

Chapter V

EDUCATION IN THE PLANTATION SECTOR FEW CASE STUDIES OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The East India Company shipped tea from China to England from 1689 and in 1721 obtained monopoly rights in the trade but lost its monopoly in 1833. This defeat led to the then British Government to think seriously of introducing tea cultivation into India. Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling backed by the Government started experimenting with tea plantation in the hill regions of Darjeeling. His examples was followed by other wealthy British people, Government encouraged them and supplied the seed and gradually by 1856 the tea industry was established as a commercial enterprise in Darjeeling District.(1) In 1856 "the Alubari tea garden was opened by the Kurseong and Darjeeling tea company, and another tea garden on the Lebong Spur by the Darjeeling land mortgage Bank; in 1859 the Dhutura garden was started by Brougham; and between 1860 and 1864 four gardens at Ging, Ambutia, Takdah and Phubsering were established by the Darjeeling Tea Company, and the gardens at Takvar and Badamtam by the Lebong Tea Company. Other gardens which were established this early period were those now known as the Makaibari, Pandam and Steinthal tea estates."(2) Gradually Planters started opening tea-gardens in the Terai area. Mr. James who opened Singel tea-estates in Kurseong also opened tea estate in Champta in the Terai region and gradually from 1866 many gardens were established in different parts of Terai, Darjeeling, Kurseong and Jalpaiguri.(3)

Plantation work progressed, Government earned money but poverty was common among the plantation labourers. Unemployment, child labour, violence,

alcoholism were common among the plantation labourers. Their socio-economic condition was poor.

A large number of Nepalese living outside the towns were mainly coolies or agriculturists who did not get any opportunity to attend schools.(4)

The primary education system was established from 1870. There were 25 primary schools with 650 boys and girls in 1873 whereas in the town there were only 2 high schools for European and Anglo Indian students and one middle school in 1873.(5) And credit for this goes to the dedicated work of the mission of the Church of Scotland. In 1872 three schools were established at Soom, Takver and Lebong for the children of the coolies in tea-plantation. During this time the Director of Public Instruction also thought of directly taking up the responsibility of educating the children on tea and other plantations in the Darjeeling district. The co-operation of the managers and owners was sought, also an enquiry was made in May, 1905 by the British Parliament into the state of the education of children in different tea-estate. The British Parliament also wanted to see whether primary schools could be established in different tea estates in India. The government of Bengal made an enquiry at the request of the Secretary of State on the number of school going children and the children already received education.(6)

Divi- sion	Sl. No	Name of the tea Garden	No.of children of of school going age	No.of children receiving education	Received Education
	1	Bannokburn Tea Estate	77	3	-
B	2	Pandam Tea Estate	90/131/139/128	6/29/-	2/2/12
H	3	The British Darj.Co.	450	56	5
A	4	Bloomfield Friedrick	72	0	30
G		Shang & Orange Valley			
A	5.	Lingta T.E.	79	0	9
L	6.	Pegu T.E.	145	15	30
	7.	Nagri T.E.	108	6	-
P	8.	Badamtam Div.	293	56	17
	9.	Ranglu-Rangliot T.E.	56	12	7
P	10.	Govt. Cinchona Plantation Mongpoo 1041		49	42
U	11.	Singtam T.E.	250	7	135
R	12.	Oak T.E.	62	-	-
	13.	Phoobshering T.E.	141	6	11
	14.	Peenoke T.E.	89	39	-
	15.	Koel T.E.	112	1	6
	16.	Chamong T.E.	60	-	4
	17.	Lower Fagoo T.E.	26	-	-
	18.	Gopaldhara T.E.	53	-	-
	19.	Liza Hill T.E.	85	-	1

Divi- <u>Bhagalpur</u>	Sl. No. Garden	Name of the tea	No. of children of school going age	No. of children receiving education	No. of children who have already received education but do not attend school now.
	20.	Mian T.E.	70	-	-
	21.	Tarazam T.E.	108	13	2
	22.	Moonda Koti T.E.	250	8	42
	23.	Lower Ging T.E.	156	44	8
	24.	Darjeeling Tea & Cinchona	65	11	30
	25.	Association Limited, Pedong,			
	26.	Singtom, Namsing			
	27.	Lopchu T.E.	41	-	41
	28.	Runagmook T.E.	229	19	-
	29.	Pusambeing T.E.	91	-	7
	30.	Govt. Cinchona Plantation	230	-	2
	31.	Mansingh			
	32.	Gielle T.E.	230	5	37
	33.	Arongrave	45	-	-
	34.	Ceder	40	-	-
	35.	Takdah	150	-	33
	36.	Chongtong	200	20	100
	37.	Slopetown T.E.	30	-	-
	38.	Rangant T.E.	29	6	2
	39.	Glenburn	104	2	3
	40.	Searpani	120	-	-

