1 WOMEN LABOURERS PLUCKING THE TEA LEAVES



**PLATE 2 JHUMOIR DANCE IN KARAM PUJA BY ASSAM WOMEN
TEA LABOURERS**

TABLE XIII
PROBLEMS IN WORKING

S.No	Problems	NUmber N=100	Percentage
1	work was hard	8	8
2	Work for more time	43	43
3	No problems	49	49
Total		100	100

The above table reveals the problems as expressed by the sample. 43 per cent had said that they had to work for more time; 8 per cent had felt that the work was hard and 49 per cent had not encountered any problems while working in tea gardens.

With regard to the working time of the women labourers in the tea gardens, 60 per cent had stated that their working time was from 7.00 am to 4.00 pm with an hour lunch interval whereas 40 per cent had said from 6.00 am to 3.00 pm with one hour lunch interval. All had no work on Sundays.

As all the women labourers had to go to the tea gardens for work, they had free time only either before they go to work or after their work in the tea gardens.

The following table gives the type of work the women labourers were doing during their free time.

TABLE XIV.
WORK DONE DURING FREE TIME

S.No	Work done	Number * N = 100
1	Collecting firewood	50
2	Went to markets for selling goods	33
3	Doing domestic work	32
4	Helping mother's work	25

* Multiple responses

The above table reveals the types of work done by the sample taken for the study during their free time; 50 had said that they were collecting firewood; 33 went to markets for selling goods; 32 were doing domestic work and 25 were helping their mother's in the household activities.

TABLE XV
NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY

S.No	Number of children	Number N=100	Percentage
1	6 Nos	5	5
2	5 Nos	7	7
3	4 Nos	9	9
4	3 Nos	24	24
5	2 Nos	21	21
6	1 No	5	5
7	No children	6	6

Out of 100 women labourers taken for the study; 77 were married or widowed. Among them, the number of children in their families is presented in the above table. There were 6 children in 5 families; 5 children in 7 families; 4 children in 9 families; 3 children in 24 families; 2 children in 21 families; 1 child in 5 families. There were 6 families with no children.

47 out of 100 women labourers had said that they were

interested in sending their children for labourer's work in the tea gardens whereas 24 were firm in not sending their children to the tea gardens.

TABLE XVI
BENEFITS ACCRUED

S.No	Benefits accrued	Number * N=100
1	Increase family income	69
2	Not dependent on others	24
3	Family members got minimum requirement for living	27

* Multiple responses

The above table reveals the benefits that the family had accrued; 69 had said that it had increased their family income; 24 had given the fact that they need not depend on others and 27 had said that they had got the minimum requirement for their normal living.

All the 100 women labourers taken for the study had said that their families had not faced any difficulties because of their going for work.

With regard to household domestic work carried out in the houses of the women labourer taken for the study; 48 per cent had said that they themselves were doing the domestic work; 23 per cent had said that their daughters shared the domestic work along with them; 29 per cent had said that other members of the family involved themselves in carrying out the domestic work.

Out of 100 sample, 48 per cent of the women labourers who were doing their domestic work themselves had said that they used to complete the domestic chores of work before they go to work.

With regard to the civic knowledge they possess, 77 per cent had no idea as to how their working in tea gardens could contribute to national income, whereas 23 per cent had said that their work in the tea gardens contributed for national income.

All the women labourers taken for the study had said that their neighbours who were going for labour work were poor and their standard of living was also poor.

All the women labourers taken for the study had said that their elders encouraged them to go to work in the tea gardens.

As to the question with regard to whether, other members in their families were also going for doing similar work in the tea gardens, 64 per cent had responded in the affirmative.

All the women labourers who were married had said that their husbands had appreciated their wives for doing work in the tea gardens as it increased the family income.

50 per cent of the women labourers who were having children had said that their children appreciated their mothers for their work in the tea gardens.

62 per cent of the sample taken for the study had said that they were having happy family living.

They had given different reasons for their happy family living, namely, family members got their basic requirements because of her earnings (39 per cent); no financial problem (30 per cent); mutual understanding and adjustment among family members (14 per cent).

