

**A Study on the Role of Next Generation Educational Opportunities in
Empowering the Lives of Tea Estate Workers and
Income Dependents in the Western Ghats**

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Preface

SDM Center for Development Studies (SDM CDS), has been formed at SDMIMD to promote research in the fields of development studies, including issues in social development, social responsibility and corporate social responsibility. The initiative has been taken to encourage the faculty and students to develop more awareness in issues relating to social development and the processes through research work. This is an important aspect at SDMIMD, since the institute derives its strength from the Dharmasthala Trust which has a tradition of philanthropic social activity at its core for uplifting the weaker sections of the society.

The faculty members and the students are being encouraged to take up research projects which would culminate in the form of publications documenting various aspects of the issues relating to the social development. These researches would help in documenting the meaningful work that is being done in the third sector by many organizations, thereby, sensitizing readers in the field of social and developmental issues.

After completion of the projects, based on the peer review, reports are published with an ISBN number, by the Institute. The projects help the faculty and the students, (who assist the faculty members for these projects), to gain practical knowledge, in the field of social and development issues concerning the various sections of the society who are many a time, in disadvantageous position, socially and economically.

The institute factors the time and resources required by the faculty members to carry out such projects, and, fully sponsors them to cover the various costs of the project work (for data collection, travel, etc).

From the academic viewpoint, these projects provide a unique opportunity to the faculty members and the students to get a first-hand experience, in investigating issues and concerns of targeted organizations or groups, through field work, thereby, helping in knowledge creation and its transfer.

Nilanjan Sengupta
Chairperson – SDM CDS

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Executive Summary

The plantation sector is a major contributor to the economic growth of the world. It is a major source of livelihood and employment for the population of the regional economies. Structural changes in this sector have led to the emergence of labour categories such as permanent estate workers, casual estate workers and self-employed small tea growers. Several studies have attempted to understand the human development status of the plantation workers, without much regard to these existent categories. The paper has tried to understand the human development status, in terms of education and employment opportunities, health and basic amenities, of the plantation workers classified as permanent, casual and self-employed workers. The study uses a combination of secondary evidence on the employment pattern of the workers engaged in the estates, complemented by micro level data collected from the tea plantations of the Southern estates of India. Plantations being self-contained economic and social units, the consequences of abandonment of the estates in terms of refraining educational opportunities for the younger generations of the labour class, are lethal and drastic. Against this backdrop, it becomes quintessential to understand the conditions prevailing amongst the worker classes of plantation areas, and finding platforms that can help to pivot their aspirations.

Development of educational amenities and employment likelihood can formulate better living conditions for the plantation workers and aid in societal progress and development, while adding to financial security and attainment of basic human rights amongst the estate workers and other income dependents.

The research is an effort toward understanding the prevalent conditions in the plantation terrains, primarily coffee, tea and rubber estates, with special focus on provision of educational facilities and varying employment options through governmental support, if desired by the residents of the regions. Occupational Health Hazards faced by the labourers during the course of their work, and the potential risks to health and safety of workers in the estates are considered, since plantation workers are susceptible to a number of hazards due to physical, biological and psychosocial factors. The present paper tries to examine the notions of workers toward shifting to other means of employment, using education as a powerful tool to bring out the transformation in their lifestyles. Factors such as income, educational levels of the workers, availability of medical facilities to treat physical hazards triggered by their work in the estates, hygiene and sanitation, general awareness and perception about the different occupations, access to educational facilities, financial conditions, etc. have been taken into account while arriving at the findings of the study.

It has been found from the study that the estate workers are deficient in general education, where most of the workers expressed a strong desire to enrol themselves in educational institutions, if not for certain inevitable circumstances. They feel they are lagging behind, and urge the younger generation to be driven by their aspirations to study, rather than pursuing occupations that have traditionally percolated several layers within the boundaries of the plantation territory.

The study has been conducted mainly with the help of primary data collected with the help of a questionnaire. Altogether 251 workers, both male and female of several estates in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have been surveyed by Random Sampling Method. In addition, secondary information has been collected from sources such as books, journals and the Internet.

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 The Plantation Sector

The Plantation Sector is a significant contributor not only to the national income as a source of export earnings but also as a contributor towards the employment of millions of people (2 million in India) including to a large extent woman and hence occupies an important place in the social and economic planning of the country. The plantation sector consists of tea, coffee, rubber and cardamom. It occupies an important place in India's economy. The term 'Plantation' has been defined under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 to include any plantation to which the Act, whether wholly or in parts, applies and includes offices, hospitals, dispensaries, schools and other premises used for any purpose connected with such plantation. Section 1(4) of the Act applies to any land used or intends to be used for growing tea, coffee, rubber, cinchona and cardamom which measures 5 hectares or more and in which fifteen or more persons are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months. A peculiar feature of plantation labour, especially in tea, coffee and cardamom plantations, is that it is recruited on a family basis from distant villages as most of the estates are situated in remote places of high attitudes where workers are not easily available. As a settled labour force is essential, whole families are usually employed. Plantation work is agricultural in nature. Picking of coffee beans is the chief job. The other tasks include weeding, application of fertilizers, digging trenches. Pepper and cardamom cultivation in the coffee plantations offer additional work to the workers. Plantations which have their own pulping and curing works also employ the same workers in these units. The Workforce profile of plantations includes men, women and adolescents. The workers may be permanent, or temporary (usually of migrant/contract status). A majority of the workers in the plantation sector is women. Plantation industry is labour intensive and hence its productivity depends to a large extent on the workers. A productive workforce is increasingly important. Despite several decades of progress of the plantation industry in

India, plantation workers have remained less developed and isolated. There is an inbuilt vulnerability as they belong to the social and economically underprivileged sections of society. The production and productivity of plantations depend heavily on the performance of these workers employed therein. Therefore, the welfare, morale, and motivation of these workers must be accorded importance by the planners and promoters of the plantation industry.

1.1.1. The Tea Plantation Sector

The tea plantation sector has been considered to be a major source of livelihood and employment for the population of the regional economies. Structural changes in this sector have led to the emergence of labour categories such as permanent estate workers, casual estate workers and self-employed small tea growers. Several studies have attempted to understand the human development status of the plantation workers, without much regard to these existent categories. The paper has tried to understand the human development status, in terms of education, health and basic amenities, of the plantation workers classified as permanent, casual and self-employed workers. The study uses a combination of secondary evidence on the employment pattern of the workers engaged in the estates, complemented by micro level data collected from the tea plantations of the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The findings suggest that the casual workers who had lower employment status had lower asset ownership position and hence lower standard of living indicating their lower human development. However, contrary to the notion of permanent workers in an organised industry being better off in terms of employment status, asset position and hence better standard of living; it was observed that despite their employment status being relatively better than the casual workers and small growers, their asset ownership position and hence living standard was relatively poorer than the small growers. Thus, the wage workers in the estate irrespective of their permanent or casual work status were found to be worst off in comparison to the small growers.

There has been a general known fact with multiple studies and research papers which have strongly indicated the exploitation of estate workers by plantation owners. The workers do not earn enough to have a comfortable life style. This is linked to them not having an education and them not knowing any other skill and therefore, they have to work in the estates and they are very productive in the job sector only. Thereby, the migration of tea, coffee and rubber plantation workers is region-centric, geographically speaking.

1.1.2. The Coffee Estate Sector

The Coffee Board of India recently released estimates for the country's coffee crop grown in the two southern States of Karnataka and Kerala at less than three lakh tonnes across the plantation districts of Kodagu, Chickmagalur, Hassan and Wayynad.

Karnataka accounts for 85 per cent of the coffee crop with the remainder comes from Kerala. The average decline is 20 per cent over the earlier post-blossom crop estimates which had projected 3.5-lakh tonnes with 2.47-lakh tonnes for robusta and 1.03 tonnes for arabica according to the Coffee Board.

The coffee plant is shade loving which thrives in its natural habitat — subjected to two months of drought — after which sufficient rain triggers its annual flowering. Thereafter, adequate moisture is needed to sustain this, which determines the crop for the following year. Coffee ideally requires around 70 inches of rain through the year with clear periods of dry weather to enable its ripening. However, during the last year the average annual rainfall was confined only to a few pockets which explain the lower crop this year.

Coffee cultivation requires about 2.5 workers per acre to adhere to the specified calendar of operations. For instance, fertiliser application is ideally carried out around April-May after sufficient rains to enable the plant to optimally ingest the applied nutrition. The availability of adequate labour during this period becomes critical to cultivation as delays adversely affect the plant's

uptake of nutrition which reduces the crop output — and in turn increases the production costs. Tasks like pruning the plant, shade management of trees, demand high skill levels. However, with depletion of skilled labour force these operations are not being carried out to the required standards. The acute shortage of plantation labour is evident from the thousands of workers from Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam who have migrated to Karnataka.

Higher literacy levels and industrialisation of the economy across the southern States have witnessed high rural-urban migration to the tune of 60 per cent, which thereby creates a vacuum in the plantation work force. Today the older generation of workers are loath to see their children work in conditions exposed to the elements of nature. The coffee plantation environment characterised with rainfall requires work in wet weather that involves leech bites. Given that plantations abut forests, wildlife invariably strays into the cultivated areas, due to reduced fodder, leading to man-animal conflict — involving attacks by leopards, tigers and elephants on plantation labour.

Given the growing labour shortage, mechanisation of coffee cultivation is possibly the only option. Picking the ripe fruit uses over 50 per cent of the annual labour requirement in terms of expenditure. Mechanisation proves to be a major challenge considering the undulating terrain that coffee is grown on. Much work needs to be done in this area. In Brazil where coffee is cultivated on flat terrain, mechanisation is employed successfully where a single worker covers 100 acres. Specifically, mechanisation is associated with technologies to harvest the crop and other operations which has to be adapted to coffee plantations in India.

Another challenge to coffee cultivation over the last few decades is the loss of forest cover that has resulted in environmental degradation. Such massive deforestation has manifested in climate change which reflects in reduced rainfall and also affects streams which are irrigation sources.

The country's coffee plantations have predominantly prospered under natural shade which supports the environment. A US Smithsonian Migratory Bird Centre study confirms that "habitat on shade-grown coffee farms outshone sun-grown coffee farms with increased numbers and species of birds as well as and improved bird habitat, soil protection/erosion control, carbon sequestration, natural pest control and improved pollination." Coffee plantations are a good alternative to a natural eco system without any scope for environmental degradation.

The fragility of the coffee plantation economy is because the bulk coffee prices have actually stagnated compared to other commodities in the food basket. The costs of other inputs such as fertiliser, labour wages, pesticides and fuel have undergone geometric progression over the years. With 2007 as a base, in the last 10 years the international prices of robusta coffee have increased by about 1.75 per cent; whereas the cost of cultivation has increased by two and half times. This reduces profitability by nearly 33 per cent for coffee plantations. As a result, much needed development work such as replanting old plants, investment into infrastructure like irrigation and drying yards, among others suffers which in turn impacts plantation productivity. This downward spiral has prompted coffee planters to explore other avenues of income. Among the more popular diversifications; the concept of 'home-stays' has promoted coffee tourism to supplement poor plantation incomes. To offset dependency on one crop, pepper is inter-planted in plantations which fetched attractive prices till last year. However, with the crash in pepper prices since last February it has hit the plantation economy badly.

1.1.2.1. Problems faced by the migrant coffee workers

The demand for workers is so acute in the coffee estates in Coorg that these migrant workers keep hopping from one estate to the other. In the circumstances, it is difficult to keep bonded labourers. Some of the problems are stated below;

? The children of migrant workers they do not have access to local schools due to the language problems. ? The lack of identity proof.

1.1.3. The Rubber Plantation Sector

The state of Kerala produces nearly 90% of India's natural rubber output. Rubber plantation workers are vulnerable to a variety of health hazards and being in the unorganized sector, do not enjoy the benefits that their counterparts in organized sector enjoy. Hence, monitoring of their health needs to be done periodically.

India is the fourth largest producer of natural rubber in the world. The cultivation of rubber trees as a cash crop in India was initiated by the British in the 19th century mainly in Assam and Kerala. As the tropical climatic conditions and hilly undulating terrain of Kerala was extremely favourable for the growth of rubber trees, rubber plantations flourished and Kerala eventually became the dominant producer of natural rubber in the country, producing as much as 90% of India's rubber output. Majority of the producing units are small growers (with plantations less than 20 hectares) and hence the tapping of rubber trees for latex is mainly a manpower intensive enterprise, depending on skilled yet seasonal labourers to perform the 'tapping' of the trunks of rubber trees to get the optimum output of latex as well as to later process the latex with formic acid in order to create rubber sheets. Plantation workers all over the world are exposed to hazardous working conditions, such as exposure to pesticides, working long hours in hot humid climates, and working with dangerous machinery. These working conditions predispose them to a variety of health problems like respiratory, dermatological and musculoskeletal disorders. The health risks associated are also determined by the length of time exposed, type of work engaged in, the work environment and the personal protective measures employed. In addition to this, they often suffer from various morbidities related to their environment like snake bites, nematode infections⁶ and vector borne diseases like malaria, dengue and chikungunya. Non-communicable

diseases are also an emerging concern of late. Aside from the direct impact on workers' health, work-related ailments and illnesses may affect their productivity, job tenure and satisfaction. Rubber plantation workers are a part of the informal occupational sector in India. Hence, they do not have any organized occupational health services. Further, very limited attempts have been made to study the occupational exposure and health profile of this population in India. Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess their health status and common illnesses, as well as to detect the prevalence of non-communicable diseases like diabetes and hypertension among them.

1.2. The Plantation Worker

A plantation worker is responsible for carrying out the ground level activities involved in a plantation right from nursery preparation to harvesting and storage. The module assesses a worker on various aspects like seed preparation in plantation, land preparation, nutrient management, training and pruning, harvest and post-harvest management etc.

The actual belief of labour health, safety and welfare are being flexible and comprehensively vary with actual respect to the period, area, industry, country, public value and taxes, degree of development the general socio-economic development of the people and political thinking prevailing during an exact time frame. It is also, being blinded as per gender, age, marital status, working experience, educational level of workers in various tea plantation estates in the Western Ghats. "The stable settlement of the workers in and around the plantations is for the most part depends on the process of recruitment of workers as in the initial stages was family being based. Workers were encouraged optimistically to wander to the plantations with their families, which has actually served two major purposes, i.e., first, the planters wanted to require cheap labour who would actually permanently settle in the exact plantation & this could be achieved by encouraging families to shift rather than on being individuals. The entire family male, female and children-worked on the plantation at wages determined by the

planter, & secondly, family migration ensured that labour could actually be reproduced which would ease the problems of any of the further recruitment employment opportunities in the coming future.