Divi- Sl. Name of the Tea sion No..Garden	No.of children of schoolgoing age	No.of children receiving education	No.of children who have already received education and do not school now
<u>Bhagalpur</u>			
41 Pesak T.E.	361	51	16
42 Tung Song	54	7	-
43 Ging Tea Estate	40	18	-
44 Takvar Tea Estate	350	24	19
45 Passangbong	76	26	1
46 Thealand	13	2	1
47 North Point	20	4	-
48 Stenthal T.E.	13	-	4
49 Reshihat	20	20	-
50 Happy Valley	21	-	7
51 Soom T.E.	85	30	-
52 Dooteriah	200	-	-
53 Lebong Mineral Spring	181	-	-
54 Belgachi T.E.	41	-	-
55 Springside T.E.	52	9	41
56 British Darjeeling T Co.	273	56	-
57 Nagali			
58 Sadhearan T.E.	26	-	-
59 Castleton T.E.	50	1	1
60 Darjeeling Consolidated T.Co.200		-	-
61 " " "	130	-	19
62 D.H.Tea Company	131	1	9

Divi- sion	Sl. No. Garden	Name of the Tea	No. of children of school going age	No. of children receiving education	No. of children who have already recd. education and do not attend school now
Bhagalpur					
	63	Deoroni T.E.	5	-	-
	64	Damdarijhar T.E.	18	-	-
	65	Eden Vale T.E.	4	2	-
	66	Mubelar Fagular T.E.	67	0	0
	67	Ghyabarre T.E.	23	1	0
	68	Ghamti	55	5	5
	69	Gangaram	96	0	0
	70	Gairi Gang T.E.	7	2	0
	71	Hasqua T.E.	15	0	0
	72	Hindu T.Estate	25	12	13
	73	Jangpara T.Estate	34	0	0
	74	Kamalpur T.E.	29	0	0
	75	Kristopur T.E.	25	0	0
	76	Lizzipur T.E.	82	0	0
	77	Lochnagar T.E.	112	0	0
	78	Majhna T.E.	32	0	0
	79	Mahalderam T.E.	49	0	13
	80	Matigara T.E.	3	3	0
	81	Mohurgaj T.E.	27	0	0
	82	Manjiha T.E.	8	0	0
	83	New Chemta T.E.	67	0	0
	84	Naxalbari	20	0	0
	85	Penehani T.E.	16	0	0
	86	Puttinbari T.E.	15	0	0

Divi-Sl. No.	Name of the Tea Garden	No. of children of school going age.	No. of children receiving education	No. of children who have already recd. education and do not attend school now.
Bhagalpur				
87	Rohmi T.E.	623	3	0
88	Sirdhari T.E.	40	0	3
89	Tindharia T.E.	94	0	1
90	Taipoo T.E.	15	0	1
91	Bagdogra T.E.	39	0	4
92	Sahpore T.E.	19	-	4
93	Main Tea Estate	34	0	0
Grand total		9821	796	733

Source : *Development of Education in selected district of West Bengal with special reference to the 19th Century - 1907-1910. Part I, pp.88-91 by Chakraborti Chhanda - An unpublished thesis - The table is incorporated from Proceedings of the Lt. Governor of Bengal, August, 1906, General Department, File 155 No.15-16 from D.P.I. to Secretary*
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to Govt. of Bengal General Department No.3850 March 29, 1906.

But the statistics were found to be unreliable as a number of primary schools on or near the plantations were not mentioned or some tea estates having primary schools are missing on the list.

In order to introduce education into the tea estates "The Conference was held at Darjeeling on 20th June 1906 - with D.I. Macpherson Div. C.I.E., I.C.S. Commissioner of Bhagalpur Div. as president and representative of Terai planters association.(7)

Government wanted rapid development of primary education but as it was short of funds it sought co-operation from the owners and managers of the tea estates to establish and maintain schools.

However, the Conference accepted the views of the Director of Public Instruction that the Government would contribute towards the expenditure of primary schools Rs.12 although under the grants in aid rule, except in special cases. Government grants should be limited to half the expenditure and Government could withdraw grants in case of poor attendance or mismanagement. All the tea-estate members confirmed that the initial expenditure such as building equipments and the maintenance would be borne by them. No fee was to be taken from the children but a demand was made that Government would give direct grants to the tea-gardens and not through the Scotch-Missions. However options were given that manager and owners of the T.E. could directly run the school and deal with the Government or they could approach the mission to run the schools.(8)

Though Government encouraged day schools, night schools were preferred by the students then they would be able to work in the garden.