In Assam tea gardens both the residential and working sectors were within the same areas and hence most of the women labourers without much strain had fulfilled the roles as wife, mother and worker.

The reasons given by the sample who had expressed in negative with regard to happy family living, were unable to take care of children(24 per cent); overload of work (16 per cent) and lack of mutual understanding among members of the family (15 per cent).

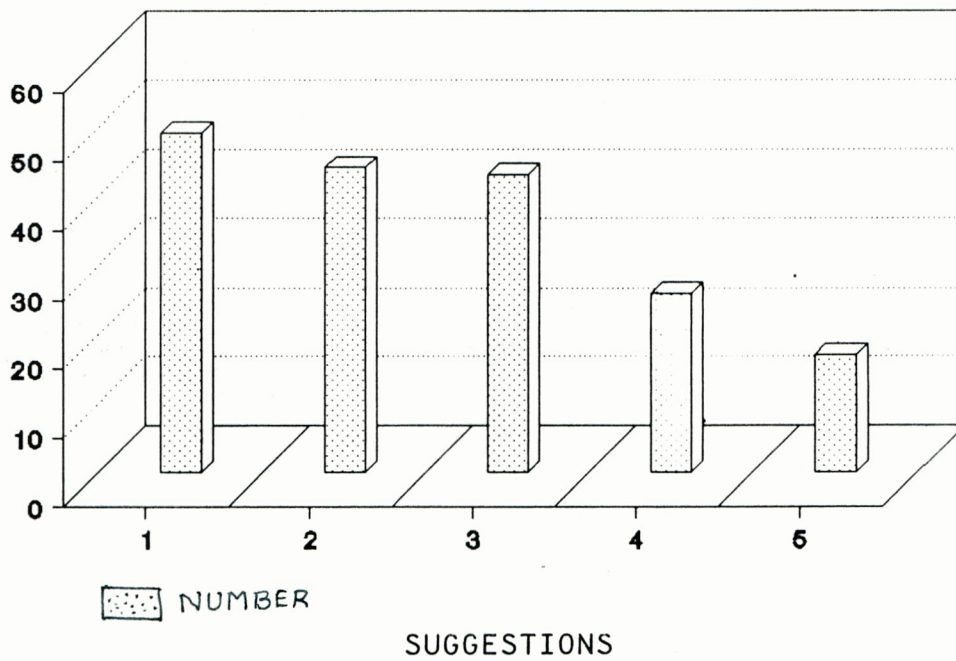
TABLE XVII
SUGGESTION FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS

S.No	Suggestions	Number N = 100 *
1	Training to be given	49
2	Co-operation among women	44
3	Provide new technology for work	43
4	Co-operation between authority and labourers	26
5	Good communication between labourers and higher levels	17

* Multiple responses

The above table gives a clear picture of suggestions given by the sample for better working conditions of women labourers; 49 had said that proper training in the job should be given to women; 44 women had said that there should be

Fig.6 SUGGESTION FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS



1. TRAINING TO BE GIVEN
2. CO-OPERATION AMONG WOMEN LABOURERS
3. PROVIDE NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR WORK
4. CO-OPERATION BETWEEN AUTHORITY AND LABOURERS
5. GOOD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LABOURERS AND HIGHER LEVEL PERSONNELS

good co-operation among women workers; 43 had said that new technology of work should be taught; 26 had suggested that there should be good co-operation between authorities and labourers. This is diagrammatically represented in the form of Pie Diagram (Figure 6)

TABLE XVIII

LABOURERS VIEWS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF WOMEN LABOURERS

S.No	Views	Number * N=100
1	Increase wages	45
2	Lessen the working hours for women labourers	40
3	Provide supplementary food for women in special conditions	36
4	Organise functional literacy classes	30
5	Provide free education to children	25
6	Give more medical facilities to women	22

* Multiple responses

The views as given by the women labourers taken for the study with regard to improvement of labourers are presented in the above table; 45 women labourers had said that the wages should be increased; 40 had suggested that

working hours of women labourers should be lessened, 36 to provide supplementary food; 30 had said to organise functional literacy classes for women labourers, 25 to provide free education to their children and 22 had suggested to give more medical facilities to women.

C. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE WOMEN LABOURERS

All the 100 women labourers had said that they were allowed to get loans, whenever necessary for celebrating marriage and other ceremonies.

All the women labourers had said that they were repaying the loan at the rate of Rs.10 per week and thus they were clearing the loan.

TABLE XIX
HELP RENDERED BY THE AUTHORITIES

S.No	Condition	Number * N=100
1	Providing loans	44
2	Providing necessary facilities like food, cloth and shelters	38
3	Provides creches, school, dispensary and hospital	34

* Multiple responses

From the above table, it could be seen as to how the

authorities were helping the families of the women labourers; 44 had said that they were getting loans from the authorities; 38 had said that the authorities were providing them the basic necessities like food, cloth and shelter and 34 had stated that the estate authorities had provided services like creches, schools, dispensaries and hospitals for the benefit of the women labourers.

All the women labourers had stated that the tea garden authorities provide medical facilities to them. 60 per cent of them had said that the authorities provide them with medical allowances and medical leave. As given by the women labourers, only 60 per cent of the women labourers were covered under insurance and they were providing employee insurance facilities.

All the women labourers taken for the study had said that the tea estates reimburse their medical expenses.

D. ENTERTAINMENT AND SAVINGS

All the women labourers were having the habit of seeing films in the cinema theatres.

TABLE XX
FREQUENCY OF SEEING FILMS

S.No	Frequency	Number N=100	Percentage
1	Once a month	45	45
2	Twice a month	37	37
3	Once a week	18	18
Total		100	100

The above table gives a clear picture of the frequency of seeing films by the sample; 45 per cent had said that they were seeing the films once a month; 37 per cent twice a month and only 18 per cent once a week.

TABLE XXI
TYPE OF FILMS LIKED MOST

S.No	Type of films	Number N=100	Percentage
1	Religious film	42	42
2	Social films	37	37
3	Family type films	21	21
Total		100	100

The above table reveals the type of films liked most by the sample; 42 per cent had said that they liked religious films most; 37 per cent social films and 21 per cent liked family type of films most.

Out of the sample of 100 women labourers taken for the study; 67 per cent had the habit of drinking intoxicating liquor whereas 33 per cent were not alcoholics.

TABLE XXII
PERIODICITY OF DRINKING LIQUOR

S.No	Frequency	Number N=67
1	During festivals	31
2	Daily	20
3	Occasionally	9
4	Weekly	7

Of the 67 women labourers who were having drinking habit, 31 drink only during festival celebrations, 20 had developed daily drinking habit; and 9 occasionally.

Normally, they used to drink only home made liquor called "Hariya" (rice beer)

TABLE XXIII
REASONS FOR DRINKING LIQUOR

S.No	REASONS	Number * N=67
1	Custom	31
2	Feeling happy	21
3	Habit	15

* Multiple responses

The above table gives the reasons for drinking liquor; 31 had said that drinking was the custom of their tribe, 21 had stated that they were drinking to feel happy and 15 had said that drinking was their habit.

TABLE XXIV
MONTHLY EXPENDITURE INCURRED ON LIQUOR

S.No	Monthly expenditure (Per month in Rs)	Number N=67
1	51 - 60	23
2	61 - 70	18
3	71 - 80	10
4	81 - 90	7
5	91 - 100	5
6	101 - 120	4

The above table picturises the money spent on drinking liquor per month; 23 were spending in the range of Rs.51-60 per month; 18 in the range Rs.61 - 70 per month and 10 in the range of Rs.71 - 80; 7 in the ranges of Rs.81 - 90 per month and only 4 were spending more than Rs.101 per month on drinking liquors.

TABLE XXV
MARRIAGE AGE OF THE WOMEN LABOURERS

S.No	Age in years	Number N=77
1	11 - 15	29
2	16 - 20	38
3	21 - 25	7
4	26 - 30	3

Of the 100 women labourers in the tea gardens taken for the study, only 77 were married and their age at the time of marriage is indicated in the above table; 29 were married when they were in the age range 11 - 15 years, 38 when they were 16 - 20 years, and only 3 were married at a late age of 26 years and above. In Assam, among the tribal families the custom was that normally girls got married at an early of 20 years or below.