Labour in Kodagu has always seen multi-cultural. Other than tribal and non-tribal local labourers, migrants from Tamil Nadu, Assam and other states were frequent in the area. The residences of the interviewed migrant labourers had access to basic amenities. All the houses visited had electricity supply, toilets and tiled roofs. Houses of non-permanent labourers had space for kitchen gardens where coffee and other sub crops was grown and this was a supplementary income for them, together with wages. The labourers living in line houses did not state anything wanting, about their places of residence. However, the inference on housing conditions of the labourers should not be generalized to the entire district. The planters felt that because of the influx of migrant labourers from places like Assam (who hardly know Kannada/Hindi), it is very difficult to understand their needs and especially medical problems when they require medical treatment. The issue of alcohol addiction among the tribal communities were highlighted by many planters. Kodagu is providing much better working environments and wages for migrant labourers and their families in comparison to other parts of the state; it is only natural since coffee cultivation is comparatively much more profitable than other crops. Even with higher wage rates in plantation labour in Kodagu, plantation labour does not offer growth prospects for labourers. There is considerable 'class difference' between planters and labourers. The distribution of land in the district is highly skewed against the Schedule Caste and Scheduled Tribe populations.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

2.1 Review of Literature

Namrata Thapa, the author of a discussion paper titled “Employment status and human development of tea plantation workers in West Bengal”, pontificates the human development status, in terms of education, health and basic amenities, of the plantation workers in West Bengal, who are primarily classified as permanent, casual and self-employed workers. The study uses a combination of secondary evidence on the employment pattern of the workers engaged in the estates, complemented by micro level data collected from the tea plantations of the Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The living standard of the households has been explored in terms of the education of their children, health status, etc. Under the Plantation Labour Act (PLA), 1951, each labourer is entitled to better economic conditions. However, most of the workers in the estate, due to financial constraints, reported that the main motive to send their children to private school for primary schooling rather than government school in the estate was to enable them to get education in English medium and thus provide them better foundation. This might perhaps reflect the rather poor condition of primary education being delivered to them.

Ruksana Saikia in Educational scenario in rural and tea garden areas of Assam portrays the workers of tea gardens in Assam as one of those communities lagging in education, despite having basic schooling facilities in most of the tea gardens. The work enunciates that literacy rate among women workers is very low in comparison to their male counterparts, and lower than other communities in the region. Lack of education and awareness are the major hindrances to overall capacity building of tea garden workers. It has been also observed that growth of primary education is poor in tea garden of Assam. It is worth noticing that the social atmosphere in the tea garden area is not at all suitable for education. Since majority parents are illiterate, with living standards below the standard, they are unaware not only about the need of education but also about

various programmes/schemes, some of which are meant specifically for the upliftment of the Tea-Tribe and rural development. Adequate socialization processes have to be adopted and means of communications should be improved to break the social isolation of the people of rural and tea garden.

Sarkar and Bhowmik in “Trade Unions and Women Workers in Tea Plantations” unveiled the fact that the general literacy level of tea plantation workers in Dooars and Terai was low, well below the state as well as the respective district averages, but the level of the women workers was less than half that of the men. This was despite the fact that the Plantation Labour Act made it mandatory for all tea plantations to provide for primary education to the children of the workers. As outlined by the authors, the lower literacy levels of the women were caused by the additional burden of taking care of the needs of the family. Lack of educational facilities keeps them illiterate, the absence of proper creches at the workplace implies that the elder daughters, instead of going to school, have to take care of the children in the household. This is not entirely correct. The authors opined that such a situation can be changed if initiatives are taken by the trade unions or other agencies to develop the political consciousness of the women, through education.

Md. Afrazur Rahman in “An Enquiry into the Living Conditions of Tea Garden Workers of Bangladesh” has made an attempt to explore the living conditions of the tea garden workers of Bangladesh including their wage structure, literacy, and health and sanitation status. In addition, this paper outlines the basic infrastructure and geo-topography of a tea estate. A case study of Khan Tea Estate of Jaintiapur Upazila in Sylhet has been taken to get an in-depth idea of the tea garden workers' livelihood. Field survey, personal interview and observation were employed to collect data. A 100 tea garden workers were interviewed, to reveal that literacy rate among the workers is slightly less than the national rate. However, the author alludes that in the recent days, literacy rate is increasing among the new generation. The tea garden workers are coming closer to the mainstream society through increase

literacy and awareness. This paper also reports some cultural and recreational aspects of the tea garden workers and puts some recommendations for the betterment of the living conditions of the tea garden workers of Bangladesh.

Sumitha S who authored “Bringing in, living in, falling out: labour market transitions of Indian plantation sector” is to throw some insights into the challenges faced by plantation labourers focusing on the issues namely the role of labour market institutions in plantations, nature of industrial relations prevailing in the sector and most importantly, the impact of production organisational innovations in the sector. Studies on social and economic status of workers as well as their working and living conditions are also discussed. The study draws attention to the major problems faced by the plantation labourers namely the perpetual nature of indebtedness among themselves, lack of provision of social amenities such as drinking water, medical facilities, electrification of houses which leads to their increasing misery. The study emphasises the need for strengthening the PLA, 1951, in the context of structural changes taking place in the industry, such as changes in the ownership pattern, governmental regulation etc., which is feasible through educational opportunities.

Abraham in his paper, ‘Labour Shortage and Social Cost in Plantations’, indicates that providing better education to the plantation population may act as a deterrent to continuous labour supply to the estate, since better foundation in the form of better primary education would enable the members in the 28 workers’ households to go for higher studies which would further enable them to obtain better employment opportunities; and hence move away from plantation work.

Weerasooriya, W. A , in his research on “Development Information needs and issues of Estate Workers in Sri Lanka” (2010), highlights that since people live in a divided world, information remains as the fountainhead for human development and the economic growth. He outlines that information is a catalyst for the development,

and it is classified in different contexts. The study portrays the fact that human development is a process of enlarging people’s freedom to do and be what they value in the life, and discusses the information needs and issues of Estate Workers in Sri Lanka with special reference to Nuwara Eliya district, focusing on the Development Information context. The objectives of this study are to have a clear picture about Development Information, to identify development information needs, to identify the ways that the estate workers fulfil their information needs, to identify the information providers, and to identify the issues faced by the Estate Workers in the information flow in Sri Lanka. Primary data also revealed that majority of Estate Workers are illiterate and they did not have rights to do their work on their own. The author believes that to overcome these issues adult education is a prime necessity and audio visual teaching methods should be used to increase the awareness of information, and its access for their day to day life among the Estate Worker communities.

Deeksha Tayal and Neelam Choudhary , “A comparative study of the informal conditions of the plantation labourers of India and Sri Lanka explains the essence of a study on the conditions of the plantation workers of India relative to that of the Sri Lankan workers. The authors focus on the section of plantation labourers, who are directly employed by the employers and are not contract workers. The paper shows that a high level of unionisation and adequate legislation in the plantation sector has not been effective in improving the conditions of the plantation labourers beyond a point. In the globalised scenario, enhancing the productivity of the plantation labour would imply improving their conditions and bringing them into the mainstream of economic development. Accordingly, the paper suggests a two-pronged approach to the possible formalisation strategies for the plantation sector labourers. The paper also suggests that the effectiveness of any formalization strategy would require collective involvement and social dialogue among all the key players in the plantation sector.

M.K. Bacchus in his book titled “Education for Development or Underdevelopment? Guyana’s Educational System”, pinpoints the rigid system of stratification retained in the Guyanese society, owing to Plantocracy. The general opinion was that a literate slave population could not be easily kept in bondage and generally blocked the efforts of early missionaries to teach or Christianise the black population. The author seconds the provision of education to the masses, and states that education should break down the false ideas of independence. In addition, the paper upholds the view that education in some unclear, unstated way could produce economic and social development for the plantation classes of Guyana.

Robyn Henderson in a case study based on an Australian context, “Educational issues for children of itinerant seasonal farm workers”, states that although many Australian children change schools during the course of a school year, the children of itinerant seasonal farm workers move residences as well as schools on a regular basis, often two or three times annually. Surprisingly, however, educational itinerancy has not been widely researched, particularly in Australian contexts. The paper uses a case study approach to discuss some of the issues that affect the literacy learning of the children from one family, the members of which follow summer and winter harvesting seasons across state borders. Through this approach, the voices of the children and their families are heard alongside those of their teachers and other school personnel.

Odvar Hollup in “Ethnic identity, violence and the estate Tamil minority in Sri Lanka” talks about the cultural politics adopted by various governments, which emphasized cultural symbols related exclusively of the realm accommodating the whole nation. The development of communal solidarity and patriotism created political conditions that contributed to a gradual dismantling of democracy. This article stresses the importance of the competition in trade, education, employment and access to various economic resources are key elements. The article deals primarily with the conditions of less focused minority, the Indian

Tamils or Estate Tamils and how they were affected, became victims of and interpreted the waves of ethnic violence occurring in the past decade.

S.N. Mahanta in his thesis, “Labour Welfare Measures in Tea Industry in Assam with Special reference to Dibrugarh District” deals with the importance of different welfare schemes available to tea garden workers and its implementation process. The study covers the sickness and maternity benefits given to (women) workers but it does not reflect the proper socioeconomic conditions of tea women workers separately.

Bhadra & Bhadra in Plantation Labours of North-East India” covered almost all aspects of working and social life of tea labourers in North Eastern India, with reference to women workers in tea plantations. An extensive study from recruitment to status of women workers in tea industry revealed a lack of severe dearth on the availability of educational opportunities for betterment of socio-economic conditions of women workers to resolve problems in the living conditions.

“Problems and Prospect of Tea Marketing in Assam” conducted by P. Talukdar lays emphasis on the aspect of performance of tea production in Assam as well as its demand and marketing problems. However, this study does not cover the employment conditions of workers which is one of the most essential parts of development of the tea industry.

Shodhganga who wrote in “A Study of Socio-Economic Conditions of Women Workers in Tea Industry of Assam” is carried out to understand the socio-economic conditions of women workers in the tea industry and evaluate their contribution to Assam economy. Tea women labourers totally differ from their male counterparts. Their problems are more serious and complex than those of male workers. The government has taken some measures for development and welfare of these labourers. The measures include maternity benefits, fixation of minimum wages, equalisation of wages, and provincialisation of garden schools, Tea Employee Provident and Pension Fund Scheme and the Assam

Tea Labour Welfare Fund Scheme etc. The paper warrants a careful study as to why the welfare measures are lagging behind in the tea gardens of Assam.

Carlo Raffo, Alan Dyson, Helen Gunter, Dave Hall, Lisa Jones and Afroditi Kalambouka in their thesis, "Education and poverty in affluent countries", maps research evidence and policy strategies about education and poverty in affluent countries, provides a framework, which organises the research literature around studies that focus on the individual (the micro level) the immediate social context, which might be located in families, communities, schools and peer groups (the meso level), and social structures (the macro level). It aims to provide a synthesising framework to assist researchers and policy makers to examine future educational policy in a holistic and comprehensive way.

Rothstein's work in the USA is an illustration of a much larger body of research that makes clear the links between social class and poverty and educational outcomes. In his analysis of the connection between poverty and poor educational attainment he examines the way the social, cultural and economic positions of a particular social class are mediated through individual, family and community characteristics and the behavioural manifestations of those classes. His message is that those from a lower social class, and in particular those in poverty, will demonstrate a collection of occupational, psychological, personality, health and economic traits that have the capacity to predict in a relatively deterministic fashion an average performance in education and other areas of life that is qualitatively different from that of middleclass and relatively well-off families or groups.

LP Tirkey in the paper titled, "Tea plantations in the Darjeeling District, India: Geo-ecological and socio-economic impacts in Post-Independence period" made an attempt to describe and explain the impacts of tea plantations on the geo-ecological and socio-economic conditions of the communities in the Darjeeling District in India. Two contrasting tea

estates, Mineral Spring and Singell, were selected for case studies with an aim of obtaining the four objectives, including a brief history of the tea plantations in the Darjeeling District, its geo-ecological and socio-economic impacts on the place and the people and strategies to deal with these problems. The author is of the opinion that after early expansion and growth of tea plantations, Darjeeling tea plantations experienced major setbacks in the Post-Independence period; ownership changes, entry of trade union, labour problem and decline in tea yield due to over-aged tea bushes, eventually resulted in acute financial crises and closure of many tea estates, impacting the educational and employment opportunities for the native labourers.

Judith Nagata, in the paper titled "Contributions to Asian studies: Pluralism in Malaysia", talks about estate education, with special reference to the Indian and Malaysian estate contexts. Discussing the condition of the children in Indian Estates, the authors contend that they possess lower levels of aspiration and motivation, low self-esteem, and feelings of frustration, in the face of environmental insults. A National Dropout study by Ponniah concluded the same. The author opinionated that the labour class is generally constituted of lower castes originating from Madras and Andhra provinces, and the general frustration of the Indian labouring classes was not just attributed to the practices of the British Colonial past Government policies, while in Malaysia, it took the form of managerial patronage on the estate and general indifference on the government.

Sajitha Dishanka Yukio Ikemoto in a research titled, "Social Development and Labour Productivity" reveal that the Estate sector performs the worst in terms of all the socio-economic indicators such as mean household income, housing and educational attainment except for income inequality poor socio-economic condition of workers, traditional work norms, lack of cooperativeness between workers and management, and management responsibility towards stockholders in Sri Lankan Tea estates which have adversely affected the labour productivity.

Conclusively, the paper suggests that low household income of the estate population has resulted in low level of education, health and nutrition, and housing which in turn affect the workers' productivity level adversely.

Dr. Hema Srikumar., Mrs. C. Jeev a undertook "A Study to Analyse the Poverty Level Among the Tea Labourer with Special Reference to Nilgiris District". The study aims to learn the socio-economic conditions, welfare and benefits of the tea estate workers. It further tries to identify the problems associated with them. The key findings of the study are that the wage and compensation provided to the workers are very low, which contributes to the industry becoming "less attractive" for labourers to work in and has hence led to the closure and abandonment of these estates becoming very common. The study also states that the workers have health problems and no medical benefits are given to them, thereby decreases the lifespan and efficiency of the plantation workers in the long run.

Sen Gupta Palas R., Samir Bal have conducted a study on the "Sources of Conflict as perceived by workers, Trade unions and management in Tea plantations in West Bengal". The major findings of the study are about the reasons for arising problems in the industry. Unemployment has been quoted as the most significant reason for the arising "tension in the estate". The common perception among the workers is that the management does not care much with regards to the wellness and welfare of the tea estate workers but rather only care about their own welfare. A vast majority of the leaders of the trade unions believe and think that there is conflict and tension between the management and the workers due to the lack of cooperation by the management in the Darjeeling tea estates.