Another general meeting for the planters was held on August 11, 1906 to discuss the employer's duty towards employees' physical and moral development. Enlightening the poor and ignorant coolies about the value of education, making them conscious about bad habits such as drinking borrowing money from the money-lenders was their duty. It was ultimately realised by the planters that education would provide efficiency of the labourers. Irwin of the Teesta Valley Tea Estate and one of the leading planters of the District spoke of his experience of opening a school on his estate. The school was conducted by Graham from Kalimpong. Under his able leadership the labourers developed their intelligence and skill. According to Graham Gordon "whatever little education so far given tended to make the men

more intelligent and useful class of labourer which is distinctive gain into the estate.”(9)

It is pointed out that Christian Missionaries of the different denomination did tremendous work to provide elementary education so as to remove illiteracy from the hill region among them. Scottish Mission's contributions is definitely noteworthy.

The Missionaries in order to disseminate knowledge and proselytize went to remote corners of Darjeeling among them - Scotch missions contribution is definitely worth mentioning. “Barring a few limited efforts of the Government the whole story of schools and education during the period 1870-1905 in the hill region of Darjeeling district would be, as a matter of fact, the story of missionary activities.”(10)

In this task the service of Rev. William Macfarlane of the Scot-mission deserved very high praise. In 1865 Rev. William Macfarlane joined in Gaya Scottish Church. During this time six Nepali boys were sent to Gaya by Captain Jerdin, a renowned planter from his garden to learn reading, writing and simple arithmetics. Rev. Macfarlane was very much impressed by these three boys' good conduct and simplicity and came to Darjeeling with them to teach and preach among the simple folk. He made Lachnagar his residence and started both a school and printing press. Soon he realised that the first thing required in the hills was a group of trained teachers and with this idea he collected a number of hill students and on them he devoted the first years of his missionary life in the hills. This class was the first of the training school at Kalimpong which trained teachers for the whole district. Observing that the Nepali language had an affinity with Hindi, he at first introduced Hindi text books for all the students. He also observed that Bhutia and Lepchas could learn Hindi very quickly. Somehow it is because of his earnest effort that Government realised that it was their duty to help the scotch mission with liberal grants-in-aid to open primary schools throughout the district.(11)

Rev. Macfarlane developed consciousness among the tea-planters of the value of education, at least they were made conscious of their responsibilities for the employees' children with the result - some resolutions were taken in different conferences of the tea-planters and their contributions continue upto the present time in many gardens.

According to Hunter, 1876, "All the primary schools in the district are at present under the Rev. Mr. Macfarlane of the Presbyterian mission, who receives a monthly allowance of Rs.175 (£ 17.10 sod) and in addition to this a sum of Rs.1200(£120) has lately been made over to him from the pathshala grant for the district. The balance of the grant is to be spent on schools in the Terai. Mr. Macfarlane had, before the close of the year under Government orders of the 30th September. On the 31st March, he had altogether 20 schools with 613 pupils on the rolls, one of which is a school for girls, and another a normal school. Of the 615 pupils, 557 were boys and 56 girls. Thirty two girls were taught in the boys schools, the remaining 24 were on the rolls of the separate girls' school. The languages taught in these schools are Bengali, Hindi, Urdu in the Roman Characters and Lepcha.(12)

However, it has been found that the administration of primary education gradually shifted from the centre to the provinces and many primary education acts were passed between 1918 and 1930 by different provinces. All these acts gave large powers to local authorities. They were asked to provide primary education and buy an education cess with the help of Government assessment. Under provincial autonomy also no basic changes were made, the same system continued.

The Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930, envisaged compulsory primary education for children from 6 to 11. In order to fulfil this objective, the act provided for the establishment of District School Boards. The personnel involved in

the working of the District School Boards, were (1) The District Magistrate (2) The Sub-Divisional Officer (3) The District Inspector of Schools (4) Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the District Board, (5) Chairman of local Boards, (6) Elected non-official members - such as two elected by members of District Board, 2 members selected by members of union boards, one elected primary school teacher and two nominated non-official members.(13)

Darjeeling District school Board was set up in 1954 to implement the scheme of free and compulsory primary education in the rural hill areas. In the urban areas the responsibility to spread primary education falls on the Municipal authorities. The Municipal authorities introduced compulsory free primary education in the hill areas in 1968.(14)

It is to be mentioned that all the schools under the plantation sector automatically transferred to the District school board. At present some tea estates voluntarily help the schools though no schools are coming under their jurisdiction. Some case studies of present plantation sectors primary schools are given.

A directive principle of the constitution is to provide free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years. "Determined efforts have been made since independence towards the achievement of this goal. Between 1950-51 and 1984-85, the number of primary schools increased from approximately 2,10,000 to approximately 5,20,000 and the number of upper primary schools from 30,600 to 1,30,000. Even so, an acceptably large number of habitations are still without primary schools and nearly one third of the schools in rural areas have only one or two teachers."(15) This is the picture of India as a whole.

There is no denying that achievement in the field of primary education is not gratifying anywhere in India and so Darjeeling is no exception.

