

Public Expenditure on School Education and Quality of Educational Provisions in Assam with Special Reference to the Tea Garden Region Schools

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1. Background and Context

The Tea gardens form the significant portion of the Assam geography and elect about 25-30 representatives to the 126 seats state assembly. This sector also employs nearly 10 lakh garden workers across 856 tea gardens¹ in the state who are critical labour force for the tea production. Welfare of these tea garden workers is one of the important aspects of the development programmes in the state. The tea garden workers are mainly categorised as tea garden communities, who form about 20% of the total population of Assam. These tribes officially recognised as Other Backward Classes (OBC) by the state of Assam practice a distinct creole culture as they originated from states like Jharkhand, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal to name a few.

The school education in the state of Assam is largely provided by the Government. About 72% of the schools is under government management². Ensuring the quality education and the compliance of the Right to Education (RTE) norms are important aspects that cannot be ignored while focusing on the planning for school education in the state. Schools under all management are bound to follow the RTE norms. A recent study on the Tea Garden workers by TISS Guwahati (2019)³ found that the schools in the tea gardens were run with a teacher student ratio of 1:75. Similar studies conducted to analyse the condition of education in tea garden area schools have pointed out the issues of irregular attendance, high drop outs due to child labour and care responsibilities, poor classroom processes leading to lack of understanding amongst the students and lack of awareness amongst parents and in general poor compliance of RTE norms (Sarma, 2011; Ghatowar, 2015; Saikia, 2007)

As per the Plantations Labour Act (PLA) 1951, Tea Garden management is supposed to provide basic facilities to all its permanent employees like housing, water, sanitation, creche and schooling although no guideline exists on the quality of these services. The PLA 1951 Act also specifies that the responsibility of providing the lower primary education (class 1 to 5) for the age group of 6-12 years. The changes in the labour codes passed by Government of India in 2020 is likely to have a bearing on the PLA 1951 and subsequently on the rights and entitlements of the labourers in tea gardens including the social security benefits, and therefore it can also have a bearing on the schools run

¹https://www.business-standard.com/article/elections/as-assam-goes-to-polls-spotlight-on-10-lakh-tea-garden-workers-121031400263_1.html

² <https://dashboard.udiseplus.gov.in/#/reportDashboard/state> - 2019-20

³https://tiss.edu/uploads/files/TISS_Study_2019_Decent_Work_for_Tea_Plantation_Workers_in_Assam_Web.pdf

by the tea garden gardens⁴. Once the states notify the labour codes, the tea gardens have an obligation to provide for housing, medical, education and toilet facilities to tea garden workers apart from wages. Tea gardens associations are requesting the government to handle the entirety of the welfare of the tea garden workers wherein they could contribute some share and thereby absolving themselves from the bigger financial responsibilities.

In this context, where the new labour codes have been notified and have become applicable to the tea gardens in the state, a discussion on the school education also becomes imperative for the state in order to improve the quality of education in the state. The state ranked 10 amongst 20 large states in India on the school education quality index computed by the Niti Aayog for the year 2021⁵.

While many studies have looked into the conditions of the tea workers including their working conditions, remunerations, deductions in pay for workers which are written and unwritten and the adequacy of housing and sanitation facilities, the studies looking into the budget for education of the state Government in tea garden area as compared to the other areas are few and far in between. With the emerging scenario of implementing the new labour codes, it becomes essential to understand this for the development of programmes for school education in tea gardens.

This study which is a collaborative study between PBET and CBPS, looks into the public expenditure on school education including its share on the tea gardens area along with a comparison of basic educational parameters like infrastructural facilities, provision of entitlements like Mid-Day Meals (MDM), teacher availability and qualifications in both tea garden and non-tea garden schools to understand the kinds of educational provisioning through budgets and delivery of quality education in tea and non-tea garden area schools. For the purposes of this study, we have limited the definition of quality education to compliance, access and use of basic educational provisions as guaranteed by the RTE, 2009 and have not gone into the aspects of learning achievement and classroom processes. Having said that, one must note that we have gone beyond the mere compliance of RTE provisions by assessing the access, use and experience of the provisions rather than just seeing the normative compliance. For example, we have not just assessed the presence of separate toilets for girls as made normative by RTE in every school, but also seen the access to these toilets for girls and assessed the usability of them. Since tea garden areas were the special focus areas in the

⁴ <https://www.oxfamindia.org/featuredstories/labour-codes-training-assam-tea-garden-workers>
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/govt-to-repeal-plantation-labour-act-tea-industry-concerned/articleshow/73586167.cms>

⁵ <http://social.niti.gov.in/edu-new-ranking>

study, we defined the tea garden area schools, as schools that were present within the tea estate region. In order to control for diffusion, it was ensured that non-tea-garden area schools were far away from the tea garden schools.

2. Methods Used and Sample

First of all, to understand the public expenditure on education in Assam, especially in the tea garden areas, the budgets of different departments with some provisioning for the school education across different ‘demand for grants’ were used to arrive at the total expenditure on school education during the period of 2015-16 to 2021-22. The education expenditure was compared with the growth of the total expenditure of the state as well as with the social services expenditure. The expenditure on school education was also marked by types of school to understand the share of expenditure on schools by management.

Further, in order to understand the quality parameters and school-level budgets and expenditures, we undertook a survey of forty-six schools across five districts – Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur and Tinsukia (see table 1).