Rie Makita in "Fair Trade Certification: The Case of Tea Plantation Workers in India" analyses the significance of Fair-Trade Certification. The study focuses on interactions between management and workers in tea plantations. It observed that the barely any estate workers were aware of the fair-trade certification. The certification is generally

undertaken by the management of the plantation and only done so in very rare cases. However, it is to be noted that the plantation workers that benefitted from Fair Trade premiums were more content and that the interactions were more positive in nature between the tea estate workers and the management. The study also suggests that a "third-party body" will be more effective in uniformly implementing the Fair-Trade Certification for the plantation workers.

Faisal Ahmmed., Md. Ismail Hossain have conducted a Study Report on Working Conditions of Tea Plantation Workers in Bangladesh. The key takeaway from this study is that tea estate workers have dreams to fulfil and a significant number of workers believe that education is the step forward in fulfilling their goals and dreams. The workers highlight that poor remuneration is the cause for the tea gardens becoming a less attractive industry for labourers to work in today. It is also observed that the estate workers believe that their educated children do not get official jobs in the tea estates and hence want their them to find work opportunities in other sectors instead. It is also observed that the estate workers sometimes engage in "unruly behaviour" with the interference and support of third/external parties, which disrupts the working environment of the tea gardens.

J. John and Pallavi Mansingh together authored "Plantation Labour Act 1951 and Social Cost- The Case of Tea Industry" focuses on the costs that an estate owner is supposed to bear for the plantation workers that are working for him/her. The major takeaway from this research study is that although there is formulation of welfare benefits for the estate workers, the implementation and continuous operations of these facilities are not taking place, which in turn decreases the satisfaction levels of the tea plantation workers. The study also implies that there is a "rigid hierarchy in tea plantations that is virtually immobile", both vertically and horizontally. It is observed that the role of trade unions is a bare minimum when it comes to protecting and improving the welfare and efficiency of tea plantation workers. It is also to be noted that

the Plantation Labour Act has made these benefits statutory rights of workers in contrast to a situation where laws applicable to the plantation were to augment supply of productive labour to the plantations.

M.G. Srinivasan in the study “A Study on Problems of Tea Plantation Workers in Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu, India”, aims to analyse the working conditions of the working conditions, identification of problems and the maximum benefits available to the tea estate workers In Tamil Nadu. The key highlights of the study include knowledge and awareness of the estate workers regarding their financial benefits, health benefits, social security cover, legal labour working hours and the contract information. The findings from the study show that the financial benefits for the estate workers are very low. The study further states that the workers work overtime for additional pay due to financial constraints in their homes. The author also goes on to suggest that frameworks like “‘The Police Theory of Labour Welfare’, ‘The Public Relationship Theory of Labour Welfare’, ‘The Functional Theory of Labour Welfare’” can be integrated and implemented under a separate third-party board in order to improve the socio-economic and financial conditions of the tea plantation workers.

Jatinder Kishtwaria et.al. have studied An Ergonomic Assessment of Women Workers involved in Tea Plantation in Himachal Pradesh. The study describes about nearly “three fourth of the sample respondents were illiterate”. All of them were employed as casual labourers in the tea estates. Due to plucking method by which equipment, worker’s physical stress was determined on the basis of average and peak and acceptable limits.

Mrs. Shailashree K and Dr. Yathish Kumar in the study “Social Inclusion of Migrant Coffee Plantation Workers in Kodagu District of Karnataka” says that Coffee Plantation is the backbone of is the backbone of the Kodagu economy. The aim of this study is to identify and emphasize the significance of the socio-economic conditions of the coffee estate workers by using data analysis methods. The study found

out that migrant workers lack opportunities to exercise their local rights. A vast majority of the estate workers that migrated here are illiterate and from poor families. The migrant workers also are keen on sending their children to school. It is also further stated that the migrant workers are well aware of the govt. schemes that are offered to them and are interested in “gaining the benefits of Public Distribution System (PDS)”.

Porag Pachoni, “Labour Welfare Practices in Tea Industry with Special Reference to Harmutty Tea Estate of Assam”. The objectives of this study are to study the different welfare practices and the role of government and labour unions in welfare practices. The key findings are that while the welfare and social policies have been formulated, the implementation of these practices are unresolved. It is also observed that there is a higher degree of satisfaction level in education and transportation facilities when compared to other welfare facilities. It is also noted that the “trade unions play a very neutral role” of an observer and showed indication of being submissive and influenced by the employers. The study further states that better welfare can indispensably lead to high productivity and satisfaction levels among the plantation workers.

Malini L Tantri in “India’s Plantation Labour Act – A Critique”, emphasizes the need for a change in the PLA of India and highlights the low standard of living and financial conditions present due to the outdated PLA and makes suggestion for amendment of the Act. This study mainly focuses on the tea plantation sector. The author signifies that the tea plantation industry is losing its level of competitiveness due to the wage rates and social costs skyrocketing to “five times whereas the price of tea not even doubling in the last twenty years (1995-2014)”. The study also talks about disguised unemployment being a cause for concern in the tea plantation industry which leads to the overall increase in wage and social benefits for the estate workers but not leading to the increase in overall social cost of labour with no increase in overall production.

Mrs. Nirmala K.D and Dr. D. Anand authored “Factors associated with Quality of Work Life of plantation workers study of Coffee Plantations in Karnataka” focused on the coffee estate workers’ Quality of Work Life (QWL) and Quality of Living (QOL) and the close association between the two. The highlights of the study include compensation of the workers, social orientation at the workplace, relationship between the workplace and family life, life comforts and the “social relevance of the work” (Mrs. Nirmala K.D D. D., 2016). The study mainly concentrates on the evaluation of the above given parameters and its reliability in using Cronbach’s alpha statistical method. The study concludes by saying that the used model can be very effectively used to evaluate the QWL in the plantation sector, which is an area that is hardly explored for such studies.

Mrs. Nirmala K.D and Dr. D. Anand in “A Perceptual Analysis of Workers and Their Quality of Work Life: A Study of Gender Differences in The Coffee Plantations of Kodagu District of Karnataka” aims to understand the socio-demographic characteristics of the workers, identify suitable constructs which influences quality of work life and to assess and compare men and women with respect to their quality of work life factors. The major findings are that “female workers have more pride in their work” and expressed that their work helped in enhancing their materialistic needs when compared to their male counterparts. It was also found that women workers hold a favourable perception towards their compensation being fair and also have better social integration in the workplace when compare to the male coffee estate workers.

The Ministry of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau, Chandigarh, Government of India conducted a study on the “Socio-economic Conditions of Women Workers in Plantation Industry” focussed on the socio-economic conditions of women workers in four industries viz. tea, coffee, rubber and cardamom. The findings of the study are that more than fifty percent of the total plantation workers employed are women. The study also emphasizes on the rise of sexual harassment cases being reported in the industry at

three percent. The study also discovered that majority of women workers among the sample size were found to be illiterate (54.4 percent). A positive sign that is on the rise that about 42 percent of the women workers are saving money. However, “only 34.7 percent, 18.5 percent and 43.5 percent of women are aware of the Minimum Wage Act, 1948, Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and Maternity benefits Act, 1961”, respectively.

Priyanka Dutta in “Women Tea Plantation Workers of North Bengal and the Politics of Wages and Other Entitlements” has delved into the role of state planters’ associations and trade unions in locating the reasons behind the existence of almost starvation level of wages in this industry where women have been the primary wage earners. The study brings forth the vulnerabilities faced by the tea plantation workers, especially the women workers. Furthermore, the paper also points out how the lobbying done by the estate owners or planters in “keeping the wages low by using various strategies and ploys” has contributed to the low financial empowerment and standard of living conditions among the tea estate workers in North Bengal.

Ruchira Gupta and Sovan Chattapadhyay in “Socio-Economic Condition of Upper-Fagu Tea Garden Workers” has examined the gender inequalities and socio-economic conditions among the tea plantation workers. The key findings of this study are that about 50% of the sampled individuals’ household depend on tea plantations for their livelihood. Furthermore, the low Quality of Life is corresponded by the low income of the tea estate workers’ households. The study has also analysed that the health facilities provided for the workers is bad to the point that there isn’t even a single dispensary available in the village. It is also observed that the percentages of female population are gradually declining from primary to higher studies level which is much greater than the male population. The causes inequality in educational status level between male and female population and behind the lower rate population in higher studies, which are attributed to “Financial

constraints, Ignorance and Distance of High Schools and colleges from this area”.

Samantha Goddard conducted a survey named “Tea Break- a crisis brewing in India”. She belongs to Action Aid UK, joined together with Indian civil society groups, and conducted interviews with workers on Devarshola tea plantation owned by Hindustan Lever. It was found that the workers paid low wages for increased workloads, suffering hunger and malnutrition, facing increasing job insecurity. Besides, the reason could be behind that cause of the crisis is decline in demand on global tea market, a “decrease in demand for low-quality tea from tea companies”.

Sharat Bhowmik et al. have conducted a study on “Ethnicity and Isolation: Marginalization of Tea plantation workers”. They found the employer’s commitment to education is perhaps the least. The amenities provided by the estate to workers is better in Tamil Nadu as compared with Assam and West Bengal. The health services are not met by any state according to Plantation Labour Act. Plantation companies point out that if the proposed wage revision comes into effect without considering these hard realities. It would further “widen the wage difference between Kerala and other tea producing states”, putting the former at a great disadvantage.

P.K. Viswanathan and Amita Shah in “Gender Impact in Trade Reforms in Indian Plantation Sector: An Exploratory Analysis” highlights the price crash and trade reforms in the Indian Plantation Sector, the inequalities and gender parities, the trends in unemployment, dwindling social security measures and micro-level issues in the trade-induced crisis of tea and rubber plantation sector. This study observes that the ramifications of the crisis have turned phenomenal as the planters’ community vehemently adopted various crisis management strategies, one of which was targeted towards displacement of the workforce in the plantation sectors. The study also emphasizes that along with “structural issues and market uncertainties”, there are other major threats emanating from climate

change, growing shortage of plantation workers due to the specific labour displacing and ruthless labour management policies adopted by the planters over the years.

Gita Bharali’s “The Tea Crisis, Health Insecurity and Plantation Labourers’ Unrest” deals with the problem of the health security of the plantation labourers of Assam in the context of the present crisis in the tea industry. This study has implied that there are discrepancies in the system by examining the current state of the tea estate workers and the welfare schemes offered to them. In theory, the workers are supposed to be receiving all “the socio-economic and health benefit schemes” that the Govt. has made available to them but in practice, this isn’t the case as the reality is that tea plantation workers. The author also signifies the importance to amend the structural principles in the Plantation Labour Act of 1951. It is emphasized that this positive change can potentially ensure a much higher Quality of Life as well as better financial stability to the tea plantation workers.

Occupational Wage Survey, found that majority of 80.79 per cent of the workers were employed on piece-rate system of wage payment, whereas the remaining 19.21 per cent of the workers were employed on time-rate basis. The employment of piece-rated workers was observed in all the three plantations. The overall average daily wage rates of men, women and adolescent workers combined for all the plantations, were recorded at “Rs.60.47, Rs.57.15 and Rs.33.49”, respectively. The overall average daily wage rate for all the workers in three plantations stood at Rs.58.37. It is observed that earnings of women workers were less than that of their male counterparts in all tea, coffee, rubber plantations.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1. Statement of the problem

The Plantation Sector is a major contributor to the economy of the nation. Apart from exports, the sector also provides employment opportunities to a sizable population of people in the rural and semi-urban regions. However, the livelihood of the workers in this sector is not emphasized properly. The principle objective of the study was to determine and describe the extent of livelihood improvement in the conditions of the workers, while also channelling educational and growth opportunities for the minority. Hence, this study is designed to identify the feasibility of education in uplifting the lifestyles of tea and coffee estate workers

3.2 Design of the study

The prevalent conditions of the plantation workers and income dependents were measured by five primary assets, namely, human capital or the population of the workers, natural working environment, physical conditions, financial positions and social capital, along with requirement for governmental support, if necessary. The Interview Schedule was prepared on a Likert scale with 5 point-indicator rating scale, on a quantitative basis i.e., Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, respectively. The Questions ranged from occupation-related queries, to information pertaining to financial and social obstacles that hindered the growth and development of the workers. Survey was conducted with both women and men estate workers/estate-income dependents with age brackets ranging below 18 to above 65.

3.3. Place and Duration of the Study

The study was conducted in the northern parts of Coorg (Karnataka) and also at a few plantation regions of Ooty (Tamil Nadu), through July 2018 to January, 2019.

3.4. Methodology

- Data was collected from 251 sampled estate-workers, on a primary basis. The respondents were interviewed using interview schedules.
- The questions were pontificated using regional languages to explain the crux of the query, and for clarity.
- To avoid biases in the answers, the respondents were interviewed in separate halls, with no intervention from the owners or the plantation managers.

Data collection method

A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. Relevant primary data were obtained by using questionnaire.

Sample size

- The target group for the project are the tea-coffee estates income earners of South India. The questionnaire was given to the them who had little or no education and providing education for their wards.
- 290 responses are taken as sample but proceeded with 251 samples size and they are from various tea-coffee estates accross South India.

Tools

Graphical analysis is applied to describe the demography of the income earners.

Assumptions

- All the 251 respondents clearly understood all the questions in the questionnaire.
- The responses are not biased and convey the true feeling of the respondents

Limitations of the study

Due to paucity of time many other indirect impactful factors could not be covered for research and hence could not be elaborated in detail.

Chapter IV: Theoretical Overview

4.1. Role of Education in the upliftment of estate workers

The role of education in our society is a vital one. Education does not operate in a unidirectional dimension, but as a conglomerate function within an environment and outside it. A multidimensional entity, education performs a multitude of roles such as shaping an individual's temperament and identity, while preparing one to adapt to a number of social situations.

Estate workers in the southern parts of India strive for equity in terms of education and opportunities for employment.

The study of education equity, linked with the study of excellence and equity depends on two main factors. (OECD, 2014.) The concept of distributive justice outlines the distribution of goods to the societal members. Fairness in terms of availing educational opportunities within and beyond the territories of the estate implies that attributes relevant to an individual's specific situation preferably ought to never collide with the individual's potential of attaining success academically.

Inclusion is the second critical factor that influences the study of educational equity in estates.

Inclusion, in a broader sense, refers to a universal principle that is applicable to each and every entity in a particular educational system. The correlation of these two factors is the primary determinant of the success of an education system in any environment.

The idea of educating the estate workers and their progeny revolves around the idea of providing them with better opportunities of leading their lives comfortably and is a direct determinant of the future quality of life of the workers and their families. It has always been historically known that an academic system that practices quality in terms of availing

education and delivering equity, though challenging, can be broken down into inequity due to socioeconomic standing, race, gender or disability. Acquiring and putting in place a system that is fair and impartial, governed by equity also depends on the geographical positioning, the people and architecture of the society. History shapes the outcome of individuals within the education system. (OECD, 2014.)