There are many problems in the field of primary education. These are (1) financial problem (2) problem of wastage and stagnation, (3) the indifference on the part of the teachers, (4) low salary scales (5) parents lack of responsibility towards their children's education (6) poverty and unemployment (7) problem of admission from primary to secondary school, (8) irregular attendance and absenteeism from the part of the students and teachers (9) lack of educational equipment and facilities like school tiffin or mid-day meals, uniform, books, slates etc. (10) Early marriage (11) unsuitable curricular (12) wrong examination policy.

All these are common problem of primary education everywhere in India leading to high dropout among boys and girls.(16) Analysis of the past and the present situations of the tea gardens reveal that the entire capital for the tea-industry came from Europe because the industry needed large capital and technique of manufacturing which was out of the hand of the Indian people at that time. Dooars and Darjeeling district flourished because of great economic activities started with the expansion of tea industry. Garden ran by individual lease which brought crisis for the time being between 1865 and 1868 due to inefficient management. However, planters later recognised the result of inefficient management by the private owners and gradually crisis was overcome and the industry flourished again.(17)

The picture of post independence period is different, no. of new gardens added to the tea-industry. Gradually, Indian ownership came in the industry. "Under the new ownership gardens were neglected and it brought about a deterioration in the age composition leading to the downward trend in the productivity of the Darjeeling Tea-industry.(18)

It is a fact that the new owners of the teagardens systematically neglecting the garden by taking the surplus and passing it to other industries - situated in

Bombay, Delhi and Rajasthan and because of this gardens had been sick during seventies. "The size of the sick gardens, in terms of planted area varies from 29 hectares to 30 hectares at that time. It means a total loss to the industry of 1669 hectares, constituting about 10 per cent of the total hectarages under tea. Again the sickness means a loss in terms of production of at least 0.48 million kgs. of tea in a year is about 5 per cent of the total population of tea."(19)

Once 46 per cent income came from plantation and forestry. During British period the economic condition of the hill people was much better than the plains. Both the industries served for the economic development of the area, gave scope for employment opportunity in both the sectors. But at present it is difficult to bring more land for plantation cultivation so people in a large number going for agricultural work because there is no other medium sized industry which can give employment opportunities to the people of the hill areas of Darjeeling.(20) "In the hill areas unemployment problem is increasing day by day which is bringing poverty in the rural area and in the schools the same picture reflected.

The financial problem is the main problem in the field of primary education. The state government gives a contingency grant of Rs.25 per month to all the schools under Municipalities and District School Boards. No development and maintenance grant is given to a particular school but financial help is given on appeal, sometimes for repair work and furniture but this type of case is rare. In the Darjeeling hill area however State Government with the help of the Hill Council at present helps the primary schools by giving financial aid for repairs of school building or in one or two cases by constructing a new building. An enquiry has been made and it has been found that Happy Valley Amiyanath Primary School, Pandam Primary School, Stenthal Primary School, Bloomfield Primary School all got help in the form of building and equipments from the D.G.H.C.

Information gathered by the scholar through field investigation from different schools are presented in the following. Emphasis given to find out the dropout rate of the students : both boys and girls and also to see different problems faced by the different schools.

1. Pandham Tea-garden Primary School - (A Case Study)

Pandham Primary School was established in the year 1947. At first the school used to get help from the garden in the form of finance and equipments but the garden stopped giving aids when all the schools went under D.S.B.

In 1981 Pandham tea garden schools received Rs.15,000/- for school equipments etc. from the District School Board. Again in 1988 the District school board gave Rs.40,000/- for building and repairs which according to teachers and Headmaster was totally misused. The Headmaster wanted to set up a beneficiary committee under which the contractors would work. The contractors were against the proposal but ultimately they agreed and accordingly a beneficiary committee was formed. But the repair work was done in the winter vacation and the work was done badly in the absence of Headmaster.

The environment of the locality is not good. Many a time theft cases were recorded with the police by the Headmaster because school furnitures and equipments are frequently stolen by some people of the area. According to the headmaster after the repair work in 1988 children's small desks and old furniture including Headmasters' table were disappeared and till 1988-91 teachers and students had almost nothing to sit on and do their work.

In 1992 on appeal to D.G.H.C. by the Headmaster the School received 7 chairs, 5 tables, 15 small desks and benches and 8 desks and one rack or shelf.

The school is having 8 teachers and only 31 students in Class I & II, no students for Class III and IV in 1995. The dropout rate is presented in Tables 1 to 11 and from this table it will be seen as to the number of students keeps decreasing. They keep dropping out each year after being admitted initially in the infant section. Here the dropout rate for boys 88.88 and girls 88.88 are same.

Table 1 : *The dropout rates of the students both boys and girls - Pandham Tea Garden Primary School.*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1996	Class	-	-	-	
1995	Class II	2	1	3	
1994	Class I	2 (86.66)	1 (88.88)	3	
1993	Infant	15	9	24	
		19	11	30	(21)

Source : Headmaster and the teachers

2. Happy Valley Tea Garden School was established in the year 1935. The school is known as Amiyanath Primary School after the name of the owner of the Garden and also founder of the school. He had given land and helped the school financially. One important point is to be remembered is that the garden is at present a private garden.