Table 1: Sample description

District	Block	Number of Schools
Dibrugarh	Khuwang	1
	Tinkhang	1
	Panitola	1
Jorhat	Titabor	1
	Baghchung	9
	Central Jorhat	1
	Jorhat	3
	Titabor	3
Lakhimpur	Bhipuria	1
	Lakhimpur	8
	Karunabati	1
	Nowboicha	2
Sonitpur	Dhekiajuli	2
Tinsukia	Hapjan	6
	Kakopathar	3
	Tinsukia Urban	4
5 districts	16 Blocks	46 Schools

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

A purposive sampling was done by PBET in consultation with the CBPS team in order to get a good representation of schools in both tea garden and non-tea garden regions spread over 16 blocks in the above-mentioned districts. About 59% (27 schools) of the total schools belonged to tea garden areas and rest 41% (19 schools) to non-tea garden areas. As seen in table 2, while tea garden schools were selected from all 5 districts,

non-tea garden area schools were restricted to the districts of Jorhat, Lakhimpur and Tinsukia.

Table 2: Sample description by Tea Garden and Non-Tea Garden area schools

District in which school is located	No. of Schools in Tea Garden Area	No. of Schools in Non-Tea Garden Area	Total
Dibrugarh	3		3
Jorhat	10	6	16
Lakhimpur	5	7	12
Sonitpur	2		2
Tinsukia	7	6	13
Total	27	19	46

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

The survey comprised of interviews with teachers, Head Masters (HM), school management members and officials from the education department and children studying in class 5, 7 and 9. While the tools were developed by CBPS, it was sent for review and feedback to PBET. Post which the PBET team translated all the tools to Assamese. We ensured that children below the age of 10 were not interviewed and classes were not disrupted during the process of interviews. Permissions and consent were taken from all participants in the survey process; for children, we took permissions from the teachers and HM apart from explaining the entire survey process and format of the questions to the children themselves. The ease and comfort of all participants was given utmost priority especially for child interviews. The survey team comprised of education promoters and coordinators working with PBET. The survey team underwent a comprehensive training by the CBPS reach team not only on the modalities of the questions to be asked but also on the ethics of conducting the surveys. The other part of the survey was based on observations, infrastructural facilities at the level of the schools and classrooms were observed and noted down on the basis of a simple observational tool developed for this purpose. Following is the detailed list of tools used for the survey. Annexure 1 contains the tools used for all the interviews and observations.

Tool Title	Description
Tool A	Mapping of School Resources and Head Master Interview
<i>Section 1A</i>	<i>School Profile</i>
<i>Section 2A</i>	<i>Teacher and Admin Profile</i>
<i>Section 3A</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>
<i>Section 4A</i>	<i>Child Entitlements</i>
<i>Section 5A</i>	<i>School Infrastructure</i>
<i>Section 6A</i>	<i>Classroom Infrastructure</i>

Tool Title	Description
<i>Section 7A</i>	<i>School Management Committee</i>
<i>Section 8 A</i>	<i>Other observations</i>
Tool B	Questionnaire for Children
<i>Section 1B</i>	<i>Child Profile</i>
<i>Section 2B</i>	<i>Educational Profile</i>
Tool C	Questionnaire for Teachers
<i>Section 1C</i>	<i>Teacher Profile</i>
<i>Section 2C</i>	<i>Teacher's opinions and perspectives</i>
Tool D	Questionnaire for the Management and Education Department Officials
<i>Section 1D</i>	<i>Profile</i>
<i>Section 2D</i>	<i>Opinions and Perspectives</i>

Once the data was entered in MS Excel Format, the team spent time collating and processing data from different districts. This was followed by cleaning of the data which included identifying incorrect entries and formatting the data in a manner which was easy to analyse. While entering the data, we made sure that tea garden communities were not marked as OBC, and the OBC children and teachers who are part of the sample were non tea-garden OBCs.⁶ Post this, the data was analysed and tables were drawn out of the data. The report details the observations and inferences made. Before delving deeper into the quality of educational provisions at the school level, we first talk about the budgetary allocations and distributions for school education in Assam with special reference to tea garden areas.

⁶ This was important because tea garden communities are considered as OBCs for the purposes of reservations in jobs and higher educational institutions.

3. Public Expenditure on School Education

As is true for all Indian states, the state government in Assam is responsible for provisioning of the school education while following the Right to Education (RTE) Act related norms at the elementary education level. A quick perusal of the number of schools indicates that 72% of schools are run by government while about 7% of the schools are government aided schools. Private unaided schools and unrecognised schools account for 8 and 12 percent of schools respectively. Only about 428 schools catering to classes 1-5 are being run by Tea Estate management. School enrolment also follows similar pattern with enrolment in government schools and aided schools accounting for 67% and 6% of total school enrolment respectively. Enrolment in private unaided account for 18% of the total enrolment while enrolment in unrecognised schools and central schools account for five and three percent of total enrolment respectively.

Expenditure on school education is incurred by the Department of Elementary Education, Department of Secondary Education, Department of Plain tribes and backward classes, Department of Agriculture (Forest school) and Department of Sports and Youth welfare with majority of the expenditure incurred by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Table 3: Expenditure on School Education by Major Head of Account

Major Head	2015-16 AE	2016-17 AE	2017-18 AE	2018-19 AE	2019-20 AE	2020-21 RE	2021-22 BE
2202	7773.04	8407.02	8191.24	8420.08	8672.93	11738.09	13942.65
2204	0.00	0.16	0.17	0.19	0.13	0.12	0.25
2225	6.96	13.65	5.51	2.69	40.18	60.49	40.80
2415	2.06	2.64	3.55	3.57	2.67	4.82	4.36
3055	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4202	0.00	0.00	16.44	0.44	81.87	329.01	348.12
4552	1.33	1.78	2.65	2.15	0.00	3.44	0.00
Total	7783.38	8425.24	8219.58	8429.13	8797.78	12135.96	14336.17
as % of TE	19%	15%	13%	12%	11%	10%	13%
as % of SSE	42%	35%	34%	31%	29%	34%	34%
SSE/TE	46%	44%	38%	40%	38%	30%	39%

Source: Assam State Budgets

An analysis of the expenditures on school education across all the departments is indicated in table 3. The expenditures have been growing at an annual average rate of 11% in nominal terms for the period 2015-16 to 2021-22, which is a positive sign. However, the share of the expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure of the state has been declining since 2015-16 from 19% to 11% in 2019-20. The share of the social sector expenditure as a whole, as a proportion of total expenditure of the state, has also seen a decline for the same period from 46% to 38%. The analysis clearly indicates a low priority for social sector including education.

