



# Parental Involvement in Academic Activities of Children in Tea Communities of Assam

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**Data Availability Statement:** Legal restrictions are imposed on the public sharing of raw data. However, authors have full right to transfer or share the data in raw form upon request subject to either meeting the conditions of the original consents and the original research study. Further, access of data needs to meet whether the user complies with the ethical and legal obligations as data controllers to allow for secondary use of the data outside of the original study.

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## Abstract

In today's modern world, every parent wants their children to get better education. They try to involve in children's education so that their children can have bright future and achieve good status in the society in their later life. The present study was an attempt to assess parental involvement in academic activities of their children. The involvement of parents of tea communities was assessed in four different aspects viz. Involvement of parents in school related activities, involvement of parents in home based academic activities, academic expectation and aspiration of parents and intergenerational influence on academic socialization of children. The sample consisted of 100 parents who had children studying in either lower primary or secondary school standards. From the total 100 samples, 50 respondent having children of lower primary class and 50 respondents having children of secondary standard were selected randomly. Samples were selected on the basis of stratified random sampling from the tea gardens of Jorhat district of Assam. An interview schedule was used for data collection. The results revealed that there is no difference in regards to parental involvement in school based academic of children during lower primary and secondary school standards. Also the difference was not found in case of intergenerational influences on academicsocialization of children. Differences were found in parental involvement during lower primary and secondary school standards in the aspects of involvement in home based academic activities of children and academic aspiration and expectation of parents.

**Keywords:** School and home based academic activities, academic expectation

## 1. Introduction

A child passes most of his time with his parents and learns from the environment provided to him at home. Parents play a vital role in socializing a child to live as a social being. The socialization process that parents employ in socializing their children towards education may influence in developing positive attitude towards education. Academic socialization has been found to play a crucial role in the development of children's academic beliefs, attitudes, and skills from childhood to adolescence (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; Sonnenschein et al., 2012). Parents' interaction with their children prior to school enrolment helps in promoting school readiness and future academic success (Mehaffie and Fraser, 2007). Parents and other family member's attitude towards

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education and involvement in children's education affect their educational progress and achievement. Involvement of parents has a big influence on early childhood education and also helps to broaden the child's horizon, enhance social relationships and promote a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Fasina and Fagbeminiyi, 2011).

Parents act as a role model for their children. If they hold positive attitude towards education, provide learning environment and involves in their academic activities, children will get motivation and encouragement from their parents. Parent's involvement in children's education is important irrespective of the gender, race, caste, creed and ethnicity because every parent want their children to perform well in academics. Parental involvement includes parental attitudes, behaviours, parenting style and activities that occur inside or outside the school setting that support children's academic or behavioural success in school (Abdul-Adil and Farmer, 2006). Parental involvement in a child's education along with environmental and economic factors may affect child development in areas such as cognition, language, and social skills. Research studies shows that parents play an important role in educating their children and in shaping their educational and occupational aspirations (Croll, 2008). Parent's expectation can affect children's academic outcomes in many ways. It affects more if the parent child relationship is indicated by closeness and warmth (Moore et al., 2009; Fan and Williams, 2010). Most educators believe that peer pressure has an influence on children's academic performance. According to Jonsson and Mood (2008) children with high academic expectations and achievements are likely to connect with those sharing the same interests and expectations. Oppositely, adolescents, who have worse attitude to school and lower expectations, will most probable be attracted to peers with similar views (Ryan, 2000). Family SES has been regarded as one of the most powerful elements determining parenting styles and academic socialization (Bornstein and Bradley, 2012).

Education is a process of obtaining knowledge and learning new things which may be through formal education and non-formal education. One can acquire knowledge not only from teacher but also from parents, family members, relatives, neighbors, friends and many others. Education is regarded mostly as an important means to achieve success for later life. The people from tea gardens of Assam does not that value to education as for them tea working in tea garden as wage earner is the ultimate goal which does not need higher education. The literacy rate of the community is lowest in Assam particularly among girls and women. The family members of a tea community do not give much interest in their children's education and are uninvolved. However, numerous studies indicated that the effects of academic socialization and the way it is carried out may differ depending upon the families' ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Coll and Marks, 2009; Hill and Taylor, 2004; Pomerantz et al., 2014;

Yamamoto and Holloway, 2010).