The earning of the members in the family has always played a major role in shaping the careers and educational opportunities. It is obvious in the Indian context that the members of a higher socioeconomic status are entitled to numerous opportunities in comparison with those belonging to lower societal section, which is an indicator of an inequitable advantage and an unmistakable class barrier.

Studies on working and living conditions of tea plantation labour show that they have been extremely poor right from the time the industry originated in the mid-19th century right to the current era. All plantation workers are migrants, whose ancestors had moved to work on plantations mainly due to poverty in their places of origin.

From a scientific point of view, the human species is a single species. Nevertheless, the term racial group is enshrined in legislation, and phrases such as race equality and race relations are in widespread official use. ("Race equality and education : A practical resource for the school workforce : A resource written by Robin Richardson for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers", 2014) Racial equity in education means the assignment of students to public schools and within schools without regard to their race. This includes providing students with a full opportunity for participation in all educational programs regardless of their race. ("Region X Equity Assistance Center - Education Northwest", 2014)

The educational system and its response to racial concerns in education vary from country to country.

4.2. Gender equity in education

In literal terms, gender equality appertains to both male and female, although most of the gender bias is against women in the developing world. Gender bias or discrepancy based on gender has predominantly been an indisputable issue in most nations, particularly in developing economies like India, where culturally inherited stigma is stinting the opportunities for development and affluence for women estate workers and the girl child. Global Campaign for Education (GCE) followed a survey called "Gender Discrimination in Violation of Rights of Women and Girls" states that one tenth of girls in primary school are 'unhappy' and this number increases to one fifth by the time they reach secondary schools. Some of the reasonings that girls provided include harassment, restorations to freedom, and an inherent lack of opportunities, compared to boys. (Anne, 2014)

However, education prompts freedom of an individual, empowers an individual and yields important development benefits, as per UNESCO.

Katarina Tomasevki, a special Rappoteur of the UN developed the '4A' framework on the Right to Education. The '4A' framework encompasses availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability as fundamental to the institution of education. In spite of this, girls in many underdeveloped societies such as India, especially in estate terrains, are denied any form of higher secondary education. (Atl.organization, 2014)

4.2.1. Causes of gender discrimination in education

VSO, a leading independent international development organisation that works through volunteers to fight poverty in developing countries has high-impact approaches involves bringing people together to share skills, build capabilities, promote international understanding and action, and change lives to make the world a fairer place for all. VSO published a paper on the kind of difficulties faced by farmlands and plantation ranches

that categorizes the barriers in such terrains into two sections primarily.

- Obstacles at the community level, that primarily relates to the bigotry displayed for education, with an external locus of control to the school environment, which includes restraints due to poverty and child labour, socio-economic constraints, lack of parental involvement and community participation. Harmful practices like child marriage and predetermined gender roles are cultural hindrances in countries like India, and in Indonesian estate territories with little or no access to educational opportunities.
- Obstacles in the school or educational system levels: Lack of investment in quality education, inappropriate attitudes and behaviours, lack of female teachers as role models and lack of gender-friendly school environment are all factors that promote gender inequity in education. (Vsointernational.org. , November 2014)

Education is phenomenally and widely recognized as an important element in societal life, as it affects the economic, social and developmental facets of a country. In terms of the lives of estate workers, educational equality ensures a reduction in the mortality rates of infants, aids in the improvement of the health of the younger generation, enhances the life-curve of an estate worker by reducing the level of physical turmoil he might be involved in, and also traces the standard of living toward exponential growth. Equity in education of women also reduces the chances of child labour, sexual trafficking and exploitation of women in the underdeveloped plantation terrains.

The estate workers of the Southern hemisphere of the Indian subcontinent have widely been exposed to hardships in their lifetime, or so they say. They are complacent with their current work norms and the current lifestyle, but have a deeply rooted thirst for opportunities to lead a better life. Some of them even express desire to continue in the same way, owing to the greater extent of adaptability and a desire to purge undermined change. However, they want their children to opt for different means of

survival and seek developmental opportunities that would surpass succumbing to the authoritative power of a superior, such as a writer, or the estate manager.

This brings us to the concept of universal access to education, especially in such professions. Imparting some kind of education informally to the estate workers and their children can aid in improvement of lifestyles, such as performing routine activities better.

On a global scale, the avenue for educational opportunities may be tough for some groups to attain owing to problems based on race they belong to, the entitlement of labour class, discrimination based on gender-specific occupations.

Universal education in the Indian subcontinent needs to be backed-up by the rural and sub-urban governments covering the cost of free public education.

Inclusion of the estate workers into a category that helps provide them sustainable options for survival and employment, while ensuring ample resources for education and development of their children is what will cause a revolution in the next generation. However, there is an indication of a social debate on how to universalize the right to education in these groups, while also re-formulating the methods of access to education.

It is pellucid that employment is a critical factor in the life-cycle of a person.

Besides, sociologists view that role from many diverse points of view. Functionalists believe that education and employment equip people to perform different functional roles in society. Critical sociologists also view education as a means of widening the gap in social inequality.

Feminist theorists point to evidence that sexism in education continues to prevent women from achieving a full measure of social equality. Symbolic interactionists study the dynamics of the classroom,

the interactions between students and teachers, and how those affect everyday life.

A troop of estate workers, during the course of the research, when asked what they think the prominence of educating their children was, according to them. In their opinion, education was crucial for survival, especially in the current world. They felt it would transform the lives of their children to a great extent and help them to refrain from indulging in the hardships they currently faced. Having expressed deep regrets for not having the facilities or choices to educate themselves, the workers emphasized that given an opportunity, they would move away from the physical labour and take up occupations that were easier.

On the contrary, another group expressed their desire to continue their work in the same line of business, despite having opportunities to switch. They expressed the lack of skill to pursue any other occupation, and opined that they were content with their work. Nevertheless, they did want their children to choose other means of living if they were interested. They expressed content in the current work, and were of the view that learning a new skill was something unimaginable, since they were very good at their work currently, were being treated well by the estate owners and earned enough to sustain themselves comfortably. Given another option, they'd still pursue the same line of work. However, they came into terms to the fact that education was a necessity of life, but employment opportunities were solely dependent on the levels of skill they could commit to.

4.3. Functionalism

The belief that education is a major social unit in society, and substantial in generating employment opportunities for the youth.

Some functionalists grapple that education contributes two forms of functions:

- a) Manifest (or primary) functions, which are the intended and visible functions of education
- b) Latent (or secondary) functions, which are the hidden and unintended functions.

4.3.1. Manifest Functions

Of the most prominent manifest functions associated with education, the first is socialization. Beginning in preschool and kindergarten, students are taught to practise various societal roles, which also involves learning the rules and norms of the society as a whole. In the early days of compulsory education, students learned the dominant culture. Today, since the Indian culture is increasingly diverse, students may learn a variety of cultural norms, not only that of the dominant culture.

This function also prepares students to enter the workplace and the world at large, where they will continue to be subject to people who have authority over them. Fulfilment of this function rests primarily with classroom teachers and instructors who are with students all day. (Emile Durkheim, 1898)

Considering plantation workers, education serves as one of the considerable methods used by the labourers for upward social mobility, also known as social placement, moving societal sections proximate to the employment opportunities that will make them financially free and provide the security they seek.

The children of the plantation workers might be interested to study areas that they believe will be favourable on the social ladder and will help them get exposure to employment fortuity, through the study of subjects more relevant to them, such as coffee pulping, rubber collection, life sciences etc.

4.3.2. Latent Functions

Attaining a high Literacy Rate accomplishes latent functions. The educational context introduces students to social networks that might last for years and can help people find jobs after their schooling is complete. Another latent function is the ability to work with others in small teams, a skill that is transferable to a workplace.

The attainment of one's education is strongly affiliated to social class. Students of low

socioeconomic status are generally not afforded the same opportunities as students of higher status, no matter how great their academic ability or desire to learn. Many students from working-class plantation backgrounds are in a dilemma with helping out at home, contributing financially to the family, having poor study environments, and lacking material support from their families. This is a difficult match with education systems that fall under the constraints of a traditional curriculum that is more easily understood and completed by students of higher social classes.

Members of the upper and middle classes have more cultural capital than families of lower-class status, and they can pass it on to their children from the time that they are toddlers. As a result, the educational system maintains a cycle in which the dominant culture's values are rewarded. (Anne, 2014)

The cycle of rewarding those who possess cultural capital is found in formal educational curricula as well as in the hidden curriculum, which refers to the type of non-academic knowledge that one learns through informal learning and cultural transmission. The hidden curriculum is never formally taught but it is implied in the expectation that those who accept the formal curriculum, institutional routines, and grading methods will be successful in school. This hidden curriculum reinforces the positions of those with higher cultural capital, and serves to bestow status unequally.

In terms of educating plantation workers, who are inhabitants of the estate since historical years, and those who have migrated from lands afar in search of employment options, the current schemes of education do not provide equal opportunities, but instead maintain an entrenched configuration of power.

4.3.3. Feminist Theory

Most of the institutions in the Indian society are typified by different methods and liberty for women. "The Feminist theory aims to understand

the mechanisms and roots of gender inequality in education, as well as their societal repercussions.” Almost two-thirds of the world’s 862 million illiterate people are women, and the illiteracy rate among women is expected to increase in many regions, especially in several African and Asian countries (UNESCO 2005, World Bank 2007)

In spite of similar work that surpasses the gender egalitarian principles of equal wages amongst plantation workers, women are renown for earning lesser wages in comparison to their male counterparts. The earnings of some women run entire families, and the amount of hardship involved is equal to that of the male workers. In comparison to the corporate scenario, the female workers are denied of basic access to maternity benefits, amongst others. Educating the plantation workers on these measures and generating a framework for the betterment of the troop becomes imperative.

When women face limited opportunities for education, their capacity to achieve equal rights, including financial independence, are limited. Feminist theory seeks to promote women’s rights to equal education and its resultant benefits across the world.

The availability of employment opportunities to the estate workers is only legit, largely because they are earning such low wages and face numerous obstacles that make it difficult for many of them to find and keep a job, save up money, and maintain a sense of self-worth.

Disadvantaged workers are not only more likely to find employment in a tight labour market, they are also in a better position to secure higher wages as employers are forced to compete for labour. This can allow millions of workers the opportunity to raise themselves and their families out of poverty. A few of the most common struggles faced by the plantation workers are finding affordable housing, buying basic necessities, arranging childcare, the lastly, coping with low-status work.

Some of the plantation workers are usually employed on a contractual basis, while a few are permanent workers.

The plantation workers are employed at least some of the time, they often find it difficult to save enough and end up in living situations that are actually costlier than adapting to permanent labour conditions.

Ordinary thatched or some tin roof huts are provided. They are generally overcrowded owing to insufficiency of accommodation in comparison with the number of people living in them. The houses are not laid out with any idea as to utilising sunlight for drying the immediate surroundings and plinths do not exist or are insufficient. In many cases where water is scarce and deep wells have to be sunk, labour tends to become congested, as coolies’ houses are congregated in the immediate neighbourhood.

Some workers are also eligible for housing subsidies; however, lack of education opportunities starts many times with the estate workers from childhood and follows them into their struggle for a substantial income. The children of the workers are not provided the same educational opportunities as their middle-class counterpart. In many cases the low-income community is filled with schools that are lacking necessities and support needed to form a solid education. (David Fulton, 2000)

The insufficiency of funds to avail continuity of schooling of the plantation workers is a reason for the lag in terms of educational development. A majority of the interaction revealed that the parents also were unable to successfully complete their basic education as they were dragged into the plantation work to support their families, and had to resort to low-income and low-skill labour for survival purposes.

The inequality in available education continues the vicious cycle of families entering into the working poor.

The Plantations Labour Act (PLA) is an extremely important act for plantation workers because its provisions tend to improve the cultural and social lives of these workers who are isolated and cut off from the world outside the plantation. Given the fact that plantations are isolated and labour engaged may not have access to basic human facilities, the act makes it mandatory for employers to provide housing to their workers and their families, sanitation facilities and provision of potable water in the labour lines, canteens with subsidised food, crèches, primary schools and hospitals, including group medical hospitals for specialist treatment. The plantation associations have complained that these are too heavy a burden for them. However, it is quite well known that most of these provisions are never implemented so the costs involved for their implementation claimed by the planters are purely speculative. The non-implementation of acts is mainly because of the indifference of the state governments and of course the plantation companies. (Plantation labour act)

Basic necessities like food, clothing, housing are every worker's right. In some cases, however, the basic expenses of an average estate worker could be greater than their earning.

They also face noticeably more childcare related barriers since these expenses can exceed an estate worker's income, making work, especially one with no potential for advancement, an economically illogical activity.

Some of the workers have an option of being Openly available to work any time on any day. This makes it difficult for workers to arrange for childcare or to commit to another job. It also makes it difficult for them to budget effectively and save up money.

The Maslow's Hierarchy, if applied to the context of plantation workers, satisfaction of the physiological needs of availing basic necessities of food, shelter and clothing is barely met. The working classes succumb to the pressures of the external environments and are forced to remain in their lines of work, and not rise above or below. The levels of

skill appertained to these workers is usually the same since historic times when estates were ruled by the British, and re-skilling would demand an extreme amount of input from the plantation troops.

The safety needs of the plantation workers are met by the makeshift housing facilities provided by the estate owners, and serve their basic purpose. The facilities provided for shelter are revamped according to the employment shifts that the workers are hired for. For instance, contractual workers operate from their base in a certain estate terrain, and traverse according to the requirement via transportation modes arranged by the hirers.

The third level in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs; a sense of love and belongingness is well observed in the plantation worker community. The workers enjoy a sense of freedom and content in their work, and very few, for instance, 1 in 20 express a desire to move away from their routine work and seek other forms of employment. The re-skilling required to opt for other work is tremendously under-rated amongst the estate workers and they feel it is difficult to adapt to newer environments and living conditions other than the ones they are accustomed and acclimatized to. The workers prefer to be in static environmental and societal conditions that are certain, and expound a pulse of stability, rather than exploring their options with new kinds of employment.

However, a large mass of the plantation workers wants their children to be educated and aware of better ways of earning their livelihood. The provision of opportunities for employment and educational development will help the worker-class to move up the societal ladder and reach greater heights in terms of survival. Though it's a struggle, education is continually being improved in the developing world.