However when the responsibility to run the school shifted to District school Board the garden stopped giving aid regularly. At present the hill council had given help in different matters such as repairing the building, by providing infra-structure such as almirah, benches, chairs etc. D.G.H.C. sanctioned Rs.80,000/- for building repair grant.

The school is having 14 teachers and approximately 166 students including

boys and girls in 1996. However dropout rate is very high also in this school.

Table 2

Happy Valley Tea Garden School - dropout rate of the students, boys and girls

				<i>Total</i>
1996	Class IV	3 girls	5 boys	8
1995	Class III	5 girls	6 boys	11
1994	Class II	13 girls(92.68)	7 boys(28.19)	20
1993	Class I	8 girls	10 boys	18
1992	Infant Section	26 girls	16 boys	42
1991	Infant section	41 girls	21 boys	62
		96	75	171 (22)

Source : The Headmaster and-the teachers.

For less enrolment of boys in the school dropout rate of girls is 92.68 and boys 28.57.

Children of the well of parents at present do not go for work but goes mainly to good school as the garden is near the town, nearly 40% goes to St. Teresa, 30% to St. Michael, 20% to R.K.S.P. school, 10% to St. Roberts and 15% to Nepali Boarding School, 5% to Maharani Girls school. Generally able parents take their children from the infant level. While coming back from the school the scholar herself found that many students with their school uniform coming from different town schools.

3. **Steinthal T.E. Primary School** is known as Saipatri primary school. It was established in the year 1935. As usual the school got the help from the garden but after D.S.B.'s take over it did not get regular help from the garden. The school was recognised by the Board in 1965 and in 1985 Rs.48000/- given by the Board for the

school building. Again in 89 Rs.48 thousand given by D.G.H.C. for repair work of the school.

From a philanthropic organisation the school got time to time help such as mid-day meal, books, furnitures and medical checkup for the children. The Headmaster also did contact with the Government Health Department as the area is T.B.prone. So time to time medical check up is also done often by the department of health. He is collecting for this Rs.2/- from the students who could afford that money.

However the school is having eleven teachers at present and the no. of students are approximately 151 in 1995.

But from this school also able parents shift their children to nearby good school and generally to secondary and Higher Secondary school. In this school children from nearby areas other than plantation sector also comes.

Table 3 : Dropout rate of the Students Boys & Girls - Steinthal T.E.Primary

<i>School</i>				<i>Total</i>
1995	Class IV	Boys - 7	Girls - 5	12
1994	Class III	Boys - 9	Girls - 7	16
1993	Class II	Boys - 11(90%)Girls -9(87.5%)20		
1992	Class I	Boys - 58	Girls - 36	94
1991	Infant	Boys - 70	Grils - 40	110
Total-155		97	252	(23)

Source : The Headmaster and the teachers.

As the less no. of girls are enrolled in the schools the drop out rate is less than boys, 87.5% for girls and 90% for boys.

4. Rangleet T.E. Saraswati Primary School : The area of this garden also known as Chota-Patabung. This is a private garden now. Few years ago

Phubshiring Ging and Bannéburn and Rangneet - were remained attached garden. The garden is now owned by a businessman from Rajasthan.

The school was established in 1947. The small wooden building was constructed in 1950. Before the school used to get help from the garden but after D.S.B.'s take over the garden stopped giving any help. However, recently the garden had given land for the school near the Lebong roadside.

The school is at present having six teachers and the number of students are all total 80. Dropout rate also high in this school the reason is parents who could afford to take their children to good school takes them, whenever they get opportunity for good school nearby. The children do not go for garden work at their tender age. Few join garden when they grow up that is at the age of 13th or 14th.

Table 4 : *Rangneet T.E. Saraswati Primary School, Dropout rate of both boys & girls*

	<i>Infant section</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1992		10	7	17	
1993	Class I	8	5	13	
1994	Class II	5(70%)	4(57.14%)	9	
1995	Class III	4	4	8	
1996	Class IV	3	3	6	
	Total -	30	23	53	(24)

Source : The Headmaster.

5. **Takdah T.E. Primary School** was established in 1935. It went under District Board in 1965. Before 1965 it was under the care of garden. However, unlike other

garden Takdah Tea garden take care of the school till now. It takes the responsibility of white-washing, the building repairing etc. If necessary, supplies benches tables etc.

However at present only three teachers are working with a large group of students. In 1995 the total students' strength was 152.

Dropout rate is high as many students go to nearby good school or high schools' primary section. Few children coming from the labourer class at the age of 14 or 15 goes for garden work. Though normally this age groups are rarely found in the town primary school but this age group is considered in the primary school of the rural areas or in the plantation sectors.