Considering the above scenario of parent's involvement in academic activities of children, the present study was undertaken. The involvement of parents of tea communities was assessed in four different aspects viz. involvement of parents in school related academic activities, involvement of parents in home based academic activities, academic expectation and aspiration of parents and intergenerational influence on academic socialization of children. Involvement of parents in their children's school related academic activities included contact with teachers, monitoring the attendance of children in school, monitoring their activities in school, checking their academic progress etc. Parental involvement in home based academic activities included verbal encouragement and interaction of parents for academic activities of children, monitoring home works and school works, providing academic guidance, arranging tuitions and providing financial support for academic purpose etc. Academic aspiration and expectation of parents included conversation on importance of education, future academic plans, decision making and positive feelings towards education of parents. It means influence of parents, grandparents, siblings, peers and community in shaping behaviour and attitude of children regarding education. The present study was carried out with the following objectives i.e, to find out parental involvement in academic activities of children in tea communities of Assam and to find out the parental involvement in academic activities of children during primary and secondary school periods. The null hypothesis of the study was that there is no difference in the parental involvement in academic activities of children during primary and secondary school periods of children.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The present study is quantitative in nature and descriptive survey method was applied to accomplish the objective of the study. For conducting the study multi-stage clustered sampling design was adopted. This design was adopted since the population under study naturally exist in groups or clusters (tea gardens). It was conducted in Jorhat district of Assam during the calendar year 2018. For the study total four tea gardens were selected through simple random sampling method from a total of 88 tea gardens in Jorhat district. Samples were selected from the tea gardens on the basis of stratified random sampling. The sample consisted of 100 parents who had children of either lower primary or secondary school standards. From the total 100 samples, 50 respondent having children of lower primary class and 50 respondents having children of secondary standard were selected randomly. Out of 50 respondents, 25 parents having girl child and 25 parents having boy child studying in lower primary class were selected randomly and also out of the other 50 respondents, 25 parents having girl child and 25 parents having boy child studying in secondary standard were selected randomly. An interview schedule was used in the study to

collect information. The interview schedule consisted of two parts – first part consisted of background information of the respondents and second part consisted of items constructed to assess parent’s involvement in academic activities of children and scores were given against the responses. The second part of the schedule consisted of total 28 statements on four areas of parent’s involvement namely- school based activities, home based activities, expectation and aspiration and intergenerational influence. The statements were rated on 4 point Likert scale of “Always”, “Sometimes”, “Occasional” and “Never” and the scores were given against the responses in the pattern 3, 2, 1 and 0 for “Always”, “sometimes”, “Occasional” and “Never” respectively. Prior to the research study on the final sample, a pilot study was conducted to pre-test the administering tool. Pretesting was done on 30 non samples. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test was done on 30 non sample respondents. The value of the result was 0.711, which indicates that the schedule was acceptable.

Prior to selection of the tea garden, the researcher approached the Assistant manager of Tea Board of Jorhat district to collect necessary information of tea garden. After receiving permission from the authorities of the tea gardens to conduct research study, researcher approached the welfare officer to collect the list of parents who had children either of lower primary class or secondary class. From the list required numbers of samples were selected. The researcher established rapport and told them the purpose of visiting them and requested them for cooperation. While collecting information from the respondents informal talks were also done whenever possible to get additional information. The researcher interviewed the selected respondents and maximum care was taken so that no statement was left unanswered. After collection of data, raw data was categorized, coded, tabulated for statistical computation. The collected data were analysed with the help of percentage and frequency, “t” test, mean and standard deviation using SPSS 20.0 version and the results were interpreted accordingly.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Data were examined to assess demographic characteristics of the respondents and parental involvement in academic activities of children and the response received has been presented in the form of table