Chapter V: Analysis & Interpretation

5.1. Questionnaire Response Interpretation and Analysis

We received a total of 251 responses with a majority of the respondents being female (62.2%) and the remaining male (37.8%)

Age

251 responses

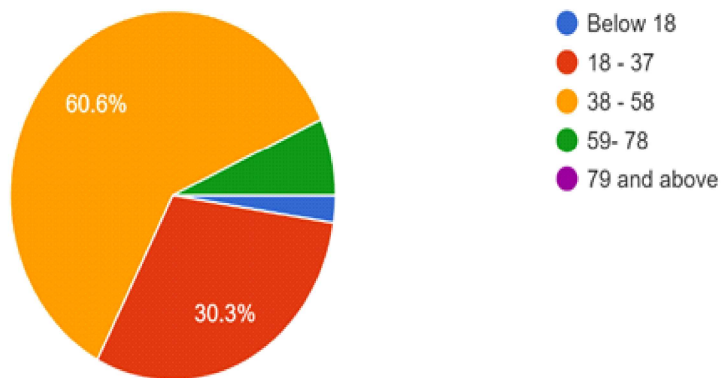


Figure i: Age of the respondent

The age of the respondents for this study was mainly between 38 to 58 years of age. This is a pattern that is seen throughout the study. This also indicates that

almost every respondent is associated or has children of their own and hence this study is applicable to them.

Educational Qualification

251 responses

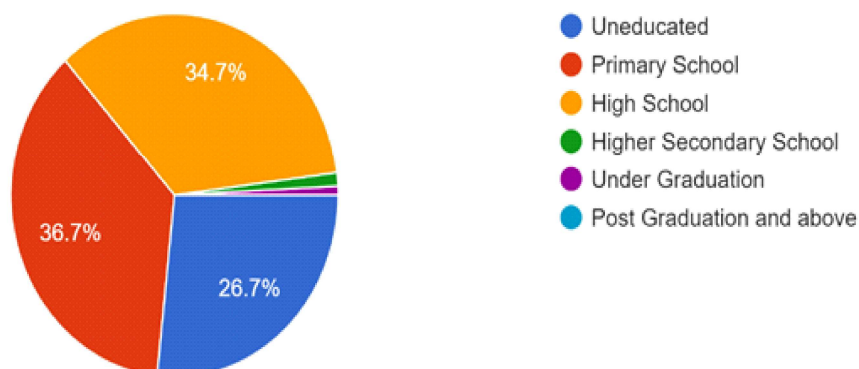


Figure ii: Educational qualification

It is noted that a good portion of the respondents are either uneducated, attended primary school

or attended only up to high school.

Marital Status

251 responses

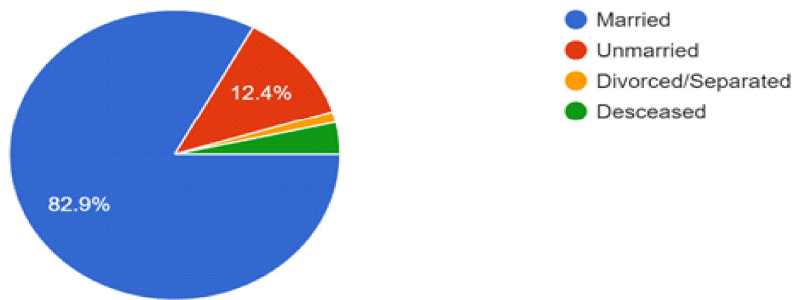


Figure iii: Marital Status

The chart above shows that a high percentage of the respondents are married and are prime subjects for this study as they have more likely to have children of their own and are also conscious about the education of their children.

Number of Children

251 responses

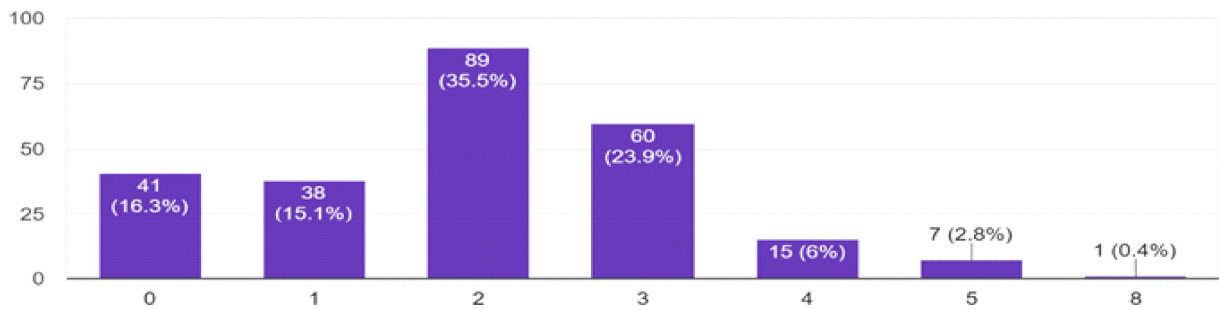


Figure iv: Number of children

The chart above tells us that more than 65% of married respondents have at least two or more children which and are within the scope of this study. This ensues with them having varied opinions about the reason for having children, whilst some respondents see it as a blessing or a burden.

Nature of income dependency

251 responses

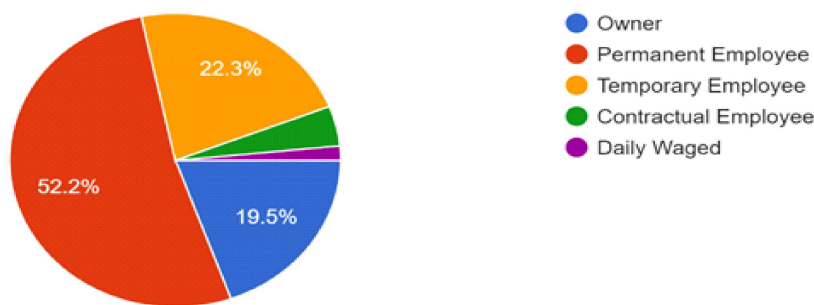


Figure v: Income dependency

While most of the respondents were permanent or temporary employees, some of the m were small plot owners and the remaining were contractual workers while fewer still were daily waged workers.

Number of adults in the family involved in the similar work for income generation

251 responses

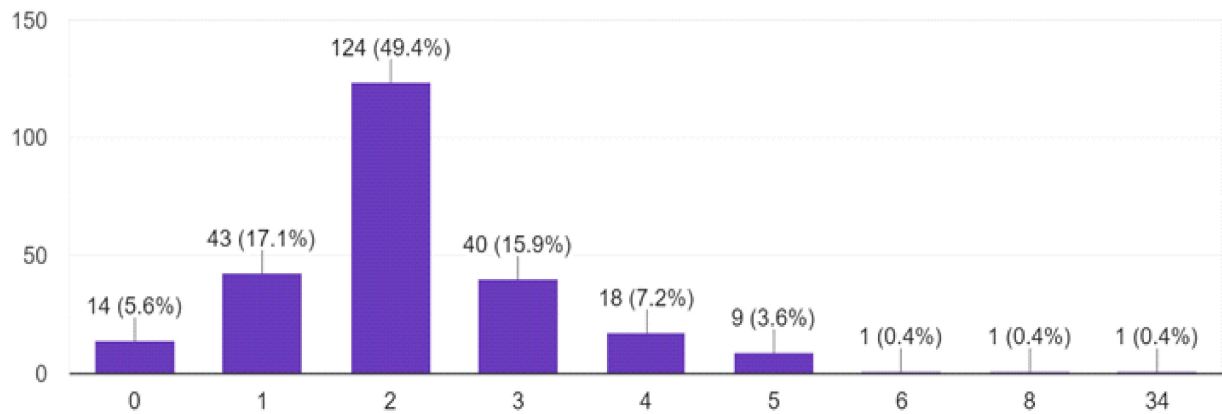


Figure vi: Family Members

The above chart shows that in a high percentage of families, the mother and father are the ones that generally the ones that are involved in this sector of work. Although in other cases, more than 2 members of the family also have to work in order for the family to survive and make ends meet.

Number of members (below 18 years) in the family involved in this job

251 responses

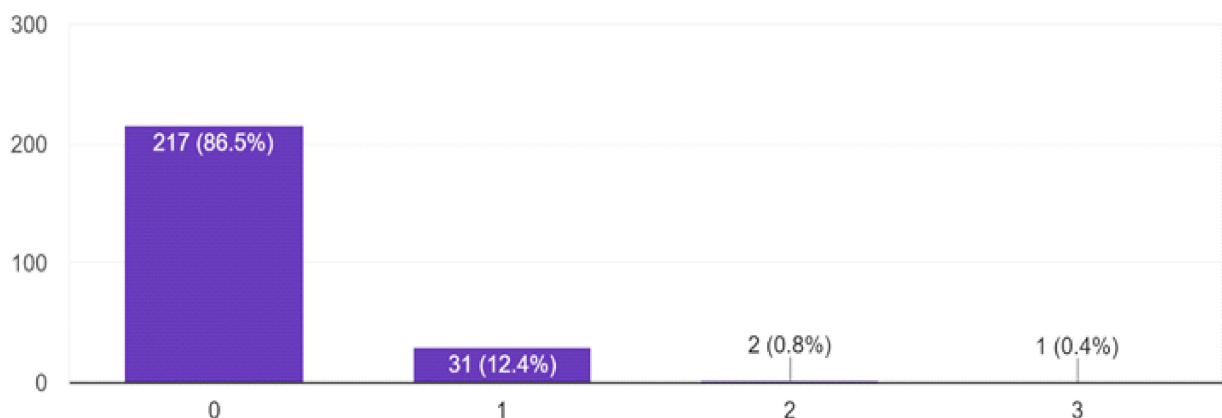


Figure viii: Minors in the family working

The above chart shows that in most families, they understand the importance of education and have ensured that their children aren't made to work. The respondents have regrets of their own and do not want their kids to work in a similar way to them. However, there is a small portion of families that have to make their children work in order to make ends meet and survive.

Given below are the questions interrogated to the respondents for the purpose of this research:

The following Likert Scale is used to measure and quantify their responses:

SA – Strongly Agree

A - Agree

N - Neutral

D - Disagree

SD – Strongly Disagree

1) I am doing this job wholeheartedly with interest

251 responses

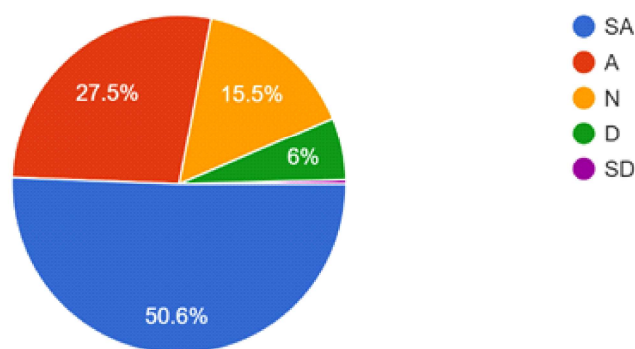


Figure ix: Question 1

Of the 251 participants in the survey, 128 respondents opined that they were involved in plantation work whole-heartedly and with interest. 69 workers said they worked with interest, but not whole-heartedly, while 15 workers expressed their disagreement on the same. Only one respondent

expounded strong disagreement. 39 participants were neither interested nor uninterested in their work, and chose to remain neutral.

We observe that a major chunk of the estate workers is happy with their job, while about 6% of the

2) I am in this job as I don't know any other job

251 responses

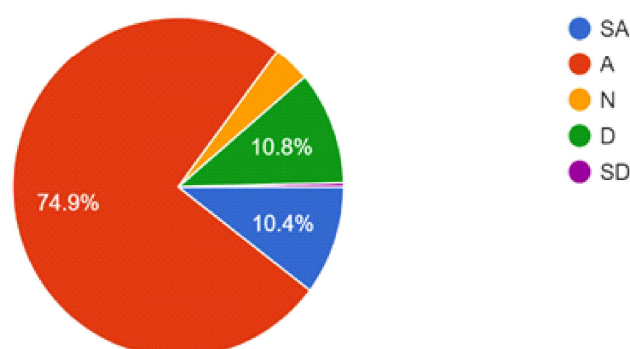


Figure x: Question 2

189 respondents accepted that they were involved in this work as they had no knowledge/skill for any other work. 9 remained neutral. 26 respondents

strongly agreed, while one response was in strong disagreement.

Here, we observe that a majority of the workforce indulged in estate work, as they have no other skills for employment. However, 27 people chose to work in this occupation in spite of having knowledge about other kinds of work.

Most of the workers are in this job as they do not have the skills to do any other job. This is a major factor as to them being permanent employees.

3) I am doing this job as there are no other alternatives available here

251 responses

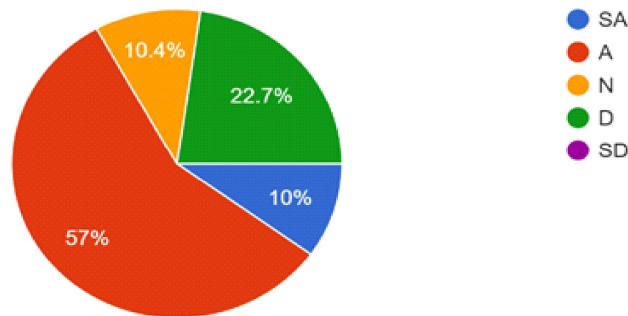


Figure xi: Question 3

Again, a good majority of the respondents are involuntarily forced to work only in their current job as there are not enough alternatives available here.

143 respondents emphasized that they were in this occupation as there were no other alternatives

available in the vicinity. The number of workers who strongly disagreement is nil. We may arrive at a conclusion that had there been better opportunities available for the employment of these workers, they express desire to move away from working in their current grade, and get hold of other occupations.

4) My income is vital to take care of my family needs

251 responses

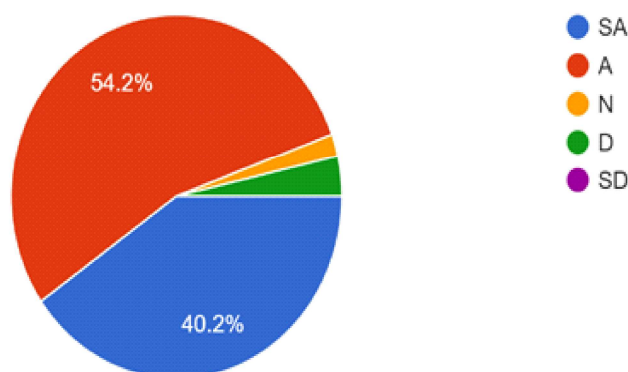


Figure xii: Question 4

Of the 251 respondents, 137 of them asserted that their income for essential for the family's sustenance, though they could avail other sources of income from the members of the family. 101 respondents expressed strong agreement to the prominence of their income in leading their lives, and the

vitality of their earnings in caring for the familial needs. 9 respondents revealed they had other sources of income in the family, their income not being the primary mode for survival. 5 respondents expressed neutrality

5) The earnings of other members of my family is also crucial to lead our life

251 responses

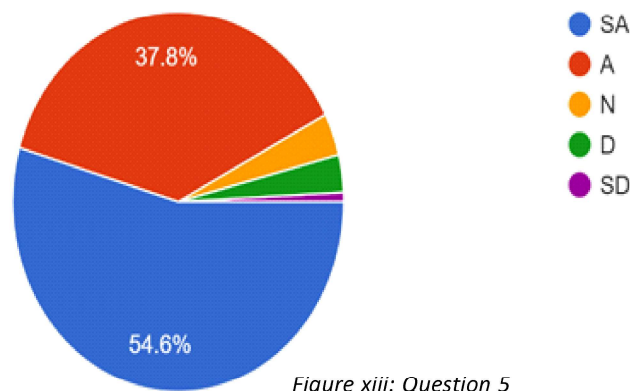


Figure xiii: Question 5

Although most of the families of respondents were male-dominant, 137 respondents strongly emphasized the importance of their counterparts within the family in being responsible for earning the livelihood. 96 respondents positively agreed on the same, while 8 respondents expressed that they were independent of other sources of earnings to lead their lives. 9 respondents chose to remain neutral, while only 2 respondents strongly disagreed. This shows that in order to sustain expenses continually, the earnings of other members of the family were equally important, which refrained the workers from leaving their current employment to look for other options.