Only about 50% of the expenditures (both revenue and capital) are incurred exclusively on government schools (Table 4). The Grant in Aid to the aided schools in the form of salary and non-salary accounted form 36% of the total expenditure on education. The expenditure through SS (Samagra Shiksha) which caters to both government and other schools such as aided, tea estate management and local body schools with the exception of private unaided schools accounted for 11% while the expenditure on student entitlements (MDM, scholarships, examinations, etc.) which are also meant for similar schools accounted for about 2.5 percent of the total expenditure. Expenditure on management (state and district offices including the regulation of school fee) and regulation accounted for about 1.5 percent of total expenditure. The expenditure that are exclusively for tea garden schools (scholarship and training) accounted for a mere 0.18 percent.

Table 4: Share of School expenditure across different categories (Govt and aided schools)

Exp type	2015-16 AE	2016-17 AE	2017-18 AE	2018-19 AE	2019-20 AE	2020-21 RE	2021-22 BE	Ave	Share (%)
GIA (non-salary to aided schools)	3.88	36.66	37.84	20.20	31.88	54.53	11.33	28.04	0.29
GIA-Salary	2354.23	2490.01	3154.49	3713.39	3869.93	4449.95	4280.55	3473.22	35.69
Govt (revenue)	3806.14	4034.19	4666.43	4282.35	4421.82	5340.18	5861.34	4630.35	47.58
Govt (capital)	5.75	6.44	23.33	2.75	82.12	339.06	352.27	115.96	1.19
SSA	1312.57	1452.73	31.45	137.37	72.49	1372.27	3293.61	1096.07	11.26
Tea Garden Community (exclusive)	0.00	0.00	1.13	1.59	37.77	49.00	30.50	17.14	0.18
Entitlements*	237.38	331.51	222.35	182.48	190.94	282.21	176.20	231.87	2.38
Govt-Mgt	63.44	73.71	82.58	88.99	90.82	248.77	330.37	139.81	1.44
Grand Total	7783.39	8425.24	8219.58	8429.13	8797.78	12135.96	14336.17	9732.46	100.00

Source: Assam State Budgets

Note: *Covering both government and other schools such as aided, tea estate management and local body schools

Expenditure for Elementary education forms significant share at 57% followed by secondary education at 43%. Some heads of expenditure which caters to both the stages of education (and cannot be categorised) forms a miniscule of 0.3 percent (Table 5)

Table 5: Share of School expenditure across Elementary and Secondary Education (Govt and aided schools)

	2015-16 AE	2016-17 AE	2017-18 AE	2018-19 AE	2019-20 AE	2020-21 RE	2021-22 BE	Average	Share (%)
Elementary	4975.52	5274.56	4554.13	4324.67	4441.88	6420.82	8893.14	5554.96	57.08%
Secondary	2797.02	3131.72	3656.86	4094.57	4310.11	5650.77	5398.33	4148.48	42.63%
Multiple	10.84	18.96	8.59	9.88	45.79	64.37	44.71	29.02	0.30%
	7783.39	8425.24	8219.58	8429.13	8797.78	12135.96	14336.17	9732.46	42.92%

Source: Assam State Budgets

The declining proportion of education as well as that of social sector in the state's total state budget is indeed a cause of concern in Assam, a state that is still far from reaching the goals of universal access and high-quality education at both elementary and secondary stages of education.

4. Sample School Profiles

Out of the 27 schools in the tea garden areas, 22% of the schools were under the tea garden management. About 30% of the schools were under aided and the highest representation was of government schools at 48% (including provincialized) in the tea garden areas. Similarly, 19 schools (63%) in the non-tea-garden areas were government schools while aided school comprised 37% of the total sample. (Table 6).

Table 6: Percentage distribution of schools by management

Districts	Tea Garden Areas			Non - Tea Garden Areas	
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized
Dibrugarh	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%
Jorhat	22%	0%	15%	21%	11%
Lakhimpur	7%	7%	4%	21%	16%
Sonitpur	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Tinsukia	11%	7%	7%	21%	11%
Total (% within tea-garden and non-tea-garden areas)	48%	22%	30%	63%	37%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

In terms of class-wise division, a little less than half of the sample schools (41%) were lower primary schools, followed by upper primary schools at 33% of the total sample. Composite schools comprised of only 15% of the total number of schools in the study, while secondary schools were least represented with only 11% of them in the sample. This pattern was congruent with the schools in tea garden area also, where lower primary and upper primary schools composed the bulk of the sample (81%) from tea garden areas. All 6 tea garden management schools were till grade 5.

In the non-tea garden area, lower and upper primary schools were about 63% of the total sample this area (see table 6).

Table 7: Grade wise distribution of schools

Schools	No. of Schools in Tea Garden Area	No. of Schools in Non-Tea Garden Area	Total
No. of Schools with Lower Primary (Class I to V)	13	6	19
No. of Schools with Upper Primary (Class VI to VIII)	9	6	15
No. of Schools with Secondary (Class IX to XII)	2	3	5
No. of Composite Schools	3	4	7
Total	27	19	46

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Almost all schools in the sample were Assamese medium, except for one school in the non-tea garden area which was Hindi medium. All the schools were affiliated to the Assam State Board.

The enrolment numbers from the schools clearly showed that the children belonging to the tea garden communities were in majority in the schools located in the tea garden areas. As expected, almost all tea garden management schools in tea garden area had majority of children from tea garden communities. The non-tea garden area schools had more of a mixed enrolment by caste where 50% children were from tea garden communities and the other 50% children were from OBC and general category, OBC being the dominant enrolled group. About 81% schools in tea garden areas had children only from the tea garden community, while such schools were only 32% in non-tea garden areas.