Background information of the respondents (Table 1) revealed that majority of the respondents (43%) were in the age group of 35-45 years. It may be due to the reason that in tea community, since people get married early so most of them have children by this period. Majority of respondents in this age group have children studying in both lower primary and secondary class level. The table1 showed that majority of the respondents (52%) were female. It may be because of the age differences in marriage, usually age of husband is more than wife. Marriage of girls at an early age occurs mostly to those who are poor, have low education level, and live in rural areas

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency (%)
Age	25-35 years	21 (21)
	35-45 years	43 (43)
	45 years and above	36 (36)
Sex	Male	48 (48)
	Female	52 (52)
Qualification	Illiterate	0 (0)
	Primary school	32 (32)
	H.S.L.C	60 (60)
	H.S & above	8 (8)
Occupation	Permanent worker	64 (64)
	Temporary/ others	36 (36)
Preference for giving education to children	Girls	13 (13)
	Boys	30 (30)
	Both	57 (57)
Type of family	Nuclear	68 (68)
	Joint/ Extended	32 (32)

(Loaiza and Wong, 2012).

Regarding educational qualification of respondents, it was found that majority of respondents (60%) had attended H.S.L.C and none of them were illiterate. This may be because after the implementation of Right to Education Act free and compulsory education is provided to children between the ages of 6 to 14 years so none of them are illiterate, they go to schools and try to complete H.S.L.C. but do not pursue higher studies.

Majority of the respondents (64%) were permanent workers because working in tea garden is their main source of livelihood and moreover in tea gardens there is a tradition of handing over of job (permanent) by the parents after retirement to their children. Tea garden people finds limited opportunity to get a job outside the gardens as higher education status among them is very poor.

Regarding preference given to education of children, majority of the respondents (57%) prefer both girls and boys. It may be due to the reason that tea community people do not show any gender bias because for both boys and girls free and compulsory education is provided by the government. Further in rare cases only they go for higher studies, hence they don’t give any kind of preference to boys or girls.

Majority of the respondents (68%) were found to have nuclear family. It may be because even though they had large family with many siblings but as they work in tea garden as permanent worker, each of them gets quarter of their own.

The results of (Table 2) in the dimension “Involvement in school based activities” shows that majority (45%) of the respondents had medium level of involvement which

Table 2: Parental involvement in academic activities of children

Dimensions of academic socialization	N=100						Mean	S.D
	High		Medium		Low			
	F	P	f	P	f	P		
Involvement in school based activities	39	39	45	45	16	16	12.66	1.960
Involvement in home based academic activities	19	19	73	73	8	8	10.14	3.414
Academic expectation and aspiration of parents	39	39	27	27	34	34	7.95	1.898
Intergenerational influences on academic socialization of children	31	31	54	54	23	23	16.66	1.505

f= frequency p= percentage

was followed by high level (39%) and low level (16%) respectively. Majority of the parents had medium and high involvement in school based activities it may be due to the reason that they had less time to participate in school based activities due to their work schedule but as they may know the importance of education and understands that their participation plays an important role in early years of child’s schooling so they try to involve whenever it is possible for them. Parent’s involvement in school-based activities is most likely to have a positive influence in the early years of schooling when children need additional support to adjust in a new learning environment and to develop a sense of belonging (Henderson and Mapp, 2002) and as children get older, parental involvement in school-based activities may affect children’s outcomes indirectly through improved attendance and behaviour (Kendal et al., 2008). Parental school involvement activities such as communication with the school, help in class activities and participation in school activities were significantly associated with lower rates of high school dropout, greater likelihood of completing high school and achieving high grade and also involvement in elementary school provides long lasting benefits to children throughout high school (Barnard 2004). According to Deutcher and Ibe (2004) students whose parents regularly kept contact with teacher were more motivated to search extra information about a topic not only in school but also outside of the school.