6) I have put few of my children in this work to meet the family demands

251 responses

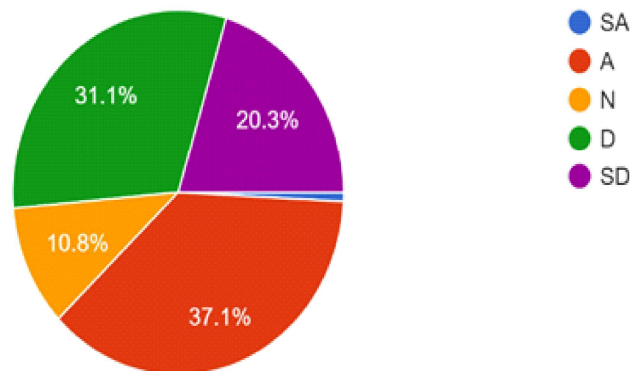


Figure xiv: Question 6

94 respondents, a majority of them belonging to interior estate terrains, quite remotely located from the town, expressed the indulging of the workers' children in the same stream of work, to meet the demands of the family. 2 respondents expressed otherwise, while 27 respondents chose to remain neutral. 51 respondents strongly disagreed, while 78 respondents expressed complacent disagreement. The unavailability of proper educational facilities, the inconvenience in the modes of transport and the lack of sufficient funds were mainly stated as reasons for the involvement of children into the work.

7) My children are involved in this job as they developed interested in this field

251 responses

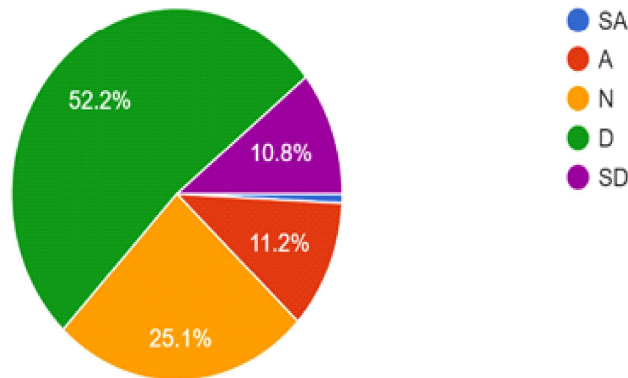


Figure xv: Question 7

Most of the respondents expressed honest concerns on the involvement of their children in the same area of work. 28 respondents, mostly aged above 60, stated the participation of their children in plantation work stemmed from their own interest in the occupation. 132 respondents expressed sheer disagreement on the same. Some of the children

were involved in estate work due to parental influence and familial pressures. 63 respondents chose to stay neutral, 2 respondents expressed strong agreement, while 27 respondents expressed disagreement owing to the aspirations of their children to pursue other fields for work.

8) All my children are going to school/college

251 responses

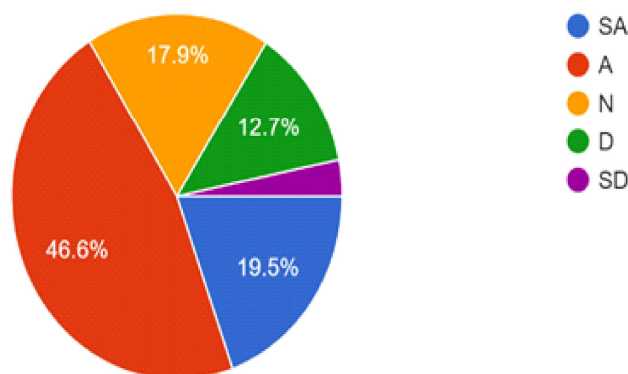


Figure xvi: Question 8

118 respondents affirmed that their children were in the bracket of attaining educational qualifications, and were admitted to schools and colleges nearby, with 49 of the respondents providing a strong affirmation. 8 respondents expressed strong disagreement, 32 respondents expressed contempt

and disagreement, and 45 respondents chose to remain neutral. The fact that most of the children of the estate workers were married, or beyond the ages of schooling needs to be taken into consideration.

9) My children are involved in this job as we want them to earn to lead their life

251 responses

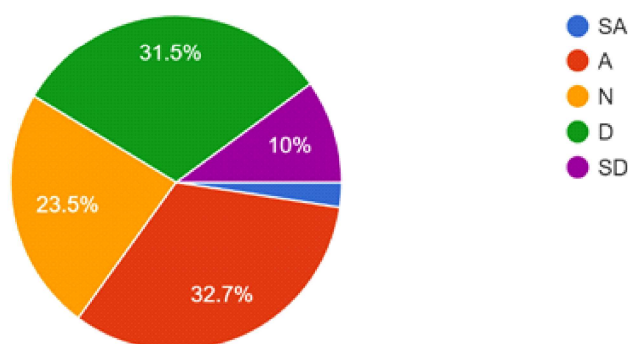


Figure xvii: Question 9

6 respondents expressed strong agreement that their children are involved in the job as the parents wanted them to start earning and leading their lives, 83 respondents expressed agreement, 59 respondents remained neutral, 79 respondents disagreed, and 25 respondents expressed strong disagreement.

In rural and semi urban areas, where the terrains lacked suitable infrastructural and developmental facilities to support the livelihood of the workers, the children were involved in the labour as a part of earning the income for the family.

10) There are numerous occupational hazards attached to this job and subsequent to earning

251 responses

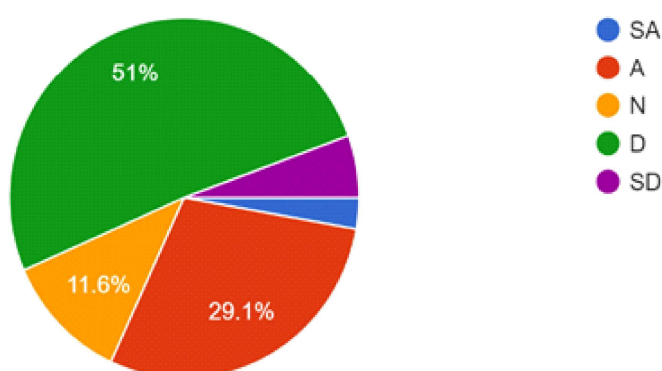


Figure xviii: Question 10

Occupational hazards attached to plantation work, subsequent to earning was not acknowledged by, or rather, disagreed by a majority of the respondents (128). 78 respondents agreed that there were some hazards involved such as poisonous bushes, or an occasional snake bite. However, 14 respondents expressed complete disagreement and stated they

had never experienced any occupational hazard in all their years of service in the estates across the region, 7 respondents expressed strong agreement, and 29 respondents remained neutral stating they were unaware of any occupational hazard in this form of labour.

11) I feel good education will help us to overcome those occupational hazards and improve our standard of living

251 responses

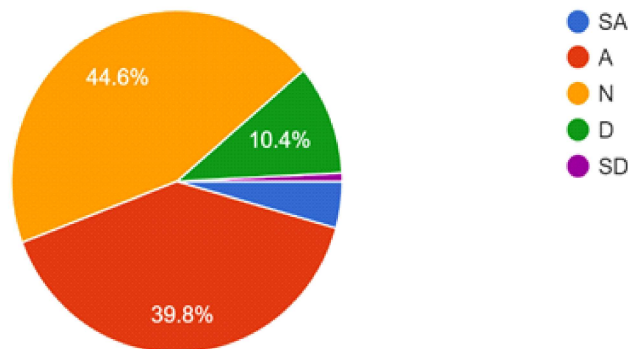


Figure xix: Question 11

In addition to the previous question, 112 respondents chose to remain of neutral opinion. 11 respondents expressed strong agreement, 2 expressed strong disagreement, while 26 respondents disagreed. 101 respondents agreed that they felt a formal educational impartment will

aid them in understanding their living conditions and physical environment better, and help them in getting better treatment and healthcare facilities if affected by any occupational hazard in the years to come.

12) I feel education can transform our life to a greater extent

251 responses

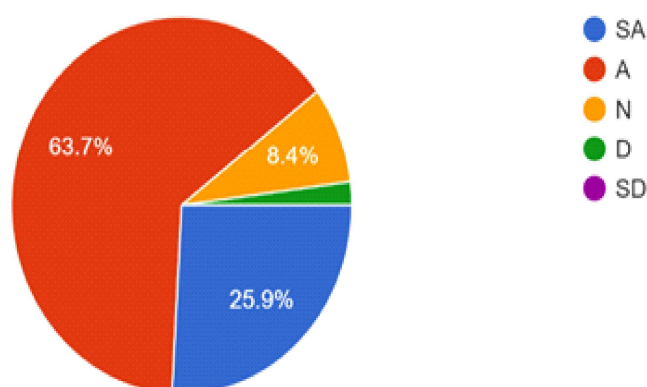


Figure xx: Question 12

65 respondents strongly felt that education had the potential to transform their lives to a great extent, 5 respondents were of the opinion that education alone would not suffice in transforming their lives, and there were other factors that would affect the

living of the plantation workers. 21 respondents were neutral to the question posed, while 161 respondents expressed agreement that education could transform their lives and help in the holistic development and uplifting of the labour class.

13) Mere education cannot help us to come out of our struggle

251 responses

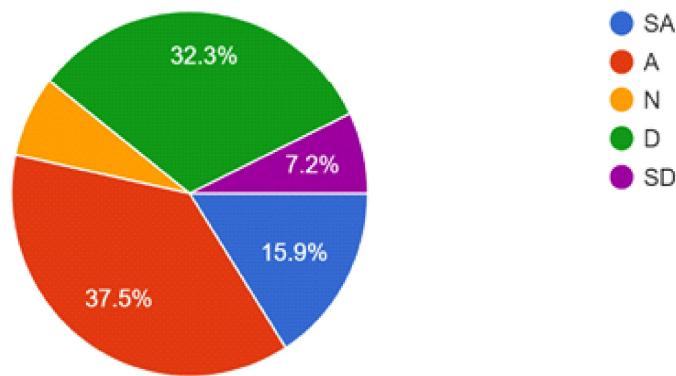


Figure xxi: Question 13

18 respondents strongly agreed that mere education could not bring the workers out of their misery and struggle, while 95 respondents expressed their agreement. 18 respondents remained neutral.

However, factually, 81 respondents opined that education alone was a powerful tool that could aid the worker class to end their struggle. 40 respondents expressed strong agreement.

14) I am particular about my family members’ education, provided that there are opportunities available

251 responses

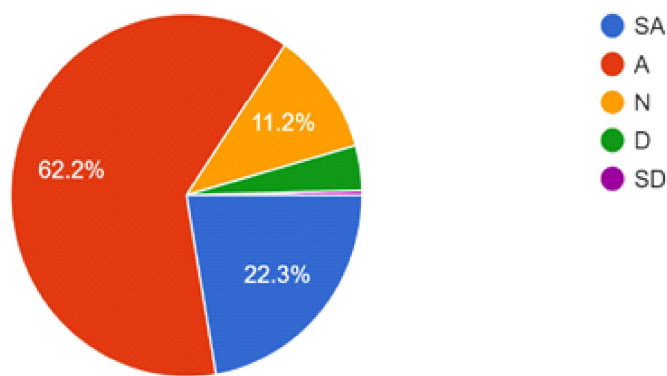


Figure xxii: Question 14

156 respondents affirmed they were particular about offering educational opportunities and facilities to their family members if it was within their span of choice and control. 56 respondents expressed agreement in prioritizing the education and learning opportunities of their family members

over other comforts of life. 29 respondents remainedneutral. 10 respondents expressed disagreement and stated they were not very particular on the education of their families, and it solely depended on their individual interests. 1 respondent expressed strong disagreement.

15) Educational opportunity is not provided for my children due to financial instability

251 responses

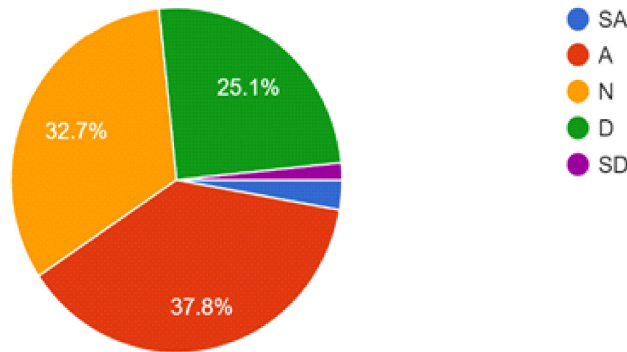


Figure xxiii: Question 15

This question yielded a lot of direct responses. 7 respondents strongly agreed that the absence of educational facilities to their children was due to the insufficiency in availability of funds. Financial instability was named the primary reason for the workers to refrain from sending their children to

schools/colleges by 95 respondents, while 63 respondents stated other reasons for the same. 4 respondents expressed strong disagreement, and stated various other factors for the lack of educational opportunities for the children, such as safety concerns, lack of interest etc.

16) Educational opportunity is not provided for my children due to non-availability of schools nearby

251 responses

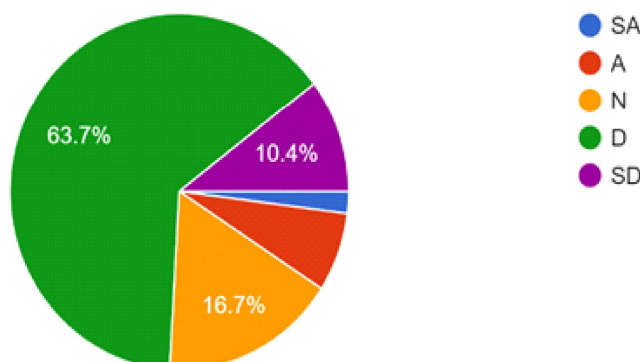


Figure xxiii: Question 15

The respondents mostly disagreed with this statement as enough educational opportunities were available close to the proximity of the estate

workers. While few chose to remain neutral about this, it is understood that the availability of the schools around the area is not an issue.