The high representation of children from tea garden community in the tea garden schools could primarily be because of the ease of commuting and the location of schools. However, a significant concentration of tea garden communities in tea garden area schools establishes the need for these schools to be sensitive towards their specific needs and demands to guarantee quality and inclusive educational experience. It is noteworthy that though the children from tea garden communities were going to all three management schools in tea garden areas, the children from OBC, SC and ST communities seemed to prefer government schools.

The data showed that only 16% schools in non-tea garden areas had enrolment of general and OBC category students. All these schools were Assamese medium schools, which could be a possible reason as to why the relatively privileged general category forms a small proportion of the enrolment in non-tea garden schools.

In addition to caste, the gender profile of enrolment shows that the population of girl students was higher in both kinds of schools irrespective of area; while 62% of the population in non-tea garden schools were girls, more than half of the population (55%) in the tea garden schools were also girls.

Therefore, it is clear that these schools served the most marginalised sections of the Assamese society, especially if we consider intersectionality of caste, gender and region, and therefore warrants a careful review of the kind of quality provisions present there, especially of those that are linked to child related entitlements.

5. Provisions for Quality Education: Teacher and Admin

We collected detailed information of all teachers and administrative staff present at the school, including MDM cooks. While teachers comprised most the staff composition (60%) at the school level, both in tea garden and non-tea garden areas, we found that there were higher proportion of MDM cooks in tea garden areas as compared to non-tea garden areas (26% vs only 18% in non-tea garden areas - see table 8).

The teacher strength was slightly higher in non-tea garden areas and this got reflected even in the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) which was 23:1 there as against the PTRs in the tea garden area schools (33:1). Both of these were close to the RTE norm of 30:1 for primary and 35:1 for upper primary schools. In both tea garden and non-tea garden areas, we found that while the aggregate numbers showed RTE compliance by both government and aided schools, huge variations emerge when we started disaggregating the data by management and at the level of school. For instance, the disaggregated data on PTR at the level of school management showed that the PTR in tea garden management schools were much higher at 57:1 while the other two management schools, i.e. government and aided in tea garden area schools were within the RTE norms in the tea garden areas.

Table 8: Teachers and Admin staff present in schools

Designation of Staff	Tea Garden Area	Non-Tea Garden Area	Total
Head Masters	11%	7%	9%
Teachers	55%	65%	60%
Administrative Staff	5%	4%	4%
MDM Cooks	26%	18%	22%
Others	3%	6%	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

School-wise variations are high in both tea garden and non-tea garden areas. In tea garden area, we had schools with PTR as low as 13:1 at one end while the highest PTR was as high as 104:1 on the other end. This school with the highest PTR was a tea garden managed school. Similarly, in non-tea garden area schools, the lowest PTR was 7:1, while the highest was 82:1. Even if we take a standard RTE norm of 35:1 for PTR, we see that about 59% schools in tea garden area and about 79% schools in non-tea garden area complied by this norm. Majority of the schools that were compliant of the PTR norms of RTE both in tea garden and non-tea garden areas belonged to government and aided schools. This clearly showed that tea garden schools managed

by the tea garden estates had a shortage of teachers and therefore a higher PTR (see table 9). Only two schools out of the six tea garden management schools in the sample had PTR that complied with RTE norms.

Table 9: RTE Compliance for PTR Ratio

RTE Compliance	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Compliant	62%	33%	75%	59%	75%	86%	79%	67%
Non-Compliant	38%	67%	25%	41%	25%	14%	21%	33%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Most of the teachers present in the sample schools were female (57%). The presence of female teachers was higher (by 16 percentage points) in the non-tea garden areas as compared to the tea garden area schools. But in the aided schools, the presence of male teachers was higher irrespective of the area in which the school belonged, i.e. tea garden or non-tea garden (see table 10). Amongst the tea garden schools, the presence of female teachers was equal in tea garden management schools and government schools (53%), while in the non-tea garden area schools, presence of female teachers was highest in government schools (72%).

Table 10: Profile of teachers by gender and management

Gender of Teacher	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Female	53%	53%	35%	48%	72%	32%	64%	57%
Male	47%	47%	65%	52%	28%	68%	36%	43%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

In terms of caste profile most teachers belonged to the OBC group in both tea garden and non-tea garden schools, but in the non-tea garden area schools, almost all teachers (96%) were OBCs. The teachers who identified themselves as tea garden communities formed only 11% of the total strength of teachers, and their proportion was highest in the tea garden management schools (see table 11). The representation of tea garden community teachers in tea garden area schools is a significant factor not only for

representation purposes, but also to address the language issues and cultural differences between the teachers teaching in tea garden areas and the students attending school who are mainly from tea garden communities, that has often been highlighted in literature (Sarma, 2011). Therefore, a larger presence of tea garden community teachers could be seen as a step towards making the school more inclusive and easing the transactional distance between teachers and students.

Table 11: Profile of teachers by caste and management

Caste of the Teacher	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non-Tea Garden Area	
General	6%	0%	0%	3%	1%	0%	1%	2%
Non-Tea Garden OBCs	81%	58%	67%	74%	99%	84%	96%	86%
Tea Garden Communities	13%	42%	21%	19%	1%	16%	4%	11%
Scheduled Tribes	0%	0%	12%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Most of the teachers (70%) in the total sample schools had more than 10 years of experience, although the presence of such teachers was higher in the non-tea garden areas in comparison to tea garden areas (7 percentage points higher). Teachers in both government and aided schools of non-tea garden areas were more experienced (more than 10 years - 73 and 74% respectively) while in the tea-garden area schools it was the teachers in aided schools who were most experienced (88%). It is worth noting that a higher proportion of teachers in tea garden management schools (63%) had more than 10 years of experience than teachers in government schools of tea garden areas (see table 12).