Table 5 : *Dropout rate of students Takdah Primary School*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1991	Infant(b)	18	27	45	
1992	" (a)	15	22	37	
1993	Class I	17(44.44%)	19(88.88%)	36	
1994	Class II	12	17	29	
1995	Class III	11	4	15	
1996	Class IV	10	3	13	
Total -		83	92	175	(25)

Source : The Headmaster and the teachers.

Because of more enrolment of girls in primary schools dropout rate is quite high 88.88% while boys' dropout rate is 44.44%.

5. ChongTong T.E. Primary School : It is an old school. Tea garden authority used to help the school before the District Board's take up. Wastage and stagnation is also a usual problem. Those students who come from broken home and poor home drop-out from the school. Drop-out occurs also from failure. Parents who could afford to send their children to good schools take their children out from the school at early stage. However, child labour also is found. Children at the age of 13/14 from the poor family join the garden. At present the school is having students with five teachers.

Table 6 : Drop-out rate of both boys and girls of Chongtong T.E. Primary school.

<i>No. of students</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1991 in Infant Section A	28	35	63	
1992 in Infant Section B	24	30	54	
1993 in Class I	20	28	48	
1994 in Class II	15(82.14)	25(77.14)	40	
1995 in Class III	15	10	25	
1996 in Class IV	15	8	23	
Total -	117	136	253	(26)

Source : The Headmaster and the teachers

Dropout rate of both boys and girls are quite high.

7. Source - Head Master, Gopal Primary School, Namring T.E., P.O.Rangli-Rangliot at Darjeeling.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Section/Class</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
1990	Infant 1st year	27	33	60
1991	Infant 2nd year	14	20	34
1992	Class I	14	20	34
1993	Class II	12(62.96%)	18(63.63)	30
1994	Class III	10	14	24
1995	Class IV	10	12	22
Total -		87	117	204

Source : The Headmaster.

Dropout rate of girls is as usual higher than boys such as girls is 63.73% and dropout rate for boys is 62.96%.

This school is comparatively new. It was established on the 18th August, 1976 and recognised by District School Board on 1979. It is clear from the table that dropout rate is quite high. (27)

8. Table 8 : *Marybong Kyel Primary School - Dropout rate of students both boys and girls.*

Year	Section class	Boys	Girls	Total
1992	Infant 1st year	61	117	178
1993	Class I	37	34	71
1994	Class II	20(63.93%)	56(72.65%)	76
1995	Class III	23	28	51
1996	Class IV	22	32	54
Total -		163	267	430

Source : *The Headmaster*

Drop-out rate of boys less than girls that is and for girls

In 1996, from the Infant class to Class I the school is having a very good no. of students, 360 is students strength. As the area is not far from Ghoom main town area, the area is crowded and so the school is having quite a good no. of students. However, Dropout rate is also observed quite high. The school is at present having five teachers. Condition of the building is not bad compared to other school.

Most of the teachers are from the same area; so teachers take classes regularly. However, dropout occurs high, beside poverty and broken home in the rural area change of school, is also found. Another good English medium private

school has been established nearby which is a place of attraction for the well to do parents. (28).

9. Lopchu T.E. Primary School : The school is a very old school. Later recognised by the District Board in 1971. Children from nearby area attend the school. At present in 1996 students' roll strength we observed 160. Boys' total no. 95 and girls total no.65. However dropout rate is also very high. Condition of building is satisfactory.

Table 9 : *Dropout rate of students both boys and girls.*

Lopchu T.E.Primary School.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
1991	Infant B	41	46	87
1992	Infant A	34	36	70
1993	Class I	28	26	54
1994	Class II	22(75.6%)	20(84.78%)	42
1995	Class III	15	12	27
1996	Class IV	10	7	17
Total-		150	147	297

Source : The Headmaster

Boys drop-out rate is 75.6% while girls is 84.78%.

No. of teachers are four. They are mostly coming from nearby area.

10. Margaret Hope T.E. Primary School - Dropout rate of the students both boys and girls : The school is comparatively a new school. The year of establishment is 15th February,1976 recognised by the District School Board in

1979. The condition of the building and the locality is good. Teachers mainly come from the nearby area. At present, that is in 1996 the total students strength is 307, Boys total no. 142 and girls no. 165.

The school did not have any separate drop-out record for boys and girls. However the dropout rate is quite high(66.6%). Altogether five teachers at present are teaching and most of them are having S.F. or PUC with Junior Basic Training Diploma.

Table No.10 :

Year	Section/Class	Boys & girls total
1991	Infant - C	12
1992	Infant - B	10
1993	Class I	6 (83.33)
1994	Class II	6
1995	Class III	4
Total -		41

Source : Headmaster.