17) I can send my children for school but cannot afford for their higher education

251 responses

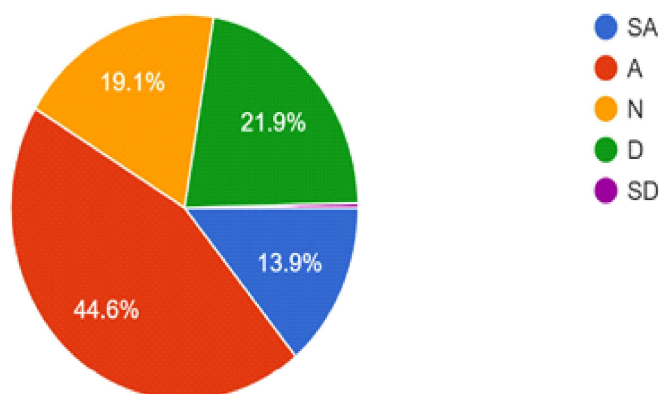


Figure xxv: Question 17

This question garnered a lot of 'agree' responses. This has to do with the fact that there are government schools available more in abundance

an the scarcely located government colleges. Also, college is more financially taxing to the parents than school.

18) If there are support from government/NGOs, I will send my children to school

251 responses

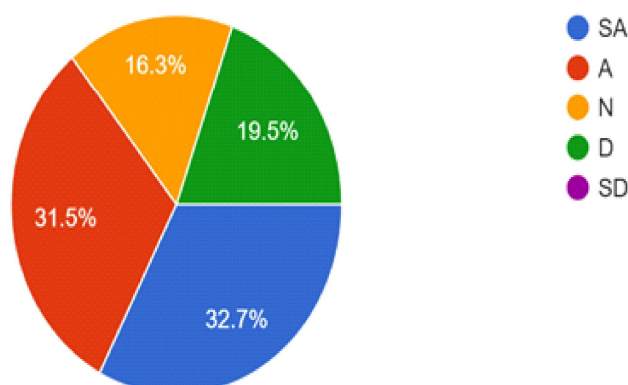


Figure xxvi: Question 18

Most respondents here were willing to take the support from NGOs and the government in order to lessen their financial burden. Furthermore, they

wanted to ensure there would be greater savings being made in the household by availing the hypothetical aides.

19) If there are support from government/NGOs, I will send my children to higher education also

251 responses

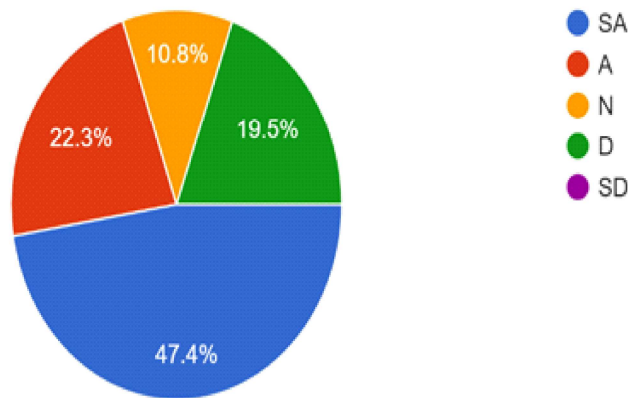


Figure xxvii: Question 19

Most of the respondents strongly agreed to sending their children for a higher education and high studies like graduation and post-graduation. The estate

workers here are ready and willing to take the support of the NGOs and the govt. in order to make ends meet more comfortably.

20) If financial support is provided, I will make my children go to school

251 responses

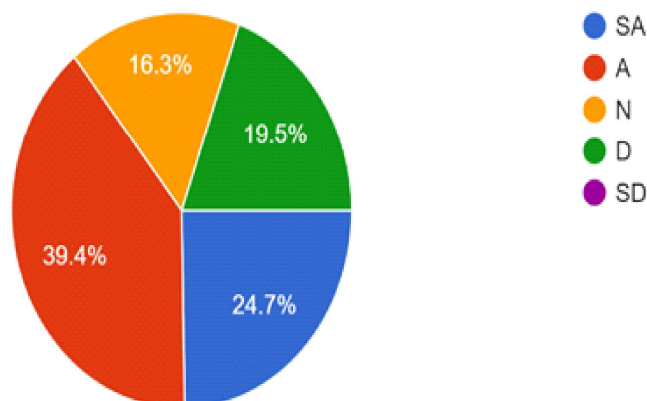


Figure xxviii: Question 20

Again, the general tone of government is also extended to schools too. They mostly agree or

strongly agree that the government aides will be a huge boost to their standard of living and livelihood.

21) If we are financially supported, I will encourage my children go pursue higher education also

251 responses

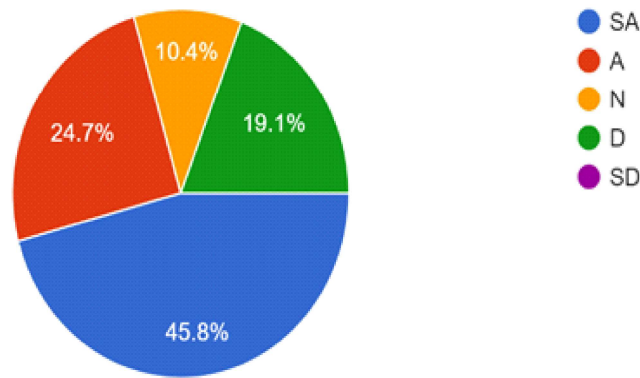


Figure xxix: Question 21

Even though their children may or may not lack the motivation to learn, the parents/respondents agreed that they will strongly pursue their children for a higher education degree or diploma in order to

facilitate their job in another sector for a higher income to their children as well as to the family income overall, provided that govt aide is given.

22) I always regret for not going to school in my childhood

251 responses

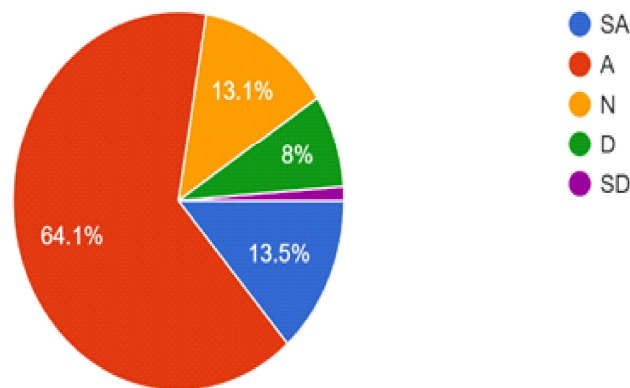


Figure xxx: Question 22

This is a good and high percentage of respondents that replied that strongly regret not paying much heed to education and not being able to focus and

continued with their education for both voluntary and involuntary reasons.

23) It will be viable for the next generation to have enhanced education for their betterment of life.

251 responses

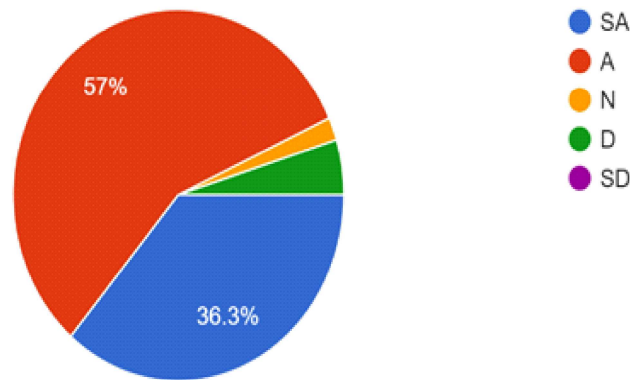


Figure xxxi: Question 23

A good 90% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that education is of the utmost importance to their children and grandchildren and they do not

want the future generations to make the same mistakes they did and want to ensure that they have a better future than the respondents' generation.

24) I feel unlucky that educational opportunities were denied due to various reasons

251 responses

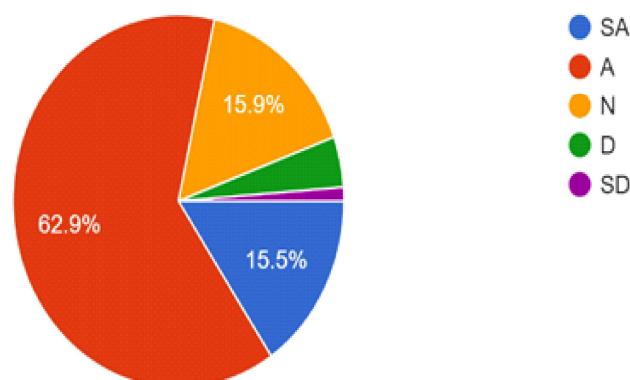


Figure xxxii: Question 24

This high percentage is due to 2 reasons-

- Due to financial constraints
- Due to the respondent being of the female gender,

back in a time where gender discrimination and inequality was rampant against women, especially in rural areas.

25) Had there been opportunities for education, I would have increased the earning potential

251 responses

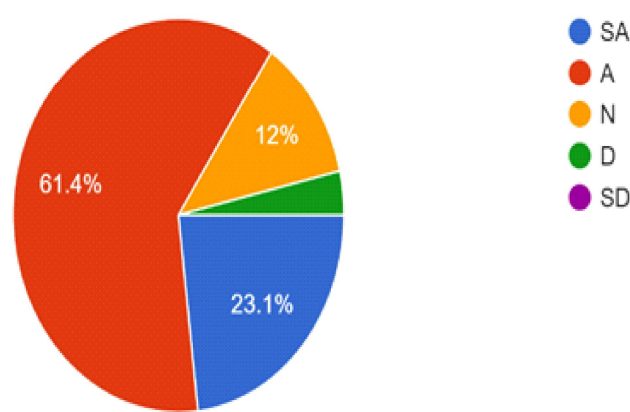


Figure xxxiii: Question 25

Nearly all the respondents agree that had here been sufficient educational opportunities, then they would have increased their earning potential to a lot more than what they are earning today. So, they feel regretful of the fact that it they weren't given enough educational opportunities.

26) Even though, there was opportunity for education, I would have continued the same way to earn my income

251 responses

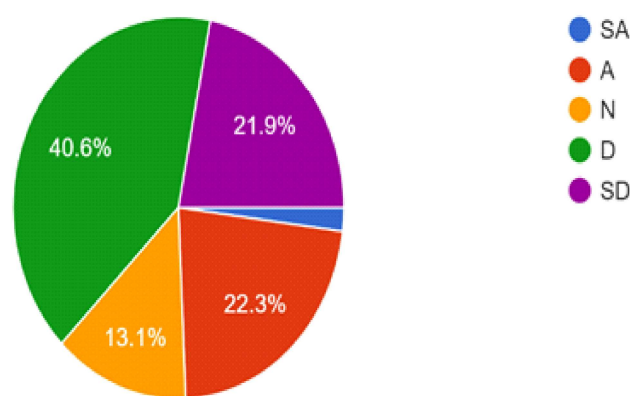


Figure xxxiv: Question 26

A majority of the respondents feel that they would have had a different work life in a different sector, perhaps had there been more opportunity for education.

27) If my children are provided opportunity to have education, I wish them to go for any other way of earning

251 responses

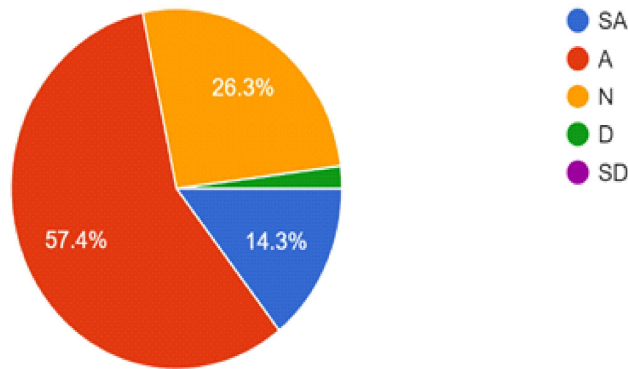


Figure xxxv: Question 27

A solid majority of the respondents feel that their children should not follow the same sector as them and want them to earn any other way than this, provided they are given more educational

opportunities. While a few remained neutral as they believed that it was the choice of the children to do what they wanted and pursue the field and sector they wanted to work in.

28) With the schooling and higher education, I wish my children to choose different fields for their career

251 responses

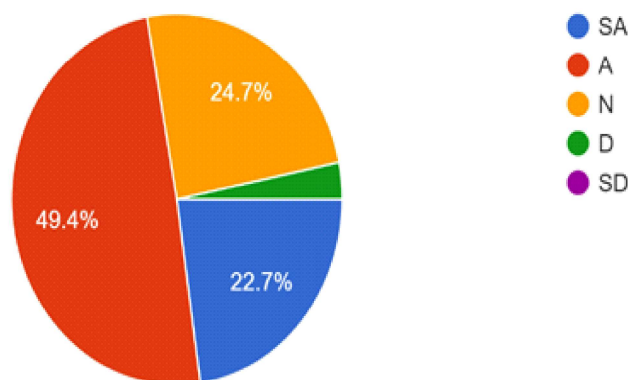


Figure xxxvi: Question 28

Here, it is pretty similar to the last question wherein the respondents said that they would rather than their children work in any other sector than this as

they feel that their kids should not go through the same kind of burden that they went through.

29) Even after availing education, I wish my children and family to continue in the same field by owning a land and applying modern methods

251 responses

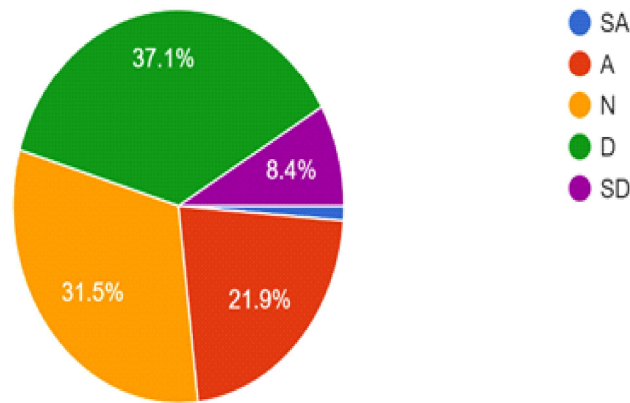


Figure xxxvii: Question 29

Here, a majority of the respondents said that it was up to their children to decide whether the they should continue working in the same sector or go to another sector altogether. However, a good portion of the respondents also said that they did not want their children to work in the same sector, not even as an owner.