The marriage of 53 women labourers taken for the study was parental arranged marriages whereas 24 had love marriages.

Of the 77 marriages, 48 marriages were conducted with strict religious rituals and 29 had got married legally through registration.

All the women labourers taken for the study in the tea gardens were celebrating all festivals like Christmas, Ester, Deepavali, Durga pooja and others.

Out of 100 women labourers taken for the study; 54 Christian labourers were celebrating Christian festivals like Christmas, Good Friday, Ester and 46 Hindus were celebrating Hindu festivals like Bihu, Tushu puja, Karam puja, saharai puja, Deewali, Durga puja and Phagua. (Plate 2)

Of the 100 women labourers only 42 were having saving habit whereas 58 were not saving anything from their earnings.

The amount of saving by the 42 women labourers varied from Rs.10 to 200 per month. Of this, only 5 could save to the tune of Rs.151 to 200 per month.

20 women labourers were saving for children's future, 19 to meet the unavoidable expenses of the family, 15 for emergency medical expenses and 13 for use in the old age, 11 saved the money for celebrating festivals.

The women labourers taken for the study were not aware of the Acts and Laws and they were least concerned about the laws.

BASED ON THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, THE PROFILE OF WOMEN LABOURERS IN TEA GARDENS OF ASSAM IS PRESENTED

Assam which is situated on the North East of India is a land of mountains and forests. Major requirement of tea in the country is being produced in Assam. Education facilities for women in Assam is inadequate. In order to earn money women of Assam go to work as labourers in Tea gardens. Their age range varied from 16 to 50 years. Most of the women labourers were illiterates or having less education. In Assam the women get married at an early age and still they continued to work as labourers in tea gardens. Women labourers were provided residential facilities in the working estate. The family size of the sample ranged from 3 - 8 members and their annual income ranged from Rs.800 to 15,000. The women labourers had joined tea gardens in order to solve financial problems of the family, do independent job, relieve family burden, to increase family income and to earn money. They were motivated by parents, friends or had joined willingly. Normally the women labourers work in the tea gardens for a period ranging from 5 to 30 years. Most of the women labourers had felt that the wages were reasonable. The different type of activities carried out by women labourers in the tea gardens were; plucking of tea leaves, manuring, tipping, pruning, weeding and sorting. They were all treated ^{no}hourably by the authorities. The problems faced by them were :

working for more time and the work was hard. They had free time only before they go to work or after their work in tea gardens. Sundays were free days for them. During their free time, they were involving themselves in collecting firewood, went to market for selling goods and doing domestic work.

The benefits that the women labourers had accrued were:

increase family income, not dependent on others and the family got minimum requirements for living. Women labourers worked for 8 hours a day in the tea gardens and all of them carried out their domestic chores of work by themselves. The estate authorities provided them with medical allowances, medical reimbursement and they were provided facilities like creche, school and dispensaries. In the Assam tea gardens both residential and working sectors were within the same areas and hence most of the women labourers without much strain had fulfilled their roles as wife, mother and worker. The women labourers had suggested the following for better working condition among women: new technology of work to be taught and healthy co-operation between authorities and labourers. They had also suggested; increase in wages, lessen the working hours of women labourers, provide supplementary food for women labourers, organise functional literacy classes, free education to children and to give more medical facilities to women. Majority of the women labourers were covered under insurance scheme. All of them were having the

habit of seeing films in theatres. Majority of women labourers were alcoholics. The Hindu women labourers celebrated Hindu festivals and Christian women labourers were celebrating Christian festivals. They were saving money in order to meet unavoidable expenses, emergency medical expenses, for children's future and for use in the old age.

The women labourers working in the gardens of Assam seemed to be happy lots and they were having a contented satisfactory life.

Summary and Conclusion

V SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A study on "Profile of Women Labourers in Tea Gardens of Assam", was undertaken in Nagaon district of Assam. Hundred women labourers randomly selected constituted the sample for the study. The investigator interviewed the labourers for the collection of data with the help of the specially evolved interview schedule. The summary of the findings of the study are presented.