(30)

As the separate record is not available for boys and girls it can be seen from the table that in the infant section the no. of students are more but in Class IV the no. is only 3 for both boys and girls. The percentage for dropout is 66.6%.

11. Lower Bloom Field Primary School - Dropout rate of the students both

boys and girls : This school is not properly maintained. The building is not good also having inadequate furniture. The teachers and students do not have toilet

facility. Teachers come from far-away area, so teachers absenteeism is a common feature. However the school record do not give separate data for boys and girls dropout rate. In 1996 the no. of students total roll strength is 52 only. 3 teachers with S.F. J.B.T. Degree teaching in the school.

Table 11 :

<i>Year</i>	<i>Section</i>	<i>Boys & Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
1991	Class I	15	
1992	Class II	12	
1993	Class III	11(33.3%)	
1994	Class IV	10	

		48	

Source : -Headmaster & the teachers. (31)

It is clear from the table that in class I in 1991 15 students were admitted but in course of time the no. has decreased to 10 students dropout rate is 33.33%

However, there is also upper bloomfield primary school, which is situated near town area having more students and teachers strength.

Informations acquired from the field investigation

In Darjeeling at present the state government is helping the primary schools through Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council by giving financial aid for repairs to school building or in a few cases by constructing a new building.

Government policy is to have a nursery section attached to a school, so that children learn to adjust with the school atmosphere. It has been said that all the

schools should have a nursery section so many school introduced nursery section but hardly any playway techniques are followed. In these schools, children play on their own under the supervision of teachers. These schools hardly have any play materials also.

In the rural areas 50% of the population are poor. Though education is free and sometimes books are also supplied by the District school board, parents cannot give guidance to their children as they themselves are not educated and the whole day both the parents spent on earning their livelihood.

In the lower strata of society - another evil practice is drinking. Parents spend money on drinking but cannot buy one or two exercise books or pencils for their wards - Mostly in the tea-garden area this problem is common. Parents are not much bothered whether their wards are going to school or not, passing the examination or failing. Some teachers and Headmaster said that they repeatedly approached the parents but with no result.

Admission to good school is a problem now in Darjeeling. Those parents having a little good financial condition take their wards out from the primary section so that they can continue their education in Secondary school. In many cases the Headmaster's appeal to parents not to withdraw their students goes unheard.

The Headmaster from Pandham school also assured many guardians that he would make special arrangement with junior high school or high school so that students could go straight from Pandham primary school to Harsing Junior High School or Tukvar High School. Unfortunately parents did not give importance to his saying.

It is also to be pointed out that craving for missionary schools is very high among the educated, and even illiterate guardians who are aware of their responsibilities in their children's education, craves for English Medium school.

Government policy regarding study of English is not followed. English as a subject remains in almost all the primary school. The information gathered from the teachers and headmaster reveals the fact that the guardians even illiterate guardians request the teachers and Headmaster to teach English language to their wards so that they can at least read and write properly.

About politicisation of education nothing much known because all school teachers and Headmasters denied that any party-politics is encouraged in school. However, teachers may have support for different political parties.

Overcrowding is not much a problem in Darjeeling hill areas. Some schools have more number of students in class one but gradually they dropout from the end of Class I and from Classes II, III and IV the no. of students gradually lessens but there is problem of accommodation. Problem of accommodation centre around the size of the classrooms which are gradually very small.

The child's health is rarely cared for. The scheme of mid-day meals have been stopped from 1990. Though one slice of bread was never sufficient for children even that also often did not reach the school children. Sometimes even stale bread was supplied and this was complained of by many school authorities. However, whatever given to children did act as an incentive to the children. The dropout rate and absenteeism were reduced to some extent due to mid-day meal but the system has not yet been introduced.

In our country child labour is a curse. In the plantation sector children at the age of 10 or 12 used to join the garden as casual labourers known as Chokras or Lokras. But that system has been stopped now outwardly because primary school children are too young. However, children dropout at the age of 13, 14 or 15 joins garden as casual labourer. But according to garden rule only in Sunday or in holiday for two hours they could work. Generally children from labourers class goes for garden work, not all the children prefers garden work.

As usual teachers salaries are meagre. So most of the teachers try to earn from side income or side business. Female teachers however have their husbands or fathers to help them or support financially. The service condition and distance of this plantation sectors schools affect the job worthiness of teachers.

Transport problem is very acute specially during monsoon. Very few teachers come from the garden area, mainly teachers goes from the town area. So absenteeism from school is a common problem from the part of the teachers and students.

Students' dropout from school are often a common phenomenon. One reason behind this is poverty and disinterested attitude of the parents. Another reason is parents eagerness to take out their children from these poor primary school to better school in the town area. Those who are engaged in different service in garden office can afford for good schools for their children. Some parents from labourer class feels that education would not be of much help to their children. Children can help in their household work and also can join garden and by earning some money can help the family.