Table 12: Teacher profile by teaching experience

Teaching Experience	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non-Tea Garden Area	
Less than a year	0%	5%	0%	1%	3%	3%	3%	2%
1-2 years	17%	0%	2%	11%	9%	8%	9%	10%
3-5 years	10%	11%	2%	8%	5%	5%	5%	6%
5-10 years	17%	21%	7%	14%	10%	11%	10%	12%
More than 10 years	57%	63%	88%	66%	73%	74%	73%	70%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

More than half of the teachers (63%) had studied up till graduation. The number of graduate teachers was almost the same in the tea garden and non-tea garden areas. Almost 20% of the teachers had only studied up till elementary or senior secondary. In the tea garden management schools, almost 68% of the teachers had either studied only till class 10 or maximum till class 12 which was contradictory of the state RTE norms for eligibility for primary class teaching (see Table 13).

The Assam RTE rules, 2011 clearly state that graduation is a requirement for qualification only for teachers teaching at the upper primary level. In addition, clearing the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) is a mandatory qualification irrespective of the grade that the teacher teaches in. Surprisingly, none of the teachers said that they had passed the TET. The RTE rules also specify that teachers without graduation need to complete a 2-year diploma in elementary education if they have studied only till senior secondary in order to be eligible for teaching primary classes. We found that less than 1% of the teachers mentioned undertaking any diploma of this kind. The teacher qualification numbers while juxtaposed with the state RTE norms show that the tea garden area schools had much poor RTE compliance than the non-tea garden area schools. In fact, a higher proportion of the government school teachers in non-tea garden areas had graduation as their highest qualification as compared to their counterparts in tea garden areas. This shows that not only the RTE compliance was weak in the tea garden management schools but even in government schools located in the tea garden areas did not follow through the norms of teacher qualification.

Table 13: Teacher qualification by school management and area

Highest Qualification	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Class 10 pass	2%	37%	0%	6%	1%	3%	1%	3%
Class 12 pass	18%	32%	16%	19%	14%	18%	15%	17%
BA/B. Sc/B.Ed./B.Com.	63%	32%	81%	64%	59%	71%	61%	63%
MA/M.Sc./M.Ed./M.Com.	17%	0%	0%	10%	27%	8%	23%	17%
Diploma	0%	0%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

It is interesting to note that even though many teachers did not comply by the teacher qualification norm of RTE, their positions were 'permanent' in schools. There could be several reasons for this. One reason could be that while the state RTE rules came into practice in July 2011, the teachers could have been appointed prior to that and therefore

did not meet the minimum qualification norms of RTE. Another possible reason could be that some of these schools were venture schools that were provincialised and therefore teachers did not meet the RTE norm. The clause 17 (2) of the Assam RTE rules also mentions that it is the responsibility of the school management to ensure that teachers meet the minimum RTE qualification and arrangements need to be adequately made so that the schools have qualified teachers within 5 years from enforcement of the act. However, there have been period relaxations provided to the school managements for this clause. It would be worth seeing if Assam still falls under the purview of relaxed norms for teacher qualifications.

Almost 80% of the teachers were permanent employees. There was not much difference between the percentage of permanent teachers in tea garden areas and non-tea garden areas. But this difference was much higher when we see the number of contract teachers in tea garden areas and compare them with non-tea garden areas. Tea garden area schools had almost 16% teachers working on contractual basis, where the tea garden management schools had about 26% of their total teachers on contract (see table 14). Another issue that was witnessed during our field work was that most of the teachers in tea garden management schools were not given salaries, but daily wages amounting to INR 205 per day. Some of the teachers also pointed out that they were never paid on time by the tea garden management. This also raises questions regarding their 'permanent' nature of employment that most of them self-reported during the survey.

Table 14: Status of employment of teachers by school management and area

Status of Employment	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Contractual	19%	26%	5%	16%	14%	3%	11%	13%
Regular	81%	74%	79%	80%	86%	50%	79%	79%
Unaware	0%	0%	16%	5%	0%	47%	10%	7%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

To conclude, what emerges is that while both tea-garden and non-garden area schools are not fully compliant for the RTE norms for teachers (PTR as well as qualification), the non-compliance is more common in the tea-garden areas as compared to the non-tea-garden areas. Within tea-garden areas, the situation is worse for tea-garden management schools as compared to government and aided schools, although those are also worse than their counterparts in the non-tea-garden areas.

6. Provisions for Quality Education: School Infrastructure

Almost all schools (87%) had a pucca building, but this proportion was higher in the non-tea garden area (4 percentage points more). In fact, all the government school in the non-tea garden region had a pucca building. It was only aided schools (29% in non-tea garden area and 13%) that had semi-pucca buildings there. In the tea garden region schools, about 11% schools had either kutchha or semi-pucca buildings. Here also, most of these schools with non-pucca buildings belonged to aided schools. The government school buildings irrespective of the area (except for 1 school in the tea garden area) and tea garden management schools were pucca and therefore followed the RTE norm.

The data on building maintenance, however, tells a different story. Almost 30% of the school building needed major repair work and only 24% of the schools seemed properly maintained. Despite having a pucca building, only 46% government schools in tea garden area and as low as 17% government schools in non-tea garden areas had a well-maintained building. The condition of school buildings in aided schools seemed to be far worse than other management schools where about 63% of the aided schools in tea garden area and 71% in non-tea garden area were in need of major repair work (see table 15). In addition to this, we could also see that even though all tea garden management schools had a pucca building, about 33% of them were in need of major repair. The issue of maintenance highlights the fact that the RTE norms are taken more for compliance rather than in spirit – presence of pucca building ticks the requirement but does not ensure the presence of an enabling physical environment if the building is not maintained properly.