1. The age range of the sample varied from 16 to 50 years. 24 per cent was the highest number which were belonging to the age range from 20 - 30 years and the lowest 4 per cent which belonged to 41 - 45 years.
2. All the women labourers were living in rural areas. The sample for the study consisted of married (50 per cent) unmarried (23 per cent) and widows (18 per cent).
3. The annual income of the women labourers varied from Rs.8,001 to 50,000.
4. The women labourers had joined the tea gardens as labourers due to their financial problems, to become independent, family burden, to increase family income and to earn money. 48 per cent had joined willingly without anybody's motivation and others were motivated to join in the tea gardens by parents and friends.

5. Women labourers were paid equal wages as that of their men counterparts along with weekly ration and 75 per cent of the women felt that their wages were reasonable and 52 per cent labourers were not satisfied with their wages.
6. The women labourers were doing different types of activities like plucking of tea leaves, manuring, tipping, pruning, weeding and sorting.
7. 49 per cent of the women labourers had not felt any difficulty in working in tea gardens whereas 51 per cent who had difficulties had expressed problems like hard work and had to work for more time.
8. The working hours for women labourers in tea gardens were 8 hours a day. They finished their domestic chores before going to work. During the free time, they collected firewood, went to market for selling goods and did domestic work.
9. 47 of the women labourers were interested in sending their children for labour work in the tea gardens. Only 24 of them were not interested.
10. The women labourers had said that their families were benefitted due to their going for work: as it increased

their family income, need not depend on others and family members got the minimum requirements for living.

11. The family members of the women labourers had not faced any difficulties due to their going to work. Generally they did their domestic chores of work by themselves before going to work and sometimes other family members also helped in their work. Their residential and working places were within the same area and hence they carried out the work at home and at the work spot without much mental strain and fulfilled their various roles as wife, mother and worker.
12. Majority (60 per cent) of the women labourers were having happy family living; the reasons given by them for happy living were: family members got basic requirements, no financial problems and mutual understanding and adjustment among family members. The reasons given by those women labourers who had stated that the family living got disturbed were: unable to take care of children, overload of work and lack of mutual understanding among family members.
13. The suggestions as given by the women labourers for making the working conditions better in the tea gardens were: to give training in the work; co-operation among

women, provide new technology for work, cooperation between labourers and authorities and good communication between labourers and authorities.

14. Their views for the improvement of women labourers of Assam were: to increase wages, lessen the working hours of women labourers; provide supplementary foods for women on special conditions, organise functional literacy classes, provide free education to their children and to give more medical facilities to women.
15. The estate owners had provided services such as creches, schools, dispensaries, hospital and were providing the basic necessities like food, cloth and shelter. All the women labourers were given adequate medical facilities; 60 per cent were getting medical allowances, medical leave and they were covered under Employee State Insurance Schemes; they were also getting reimbursement for their medical expenses.
16. Majority (58 per cent) of the women labourers were not having saving habit and only 42 per cent were having saving habit. The amount of saving varied from Rs.10 to 200 per month. They saved money for their children's future, to meet the unavoidable expenses of the family, medical expenses, for the old age and for celebrating festivals.

The following recommendations emerge out of the study

1. By conducting functional literacy classes, the illiteracy among women labourers could be removed.
2. The wages seemed to be the minimum while comparing with the other parts of India and hence it may be increased.
3. Provide free education to children of the women labourers by estate owners.

CONCLUSION

Tea industry is a highly labour intensive industry. It also helps the development of some ancillary industries. It is highly imperative to strengthen the position of women labourers, Labour education which is vital component should be implemented effectively. It is highly imperative to protect women labourers from all sorts of exploitation by proper and effective implementation of Acts.