In Darjeeling marriage by elopement is a problem however primary schools are not affected by this problem as the children's age is below 12 years generally.

It has been found out that some teachers have sympathetic attitude towards their students. They try their best to teach them even under very difficult circumstance. They often give sweets pencils, exercise books etc. as incentive to their students.

Some of the schools near urban areas get contribution in the form of food teaching aids, books, exercise books, pencils, ruler, slates and necessary articles like shoes, umbrellas from the humanitarian organisations like Hayden Hall Alumni Associations' 'Chhandagitika', 'foreign aids', 'aids from various missionary enterprises', etc. but these meagre contribution do not improve the condition of the schools.

SUMMARY

As Industrialisation is not yet developed in the hill areas agriculture and plantation are becoming two important sources of employment in the rural areas of Darjeeling.

In the agricultural and plantation sectors also gradually schools were opened mainly by the European Missionaries. Gradually the work was taken over by the tea planters and the private enterprises.

The East India Company shipped tea from China to England from 1689 obtained monopoly rights in the trade but lost its monopoly in 1833 and so the British Government thought of introducing tea cultivation into India. Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling backed by the Government started experimentation with tea-plantation in the hills regions of Darjeeling and his footsteps were followed by many wealthy British people and gradually by 1856 the tea-industry was established as a commercial enterprise in Darjeeling District. Many tea-gardens opened such as the Alubari tea garden, another tea-garden in Lebong spur, in 1859 Dhuturia garden and between 1860 and 1864 Ging, Ambotia, Takdah and Phubsiring, Tukvar, Badamtam were established. Then came Makaibari, Pandam, Steinthel tea estates. Slowly in the Terai region also many tea gardens were established.

It has been observed that Plantation work progressed no doubt but poverty leading to child labours, violence, alcoholism, violence were common among the Plantation labourers. However, credit goes to the Mission of the Church of Scotland who really worked hard to change the condition and establish schools. The primary education system was established from 1870. There were 25 primary schools with 650 boys and girls. During this time the Director of Public Instruction also thought

of directly taking up the responsibility of educating the children on tea and other plantations in the Darjeeling District.

In May 1905 the British Parliament also enquired the State of the education of the children in different tea estates. The Parliament also wanted to see whether more schools could be established in different tea estates of India. The Bengal Government made an enquiry on the number of school-going children and the children already received education. But the statistics was not totally reliable. However, Government wanted rapid development but as the fund was short it sought co-operation from the owners and managers of the tea estates to establish and maintain schools.

A Conference was held at Darjeeling on 20th June, 1906 with D.I., Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division and in the Conference it was decided Government would contribute towards the expenditure of Primary School Rs.12/- and the tea estate members confirmed that expenditure for building equipment and the maintenance would be borne by them. They could directly run the school or could run the school through Scot Mission. Another meeting also held later to discuss employee's problems and physical and moral development and ultimately it was realised by the planters that solution for all problems lies in education.

For educational development in the plantation sector the service of Rev. William Macferlane was praise-worthy. He through his work developed consciousness among the tea-planters of the value of education and their responsibility in this field.

Gradually administration of primary education shifted from the centre to the provinces and then to local authorities. The rural primary education act, 1930 envisaged compulsory primary education for children from 6-11 and established District School Board. In Darjeeling in 1954 District School Board was set up and all the schools under the plantation sector automatically transferred to the District

School Board. So schools are not coming under the jurisdiction of the Tea Estate though some tea-estates voluntarily help the school till now. However, these schools known as rural schools also having many problems and those problems are common problem of primary education everywhere in India. The financial problem is the main problem, contingency grant of Rs.25 per month to all the schools is very inadequate. Development and maintenance grant is given on appeal. In Darjeeling hill areas from 1995 D.G.H.C. is in charge of primary, secondary and adult education. According to a few case studies undertaken and it was found the problems are all the same everywhere. Child labour is not existing but some drop out children at the age of 13, 14 and 15 join garden as casual labourer.

Teachers salaries are meagre compared to the inflation and complexities of life. Transport problem is acute during monsoon for the teaching communities who generally come from the town area. Students retention and drop-out rate are very high for many reasons. However, it has been found out that many teachers and authorities have very sympathetic attitude towards their students and try to do their best for the students.

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Field Investigation and Case Study of the Primary Schools

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- 22 Happy Valley Tea Estate, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.
- 23 Steinthal T.E.Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.
- 24 Rangneet T.E. Saraswati Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster.
- 25 Takdah T.E.Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.
- 26 Chongtong T.E.Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.
- 27 Gopal Primary School Namring T.E.Primary School, P.O. Rangli-Rangliot, **Source** : Headmaster.
- 28 Marybong Kyel Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.
- 29 Lopchu T.E. Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.
- 30 Margaret Hope T.E.Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.
- 31 --- Lower Bloomfield Primary School, **Source** : Headmaster and Teachers.

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