Table 15: Condition of school building

Condition of school building	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Well maintained and painted	46%	17%	13%	30%	17%	14%	16%	24%
In need of some minor repair work	23%	50%	25%	30%	83%	14%	58%	41%
Not in a good shape, needs major repair work	15%	33%	63%	33%	0%	71%	26%	30%
Others	15%	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Similarly, we also examined the cleanliness of the premises and found that 46% of the schools with moderately clean and hygienic premises. But the segregated data at the level of tea and non-tea garden areas showed that the premises of tea garden region schools were much better in terms of hygiene than the non-tea garden area schools. In fact, more than half of the schools in the tea garden area had clean premises. Here again, it was the premises of the aided schools in both the regions that fared the worse in terms of maintenance of hygiene.

A permanent boundary wall was present only in 26% of the schools. The comparative data by region showed that more schools in non-tea garden regions had a permanent boundary than schools in the tea garden region (32% vs only 22%). There were no boundaries in about 33% schools in the tea garden area schools, with 4 out of the 6 tea garden management schools having no boundary walls. During our field visit we noticed that about 22% schools in the tea garden areas had boundaries made of local materials such as bamboo, wooden logs and hay (see table 16).

Table 16: Presence of boundary walls in schools

Boundary Wall	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Yes – permanent boundary wall	38%	0%	13%	22%	42%	14%	32%	26%
Yes – make shift/temporary boundary wall	23%	33%	13%	22%	8%	14%	11%	17%
No	8%	67%	50%	33%	8%	43%	21%	28%
Wall only on one side	23%	0%	25%	19%	42%	29%	37%	26%
Others	8%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Presence of a playground in the school is an important norm specified by the RTE as it offers space for children not only to engage in play but socialise outside the classroom. We found that more than half the schools (61%) did have a playground. The schools in tea garden areas had slightly better facilities for playground, where 63% schools had playgrounds that were well maintained and were being used by children. About 19% schools in this area did have a playground but it was not in a useable condition as one could see that the grounds were dug up, muddy or were used for cattle grazing (see table 17).

Table 17: Presence of playgrounds in schools

Play Ground	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Yes – in a usable condition	62%	67%	63%	63%	58%	57%	58%	61%
Yes – but not in a usable condition	15%	17%	25%	19%	17%	14%	16%	17%
No	23%	0%	0%	11%	17%	14%	16%	13%
The space is not enough	0%	0%	13%	4%	8%	14%	11%	7%
No response	0%	17%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Ramps are specifically useful to make the school infrastructure more inclusive for students and teachers with special needs. The data showed that less than half of the schools had functional ramps. The functionalities of ramps were assessed in terms of presence of ramps in all floors of the school, in case of multi-storied buildings, and smooth surfaces for ease of use. A higher number of schools in the non-tea garden regions had a ramp, although the difference between tea garden and non-tea garden schools with functional ramps was not much (only 6 percentage points). But the difference again came from the aided schools in both tea and non-tea garden areas, where about 50% aided schools in tea garden areas and 57% aided schools in non-tea garden areas did not have a ramp at all. The comparative numbers showed that the government schools in tea garden areas and in the non-tea garden areas had better provisions for ramps (see table 18)

Table 18: Presence of ramps in schools

Ramp	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non- Tea Garden Area	
Yes – functional ramp	54%	50%	13%	41%	50%	43%	47%	43%
Yes – but not functional	31%	17%	38%	30%	50%	0%	32%	30%
No	15%	33%	50%	30%	0%	57%	21%	26%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

The discourse on inclusive schools has extensively highlighted the need for functional separate toilets for girls, as it goes a long way in ensuring safe private spaces for girls to

use, especially during the time of menstruation and helps in curbing drops out and absence from school for adolescent girls after they start menstruating. Therefore, this is also one of the most critical RTE norms. Here again, we assessed the functionality of the toilets by seeing if girls in the schools were able to use them, if there was a source of water in the toilets, and if they were regularly cleaned or not. We found that even though 85% of the schools had separate toilets for girls, only 37% of them met our functionality parameters, therefore rendering most toilets unusable for the girls. During the course of our field work we found that some of the toilets were locked and girls did not have access to keys, in some toilets proper sanitation and hygiene was not maintained due to lack of cleaning staff and non-availability of water. A higher proportion of schools in the tea garden region had separate toilets for girls (89% vs 79%) but unfortunately, only 41% of them were functional. However, the highest proportion of functional toilets belonged to tea garden management schools (see table 19) where 5 out of the 6 schools had separate functional toilets for girls. To our surprise about 14% of the aided schools in the non-tea garden areas reported having no toilets, for either boys or girls.

Table 19: Presence of separate toilets for girls

Separate toilet for girls	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non-Tea Garden Area	
Yes- functional separate toilets for girls	31%	83%	25%	41%	42%	14%	32%	37%
Yes – but girls' toilet is not functional	62%	0%	63%	48%	58%	29%	47%	48%
No – no separate toilets	8%	17%	13%	11%	0%	29%	11%	11%
No – no toilets in the school for both boys and girls	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	5%	2%
Others	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	14%	5%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Another critical parameter for quality education that we wanted to assess was the presence of libraries in schools. Having a library especially in schools that cater to the most marginalised becomes significant because most of these children do not come from literate home environments and do not have access to additional or supportive reading learning materials. Here again, our observations went beyond the mere presence of a library but we checked for actual use and the presence of age-appropriate

books. The data showed that very few schools had a separate library room with age-appropriate books, and none of the schools in the tea garden region had a separate room for library. However, arrangements were made for children to access additional reading materials through placement of a book shelf either in their classes or the staffroom. About 67% of the schools in the tea garden region had made such arrangements, four of the tea garden management schools also had made alternate arrangements for library. While 17% government schools in the non-tea garden region had a separate library room, only 58%, which was 19 percentage points lower than government schools in tea garden region schools, had provisions for library through bookshelves and other alternate arrangements. The aided schools both in tea garden region and non-tea garden region had the least provision for library with close to 50% of them in tea garden and 71% in non-tea garden areas having no libraries at all (see table 20).