30) After availing education, I wish my children and family not to continue in the same field by owning a land but employing other workers

251 responses

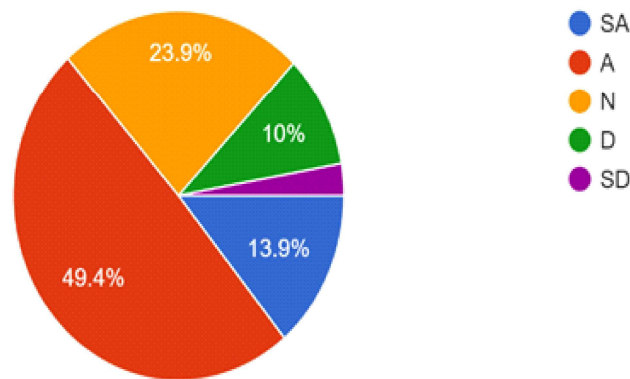


Figure xxxviii: Question 30

Most of the respondents said that they would not like their children to employ other workers as they do not want any other person to undergo through the same problems they went through. Instead, they feel that machines may be able to do these jobs in the future.

31) Overall, I hope my family will be able to change the way of living, if educational opportunities are provided for our children

251 responses

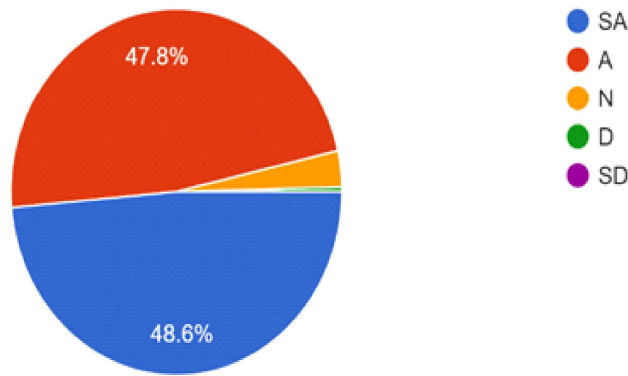


Figure xxxix: Question 31

This is a very strong percentage of respondents that replied that they strongly agree or agree that they hope that their life as well as their families' lives change with the held of educational opportunities which can be either from NGOs or from government institutions.

5.2. Other General Feedback data given by some of the respondents

- "Children are not interested to study, though we are ready to send them."
- "Lives with the brother's family."
- "No children yet. But it is up to my unborn children if they want to pursue their in this field or not"
- "I believe a child should be educated only if he/she shows interest"
- "My child is no more in this world"
- "I'm unaware of high schools nearby"
- "My child was in school but dropped out lack of interest"
- "My children have had to make their own choices"

Chapter VI: Findings, Conclusion & Suggestions

6.1. Findings

Fairness in education and employment is not giving everyone the same opportunity; fairness is giving each person what they need to succeed.

With more than a million permanent workers, the tea plantation industry is the largest in the formal private sector in the country. Yet, wages of these workers are the lowest in the formal sector and their living conditions are appalling.

In the course of the research, it was identified that the underlying demand of the estate workers was to improve the living conditions of the labour lines in the plantations.

The workers continue to fight for their rights for a dignified life.

Strategizing and formulating cradle-to-grave schemes for workers lays the onus on the plantation heads to make provision for these benefits to workers.

The situation is bad for the workers even while the going is good for the sector. Most of the tea and coffee estate workers are seeking better employment in the cities. There is mass migration. They opine that hereafter, there will be no permanent jobs in tea estates; everything will be temporary. They refrain from indulging their next generation in similar work. Even after the Plantation Labours Act came into force in 1951; the situation remained more or less the same.

The main issues for the workers are wages and rations. If workers in a coffee or tea plantation reveal they have no problems either related to their working condition, or that they do not face other externalities, they mean that they get their wages and rations on time. They are accustomed to working in those conditions. The female estate workers and the older inhabitants of the plantation areas watch their equivalents are worse off, as they do not get their wages on time and the estate owners

avoid supply of ration on a timely basis. However, a look at the labour lines gives a different picture. Many plantations gave a week's rations after a month or so.

The situation in plantations in Karnataka is almost analogous while considering the forms of living. Till about 15 years ago, the conditions in the southern tea-growing states (Kerala and Tamil Nadu) had a much better record of working conditions in comparison with Assam and West Bengal. Wages in Kerala are higher, compared to the two northern states.

Besides, the workers aspire to not only merely to work in tea or coffee plantations, but also as construction workers and are comfortable in running other errands that they can resort to, as a source of livelihood for earning their daily bread.

There are many differences between Kerala and the two northern states. Though the trade unions are quite widespread in all these states, they have not been effective. In West Bengal, the problem is of multiple trade unions.

The poor educational facilities ensure that the only future workers and the children have is of unskilled labour.

The workers and their families in the suburban coffee plantations in Coorg and Ooty are in some ways better off than their fellow workers, who have migrated from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, and strive to maintain a decent living. The permanent workers number more than the contractual workers, or the migrated workers, and the total population of these workers would be 3 times more than the migrants.

Some of the workers, especially the native inhabitants of the estate terrain, belong to lower societal segments and being a member of these classes (SC/ST) would mean availing of free educational facilities and later reservation in employment among other facilities provided by the state. However, this has deprived them of any form of protective discrimination which is absolutely necessary for their development.

The issues of the estate workers are predominantly owing to the alienation of the governments, both at the state and central levels, to the fundamental requirements and necessities as mortals. The privately-owned large territories of estates, such as Tata Coffee & Tea, Kannan Devan, etc. too are equable to share the accusation for creating this situation. The workers' organisations, the trade unions, are greatly governed, monitored and controlled by heads who do not belong to the clan, and cannot mirror the aspirations of the workers. After several years of oppression and marginalisation, the workers in Karnataka might take up the challenge of defending their rights to live a decent life. Neither would they depend on the state or on an external trade union, nor on their owners, for assisting their cause. On the contrary, they will want to create a massive transformation through their collective strength and their labour power, owing to the ample availability of educational opportunities to their next generation, backed with alternatives for employment. Education to these workers can help them become assertive in voicing their opinions and work their way toward claiming rightfully for decent work and for the right to live with dignity. Opportunities for educational development and employment support will trail blaze the path to betterment.

6.2. Conclusion

This research was undertaken with the primary objective of understanding the opinions of plantation workers on the improvement of educational facilities and provision of employment opportunities in other streams, amongst the estate labourers. Several concepts and theories concerning the topic were reviewed for the study.

Through the course of the research, it was evident that the long view of progress in education in the plantation economy has always indicated that the dominance of economic, political and social influence on it varies from phase to phase. Since decades, Indian labour for the plantations was recruited by plantation owners from among the locals living in the areas of the regional presidencies. By contrast with other labourers

across the globe, the Indian estate-workers are drawn disproportionately from low-caste groups, even till date. This study is an effort toward understanding educational progress and change among the Indian plantation labourers.

Despite the widespread extent of plantation economies and communities, analysis of educational change in plantations is scarce. Analyses tend to focus on stasis or continuity, rather than change, and employ structural explanations of continuity rooted outside the education system.

The education of the children of plantation workers in India, has been predominantly failing due to absence of an iterative way to facilitate social mobility, which can break the stagnant condition and serve as effective means of social control.

Results of the study proved convincingly that majority of the worker class, barring a few exceptions, wanted their children to avail education and shift to other means of earning their livelihood, even if it was owning a plantation region and managing it, rather than working in it. Any support extended from Governmental organizations would be taken with utmost allegiance and adhered to, as indicated by the respondents who were a part of the survey.

The plantation is not just a system of economic production; it is also a community and a system of social reproduction. Only minimal education provision is necessary for this reproduction.

In accordance with the past, education was not part of Indian plantation culture, neither was it a technical necessity nor did it have any survival value. For labourers' children, education is a means of liberation from the preconceived notion of having to pursue the same occupation as their parents, but to the planter it is a potential threat to the labour supply. A lot of the estate worker population would diminish with the workers becoming more equipped with education and this would result in scarcity of plantation workers, for the better or for the worse.

These and many similar analyses of education in plantations highlight the reasons why educational change does not happen. Such analyses of the role

of education in plantations are useful in understanding the enduring aspects of education, resistance to educational change and the maintenance of the status quo. But a long view of history indicates that education change has occurred in many plantation settings, and that this change cannot be explained simply by changes in the nature of the plantation production system, where the change can be negative as well as positive.

The continual momentum for education appears to have arisen from cultural and religious needs from among the community residing inside the plantation and from the religious aspirations of missionaries outside. A few main agents of change that can impact the education of the plantation troops are the labour recruiters and labour supervisors, primarily for two purposes: to reinforce their control of labour, and to conserve the values of the labour community.

Two movements of general significance for the plantation community with spin offs for education were the growth of trade unionism and political franchise. A major obstacle to the integration of estate schools into the emerging national system of education was language. Language barriers have made the plantation sector succumb to staying below the poverty line, with little or no upliftment opportunities in terms of growth and employment. An influx of teachers of plantation community origin in the mid 1980s was an important fourth influence.

Overall, the educational change amongst plantation workers was slow and fragmented, while the growth opportunities for estate income dependants grew at a rapid pace owing to the access to education facilities in the adjoining regions.

The plantation workers have an implicit urge to rise above their existing levels and move upward in the societal ladder for betterment of life, and attainment of education is considered a significant medium to achieve the same. A sizable portion of the labourers expressed genuine concern regarding the educational amenities and financial support/aid provided to them for the benefit of their progeny. A general interest, strongly observed among the masses indicates the desire for discontinuation of

plantation work, and indulgence in other occupations that are primarily obtained through the procurement of exposure to education.

Funded by the Government of India and the Indian Housing Project there are projects that are implemented through a participatory people's process in estates and plantation terrains. Estate worker families are closely involved in planning and monitoring of construction, while construction of the houses is undertaken through the Estate Worker Housing Cooperative Societies (EWHCS). The High Commission of India is channelling funds through the EWHCS who hire skilled construction workers, bulk purchase building materials and construct houses. These measures can serve as a firm groundwork for future educational and employment provision.

As a concluding remark, education and employment opportunities can significantly reduce the potential threat to the supply of child labour in the estate terrains. Reproductive models of education also suggest that when change does occur it arises from a contradiction between an economic dynamic and an educational system that tends to stabilise class relations between the plantation owners and the worker class.

6.3. Scope for Further research

This study opens up new grounds for further research. Further studies can address the following issues to have more insights on the subject.

1. It would be very interesting to conduct another study within the same area of research, with the incorporation of more estates and the more plantation terrains, which may give a more integrated approach to the topic and better utility to understand the thought processes of the labourers.

2. Here the study concentrates primarily on the plantation workers of the Southern parts of India while there could be a difference in opinion owing to a globally varying culture scenario, while a comparative study of other states and the Karnataka Plantation labour force on education and employment opportunity availability for the next

generation would be an interesting study to analyse the regional variations in metalinguistic and multi-cultural, diversified country like India. It will be an interesting piece of information for other sectors in offering employment to skilled or semi-skilled workers.

3. A study incorporating many socio-demographic and bio-socio variables is will be interesting to find out the impact of the plantation culture on occupational health, safety, societal development and hygiene, etc.

4. A distinct study pertaining to the children of plantation workers, (students or otherwise) to better understand their career aspirations and educational interests, with special importance to the variables that prevent children from pursuing education or cause any deviation in opting for other modes of employment.

6.3.1. Scope for Further Research

Education around the World To learn how educational programs are being fostered worldwide, explore the Education section of the Center for Global Development's website:

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Annexure-I

Format of the questionnaire used for the study

A study on the Role of Next Generation Educational Opportunities in Empowering the Lives of Tea/coffee Estate Income Dependents and Workers of Western Ghats**Questionnaire**

This study questionnaire is prepared with an objective to collect data from the tea estate income dependents on their possible transformation of life style through providing educational opportunities. This questionnaire is collected with the pure academic interest and the data will not be revealed to any other persons/organizations.

Request your earnest cooperation in filling the questionnaire and support to complete this study.

A study on the Role of Next Generation Educational Opportunities in Empowering the Lives of Tea Estate Income Dependents and Workers of Western Ghats

Name (Optional):

Gender:

Age:

Educational Qualification: Primary school

High school

Higher secondary school

Under graduation

Post-graduation and above

Marital status:

No of kids:

Nature of income dependency: Owner

Permanent Employee

Temporary employee

Contractual employee

Daily waged

No. of members in the family:

No. of adults in the family involved in the similar work for income generation:

No. of members (below 18 years) in the family involved in this job:

Given below are some statements to record your interest/ opinion on providing educational opportunities in empowering your life. Indicate your opinion on the statement in the rating scale as given below

a. Strongly agree(SA) b. Agree(A) c. Neutral(N) d. Disagree(D) e. Strongly disagree (SD)

S. No	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1	I am doing this job whole-heartedly with interest					
2	I am in this job as I don't know any other job					
3	I am doing this job as there are no other alternatives available here					
4	My income is vital to take care of my family needs					
5	The earnings of other members of my family is also crucial to lead our life					
6	I have put few of my children in this work to meet the family demands					
7	My children are involved in this job as they developed interested in this field					
8	All my children are going to school/college					
9	My children are involved in this job as we want them to earn to lead their life.					
10	There are numerous occupational hazards attached to this job and subsequent to earning					
11	I feel good education will help us to overcome those occupational hazards and improve our standard of living					
12	I feel education can transform our life to a greater extent					
13	Mere education cannot help us to come out of our struggle					
14	I am particular about my family members' education, provided that there are opportunities available					
15	Educational opportunity is not provided for my children due to financial instability					

16	Educational opportunity is not provided for my children due to non-availability of schools nearby					
17	I can send my children for school but cannot afford for their higher education					
18	If there are support from government/NGOs, I will send my children to school.					
19	If there are support from government/NGOs, I will send my children to higher education also.					
20	If financial support is provided, I will make my children go to school.					
21	If we are financially supported, I will encourage my children go pursue higher education also.					
22	I always regret for not going to school in my childhood					
23	It will be viable for the next generation to have enhanced education for their betterment of life.					
24	I feel unlucky that educational opportunities were denied due to various reasons					
25	Had there been opportunities for education, I would have increased the earning potential					
26	Even though, there was opportunity for education, I would have continued the same way to earn my income					
27	If my children are provided opportunity to have education, I wish them to go for any other way of earning With the schooling and higher education, I wish my children to choose different fields for their career					
28	Even after availing education, I wish my children and family to continue in the same field by owning a land and applying modern methods					

29	After availing education, I wish my children and family not to continue in the same field by owning a land but employing other workers					
30	Overall, I hope my family will be able to change the way of living, if educational opportunities are provided for our children					

General Opinion/Feedback if any