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Appendix

APPENDIX I

AVINASHILINGAM INSTITUTE FOR HOME SCIENCE AND HIGHER
EDUCATION FOR WOMEN (DEEMED UNIVERSITY)
COIMBATORE 641 043

AN INTERVIEW SCHEDULE TO ELICIT INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO
PROFILE OF WOMEN LABOURERS IN TEA GARDENS OF ASSAM

I. PERSONAL DATA

- a. Name of the women labourer:
- b. Age :
- c. Religion : Hindu/ Muslim/ Christian/ Others
- d. Educational qualification :
- e. Type of family : Joint / Nuclear
- f. Locality of residence : Rural / Urban
- g. Marital status : Unmarried / Married/ Widow/ Divorced
- h. Type of house : Thatched / Tiled / Concrete
- i. Complete postal address :

FAMILY BACKGROUND

S.No	Name	Relation ship to the inter viewee	Age	Sex	Educational Stu died upto	Stud ing in	Status Illi trate	Occupation	Annual income
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II. 1. For how long are you residing here ?

2. Did you discontinue your studies ?

Yes

No

i. At what standard ?

ii. Why did you discontinue your studies ?

3. What made you to join tea garden ?

4. As a women did you feel shy to go ?

Yes

No

5. Who motivated you to join ? or who compelled you to take up the employment ?

15. What type of work women do ?

Operation on field and factory

FIELD OPERATION

1. Filling of vacancies of bushes
2. Transplanting
3. Manuring
4. Tipping
5. Plucking
6. Spraying pesticides
7. Pruning
8. Weeding
9. Hoeing

FACTORY OPERATION

1. Machine operation
2. Withering
3. Rolling

4. Fermenting

5. Drying

6. Sorting

7. Packing

16. How do the authorities / bosses treat the women labourers ?

17. Do you feel secure to work in the Tea garden ?

18. Do you think that the position of women labourers working in the tea garden is unsafe ?

If yes - give details

If No - normal

19. Are the other women labourers in the garden do the same type of work ?

20. What are your achievements in your work in your tea garden ?

21. What are your problems or difficulties in working in the garden ?
22. What are your work timings ?
23. For how many days in a week, you work ?
24. Do you get leisure time ?
25. What do you do during leisure time ?
26. How many children have you boys / girls ?
27. Will you be sending them to the garden to do work ?
28. How has the family benefitted by your going for employment ?
29. What are the difficulties faced by the family because of your going for work ?

30. What does the household domestic work ?
31. If it is done by you how do you manage your timing to go in for work as well as to look after domestic household work ?
32. Do you think that women going to do such type of work will contribute for national income ?
33. What is the standard of living of your women neighbours who go for work ?
34. What is the reactions of the elders in your family with regard to your going for work ?
35. Do the other members in your family go in for similar work ?
36. If you are married what is your husband reactions ?

37. If you are mother of children what is the reaction of your children ?

38. Is the family living happily ?

Yes

No

If yes, give reasons

39. If the family is not living happily, what is the reason for the happiness ?

40. Have you thought about the cause for unhappiness in the family ?

If yes, give the causes

41. What is your suggestion for having better working conditions for women labourers in the tea gardens ?

42. Give an overall view for the improvement of women labourers in tea gardens of Assam ?

43. Do the authority give you loan when needed ?
If Yes, what are the terms and conditions ?
44. What is the repayment pattern ?
45. How do the authorities help your family ?
46. Do they give you medical facilities ?
47. Do they give you medical allownaces ?
48. Do they give you medical leave and other leave ?
49. Are you covered under insurance ?
50. Do you get ESI (Employee State Insurance) facilities ?
51. Do they reimburse medical expenses ?

52. Do you see cinema films ?
53. How often do you go to see films ?
54. What type of film you like most ?
55. Do you drink liquor ?
56. How often you drink liquor ?
57. Normally what liquor you drink ?
58. Why do you drink liquor ?
59. How much money you spend on this ?
60. If you were married, at what age you got married ?

61. Was it a parent's arranged marriage or love marriage ?
62. How was the marriage celebrated ?
63. Do you celebrate festivals ?
64. what festival do you celebrate ?
65. Do you save money from your earning ?
66. How much do you save ?
67. For what purpose you are saving ?
68. Are you aware of the laws with regard to women
employment timings, wages, rights,

Yes

No

If yes, what do you know ?