Table 20: Presence of library in school

Library in school	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Government aided / recognized	Total of Non-Tea Garden Area	
Yes – separate library with age-appropriate books	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	11%	4%
Yes – but no separate library room, book shelves in staff room/classroom	77%	67%	50%	67%	58%	29%	47%	59%
Yes – but always locked and non-functional	8%	0%	0%	4%	25%	0%	16%	9%
No	8%	33%	50%	26%	0%	71%	26%	26%
No response	8%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

In terms of availability of clean drinking water within the school premises, we found that close to 74% schools had made some arrangements in this regard. This proportion did not vary between the tea garden and non-tea garden schools. The data again showed that it was the aided schools in non-tea garden region that faltered most in this provision although half of the tea garden management schools also (3 out of 6) did not have any provisions for clean drinking water.

RTE also mandates a separate kitchen for MDM in all schools. We found that all schools had a separate kitchen for MDM, while in 3 schools MDM was not served (all three

aided schools) and only in 1 government school in tea garden area MDM was prepared in the community hall within the school premises.

MDM is an essential provision at the school level as it helps not only in providing additional nutritional supplements for children but the context of marginalisation again becomes relevant here as for most of these children, MDM probably is the only nutritious full meal that they have in a day. There is enough evidence that proves that MDM also helps in retention and regular attendance in schools, so much so, that the days where special meals are served, for example eggs, the attendance is the highest (Menon et. al 2022). Apart from MDM, other provisions in schools like text books, scholarships, uniforms also form critical entitlements that allow for not only additional support for quality education but form essential means without which children from marginalised sections, especially girls cannot continue their education.

What emerges from the analysis of infrastructure including the maintenance and usability is that the situation in the aided schools is almost alarming and calls for immediate action. The government schools appear to have had provisions but much weaker maintenance while the tea-garden management schools fare worse in provisions and but better in maintenance. There does not seem to be any notable difference between tea-garden and non-tea garden areas on these grounds. The next section analyses the various entitlements provided in the schools based on the above-mentioned frame.

7. Provisions for Quality Education: Child Entitlements

The results presented in this section are triangulated through three kinds of methods used in the field. The first is based on provision of entitlements for which the data was collected through HM/teacher interviews. To add to this, child interviews were used to serve two purposes: gaining a deeper insight into the provisions and in understanding the use of these provisions. We further juxtaposed this with the research team observations for assessing the use. In other words, if we had to understand the provisions made for uniforms, we interviewed the HM about it, then asked the children if they had uniforms with them and further observed if all children were wearing uniforms in the schools or not. In total, we have 46 observations and HM/ senior teacher interviews from the schools and 437 child interviews, where 262 children were from tea garden area schools and 175 from non-tea garden area schools.

The data from HM/teacher interviews for uniforms showed that close to 70% of the schools were providing free uniforms to the children. This proportion was similar both the tea garden and non-tea garden schools. All the tea garden management schools supplied free uniforms to children. Here again, the aided schools fared the worst, where almost 75 % aided schools in tea garden areas and 71% aided schools in non-tea garden areas reported not supplying uniforms to the children. The child interviews further revealed that most children did have uniforms (95%) both in tea garden and non-tea garden areas. But close to 18% children in aided schools of tea garden area and 11% children in aided schools of non-tea garden area said that they did not have uniforms. Our observation also showed that while most children (85%) were wearing uniforms, about 29% children in aided schools in non-tea garden areas were not in the uniforms. Interestingly, even though children wore uniforms, we found children from 48% schools were without shoes. This proportion was the same for both tea garden and non-tea garden schools, although no gender difference was observed.

Similar data was collected for text books, which showed that 94% schools provided text books, the numbers were slightly higher in non-tea garden schools by 6 percentage points. Majority of the children reported having access to the full set of textbooks, about 92% children from tea garden area schools and 98% children from non-tea garden area schools said that they had the text books for the current academic year. About 95% children from tea garden management schools also said that they had text books. One needs to note that the survey was conducted at the end of the academic year, therefore

the probability of having text books was higher. Despite this, we noticed that few children in aided schools and government schools of both the areas had some text books but not necessarily the entire set. About 19% HMs from aided schools in tea garden reported that text books were partly supplied to children and the full set of all textbooks for a class was not given.

Coming back to the provision of MDM in schools, about 93% schools reported serving MDM regularly to children. This number was higher by 7 percentage points in tea garden area schools when compared with non-tea garden area schools. About 14% aided schools in non-tea garden area said that they did not serve MDM. When asked about the arrangements made in lieu of MDM during the Covid induced school closures, more than half the schools reported providing dry ration to the children. These numbers were again higher for tea garden area schools in comparison to non-tea garden area schools. Additionally, about equal percentage of schools (around 33%) in both the areas said that they made some arrangements for food to be picked up by parents from the school during the time of school closures (see table 21).

Table 21: Arrangements for MDM during school closure

MDM during school closure	Tea Garden Area				Non - Tea Garden Area			Grand Total
	Govern ment / Provinci alised	Tea garden managem ent	Governmen t aided / recognized	Total of tea Garden Area	Government / Provincialised	Govern ment aided / recogniz ed	Total of Non-Tea Garde n Area	
Cash and food grains	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	11%	4%
Food sent to the houses of children	0%	17%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Food to be picked up from the schools	38%	0%	50%	33%	33%	29%	32%	33%
Dry Ration	62%	83%	38%	59%	50%	43%	47%	54%
No response	0%	0%	13%	4%	0%	29%	11%	7%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

When children were asked about MDM, 62% children from tea garden area schools, and 56% children from non-tea garden area schools said that they got hot meals almost every day at the school. This number was as high as 80% for children studying in tea garden management schools. Close to 20% children from aided schools of tea garden and non-tea garden area said that they rarely or never got MDM, which was a breach of RTE norms.