It was found that majority of the respondents (73%) had medium level of involvement while (19%) involved highly and only (8%) rarely in their children’s home based academic activities. It may be due to illiteracy that they may not be able to guide children in academics properly and due to poor socio economic condition they were unable all the required educational materials but try to provide the basic requirements. According to Jeynes (2002) there is a positive correlation between socio-economic status of a family and the academic achievements of a student. Chukwudi (2013) also observed that parents with high educational background tend to motivate their children to have interest in their academic work which enhances the performance of students in school. Parent’s who provides their children adequate facilities at

home perform better than those whose parents do not. The impact of assistance with school work by some parents and providing good quality of home environment as well as positive attitudes from the parents had significant correlation with high level of scholastic achievements (Aromolaran et al., 2015).

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents (39%) had high academic expectation and aspiration for their children while (34%) had low followed by (27%) who had medium level of academic expectation and aspiration. Majority of the respondents had high expectation and aspiration it may be because parents may think that their expectation and aspiration may influence children’s academic progress, places value on learning, and models behaviours appropriate for achievement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). According to Halle et al. (1997) and Syb et al. (2005) those parents who show higher expectation and place a higher value on their child’s educational attainment tend to be more engaged in achievement related activities such as help in reading, sending them to the extracurricular lesson and monitor their educational progress. Students, whose parents showed high educational expectation to their children, discussed with their children about school and future plans and monitored their homework, had a tendency to get a higher grade in English and reading achievement tests (Sanders and Sheldon, 2009). According to Raty et al. (2002) highly educated parents tended to form expectations for their 7-year olds based on the children’s cognitive competence in literacy and other academic subjects as well as their analytic problem solving skills, whereas vocationally trained parents were more likely to form expectations based on their children’s creativity and social skills.

The results in the aspect of “Intergenerational influences on academic socialization of children” depicted that majority of the respondents (54%) provides medium level followed by (31%) providing high level of intergenerational influence while (23%) provide low level of intergenerational influence. Majority of the respondent either provide high level or medium level of intergenerational influence it may be due to the reason that parent’s do not want their children to remain confined within the tea garden and may want them to go for



higher studies and that is why they favours girls education to have better future. Now a day's the attitude of literate and illiterate parents is changing significantly and majority of them favoured female education (Khattak, et al., 2012).

Results of the (Table 3) in the aspect of 'involvement in school based academic activities' indicated that there is no significant difference in involvement of parents in school based academic activities during lower primary and secondary school standard of children. It may be because most of them are engaged in tea gardens work during the school hours of their children. Because of their work schedule they cannot involve in school

related activities such as attending PTA meetings, contact with teachers, discussing about their children's academic progress, volunteering at school etc, even though they know that participation in school activities will enhance their children's academic performance. This is same for the parents of both lower primary and secondary class children because their prime need is to earn livelihood for which both the parents have to go out for work and cannot spare time to involve in children's school related activities. Even families with above average income parents often lack the time and energy to invest fully in their children's preparation for school, and also

Table 3: Comparison of parental involvement in academic activities of children during primary and secondary school periods

Dimensions of academic socialization	Lower primary class n=50		Secondary class n=50		t value	df	p Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Involvement in school based academic activities	12.68	2.084	12.64	1.849	1.02	98	.919 NS
Involvement in home based academic activities	12.70	2.809	7.58	1.513	11.349**	98	.000
Academic expectation and aspiration of parents	8.46	2.082	7.44	1.554	2.776**	98	.007
Intergenerational influences on academic socialization of children	16.84	1.299	16.48	1.681	1.198	98	.234NS

\*\*.: Significant at ( $p=0.01$ ) level; \*: Significant at ( $p=0.05$ ) level NS: Non significant

face a limited array of options for high-quality child care both before their children start school and during the early school years (Sheldon, 2003).

In case of 'involvement of parents in home based academic activities of children' results indicated that respondents having lower primary class children were more involved in home based academic activities (Mean 12.70) than respondents of secondary class children (Mean 7.58). It may be because whenever parents of lower primary class children make contact with school authority or teachers, they try to follow the instruction given at school and assist their children in doing homework and encourage them. During lower primary class the involvement of parents is associated with children's achievement due to visits to school while dropping or picking up children from school and interactions with children's teachers. According to Hafiz et al. (2013) parental involvement has significant effect in better academic performance of children and concluded that parental involvement enhanced the academic achievement of children. Interactions and exposure of parents to school increases parent's knowledge about the curriculum, enhance social capital, and also increase the effectiveness of involvement at home (Comer, 1995; Epstein, 2001; Hill and Taylor, 2004). However, in secondary class level the parent's involvements in home based activities reduce, may be because children become more independent and they don't want their parents to get involved. Moreover, the parents also do not feel themselves

equipped to get involved in academic activities of secondary school children because of their low level of education. According to Eccles and Harold (1996), parental school involvement is thought to decrease as children move to middle and high school because parents may believe that they cannot assist with more challenging high school subjects and because adolescents are becoming autonomous and as children grow older and develop more autonomy, the nature of effective parental engagement strategies changes (Bakker and Denessen 2007). According to Shumow et al. (2004) parental education is positively associated with parent's involvement in high school. Interaction and communication, parenting practices, leisure, openness, and acceptance were the predictive factors of parental involvement and had a positive relationship with students' achievement. Students may perceive their homework activities as less difficult and more enjoyable when parents are involved (Zakaria, 2013). A stimulating home environment consisting of a variety of educational materials and positive reinforcement by parents is integral to intellectual and social development in children of all ages (Sylva et al. 2004; Henderson and Berla 1994; Sammons et al., 2008).

Results revealed that there are differences in the academic expectation and aspiration of parents for lower primary and secondary class children. Every parent expects their child to attend higher education and motivates them according to their expectation. The differences in the expectation and aspiration

of parents for lower primary and secondary class children may be because parents try to facilitate their lower primary class children in education according to their capacity, but due to their limited resources it becomes difficult for parents to provide educational materials when children reach high school. The reason behind it may be that as children's level of education increases children's academic need increases and hence it becomes difficult for parents to meet the demands with their limited resources. Parents with the lowest literacy skills were the least supportive and encouraging in relation to education. As a result, children with such parents were more likely to report dissatisfaction with school and develop low educational expectations (De Coulon et al., 2008). More over the families of tea community have more than one child and their economic condition does not support them to provide higher education to children as they have to run the family also. Low socio-economic status negatively affects academic achievements because low socio-economic status prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home (Eamon, 2005). Therefore, some parents may prefer their children to earn livelihood by involving themselves in tea garden works or by other means rather than pursuing higher studies.

The findings depicted that there is no difference in intergenerational influence on academic socialization of children during lower primary and secondary standards at school. This may be because the socio economic condition of all the tea tribe are same and have same literacy level. The environmental conditions where they brought up their children are almost similar for entire period of life. The usual trend followed by most families of tea gardens is that mostly children try to become economically independent at an early age. Also the age at marriage is low in tea garden communities than others. They try to confine within their community and hence try to follow the existing trend. Studies suggest that neighbourhoods and communities can influence students both directly and indirectly. Factors such as malnutrition lack of motivation in homes, spousal violence, and single parents as well as impoverished home environment affects the development of intellectual ability negatively (Mario, 2006). Location can influence educational outcomes indirectly through the presence or absence of positive role models interacting with children and in the amount of educationally stimulating activities available to take part in (Black 2008). According to Ryan (2000), peer groups are influential regarding changes in students' intrinsic value for school as well as achievement. If peers are high achievers who engage in academically related habits like studying and completing homework in time, then students who interacted with these peers may adopt those habits and perform better academically. On the other hand, adolescents who associate with friends who do not like school are more likely to perform poorly academically leading to academic failure (Veronneau et al., 2008).

#### 4. Conclusion

There is no difference of parent's involvement in school based academic activities and intergenerational influence on academic socialization, but there is difference in parent's involvement in home based academic activities and academic aspiration and expectation of parents. It has been found that parents are more involved with lower primary class children than secondary class children it may be because they find easier to involve with lower primary class children as they listen to them and follow their instruction.

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