We also asked the schools about scholarships and found that most of the schools (83%) did not have any provisions for scholarships. Twenty one percent schools in non-tea garden areas said that they did have some scholarship provisions, and these numbers were reported equally from aided and government schools. This is despite the fact that the state has a number of state and union government funded scholarships in operation.

The following matrix provides a clear comparison of the quality of education provisions and adherence of RTE norms at the tea and non-tea area schools.

*Enabling environment Provisions for Quality Education	Tea Garden Area Schools	Non-Tea Garden Area School
PTR < 30 and 35	√	√
Qualified Teachers	√	√
Well maintained Pucca Building	X	X
Boundary wall	X	X
Playground	√	√
Ramps	X	X
Functional separate toilet for girls	X	X
Library	√	√
Clean drinking water	√	√
Uniforms for all children	√	√
Textbooks for all children	√	√
MDM for all children	√	√

Note: *If more than half of the schools in tea garden and non-tea garden area meet the RTE norm in spirit, we have given it a tick.

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

In case of fulfilling the entitlements, the tea garden area schools, including the tea-garden management schools seem to fare better than the non-tea-garden area schools though the difference is not necessarily high. Overall, the schools in two regions do not seem to be very different in terms of the RTE compliance and creating an enabling environment; improvement is needed in both the regions. However, aided schools continue to fare worse than others in both tea-garden and non-tea-garden areas. While entitlements provided at the school level contribute greatly to the experience of education that the child undergoes in her school, it also becomes important to examine the classroom processes, ease of going to school and the children's perspective on the challenges and advantages of being in school to get a picture of the critical elements that form a part of the experience of education in schools. The following section

deconstructs the experience of education by children as per various indicators and factors.

8. The Experience of Education

This section is divided into two portions, the first part deals with what a typical classroom in tea garden area school and non-tea garden looks like, and the second part is based on the perspectives of children and their experience of learning and socialisation in these schools, triangulated with teacher interviews to get deeper insights on both the teaching and the learning processes practiced and experienced by children in these classrooms.

We interviewed 77 teachers in total for this purpose, out of which 46 teachers were from tea garden area schools and 31 from non-tea garden area schools. The number of male and female teachers were equally distributed. We have already described the sample for the child interviews above, the sample for these sections remained the same.

Less than half of the schools (48%) both in tea and non-tea garden areas had separate classrooms for each grade. Almost 26% of the schools, with no variation between areas, had multi-grade classrooms. In non-tea garden area, only the government schools had multi-grade classrooms. The data showed that 3 out of the 6 tea garden management schools has inadequate number of classrooms for all grade children. The observations revealed that the classrooms were well ventilated with blackboards in all classes and enough provision for light, in all the schools. But there was a clear lack of desks and chairs for the students with almost 63% schools not having enough chairs and tables for the students. There was a stark difference seen in the tea garden area schools here, where only 30% schools had enough chairs and tables. Only one of the tea garden management schools had enough chairs and tables for all students.

We observed that TLM was displayed in most of the classrooms in both tea garden and non-tea garden schools, although the presence of TLM was lowest in the tea garden management schools where we could observe the use of TLM in only 3 schools. The teacher interview data showed that charts were the most popular TLM used by teachers everywhere. The second most popular TLM was the use of a globe in non-tea garden schools and use of the mathematical kit in tea garden area schools. It was interesting to note that many teachers especially in the tea garden area schools also said that they used the blackboard as TLM. This not only showed that they used the blackboard to its full potential but also considered creative ways of using the available resources present in the classroom. This was despite the fact that most teachers had received almost no training in the past two years; almost 20% teachers in the tea garden area schools said

that they had never received any kind of training. Out of the 11 teachers interviewed in tea garden management schools, two had never attended any training and five of them had attend a training more than two years back.

As discussed earlier, the language used in classroom process forms a very important element for reducing transactional distance. Transaction distance in simple words is the gap between what is taught and what is understood/internalised by the learners. Use of simple language, especially the language of the home for primary classes goes a long way in reducing transaction distance and making the experience of learning more inclusive. We found that most of the teachers used Assamese as their primary language of communication in their classes, but it was good to see that about 50% teachers (out of which most teachers belonged to aided and tea garden management schools) in tea garden region schools used Sadri in their classrooms even if the medium of instruction in the school was Assamese. In fact, 10 out of the 11 teachers from tea garden management schools mentioned that they used Sadri. This data when juxtaposed with the fact that there were a high population of tea garden community children in the tea garden schools, who spoke Sadri at home hints towards these being more inclusive classrooms as compared to the government schools.

When we asked the children if they could follow what was being taught in their classes, about 70% children said that they could either follow everything or mostly follow what was being taught. This number was slightly higher in the tea garden area schools where 73% children said they could follow what was being taught in class compared to 66% children in non-tea garden area schools who said the same. Although, this number when disaggregated by type of management showed that only 55% children in tea garden management schools could follow what was being taught in class. The main reason for this as expressed by the children was difficulty in the understanding specific subjects. The fact that tea garden management schools had teachers who were not qualified as per RTE norms, and were underpaid with little or no regular training could have contributed to this.

In term of aggregate numbers, close to 30% children expressed similar difficulties, this was higher in non-tea garden area school by 7 percentage points. Almost 15% students (this number was lower in the tea garden area schools) said that they could not follow the language of the teachers in the classrooms. The main reason for this could be that only 20% children from the sample said that they spoke Assamese as home, while Assamese was the medium of instruction in most classrooms. The data further showed that children mainly studied by themselves at home and did not have much support from either tuition classes or other members of the household. Therefore, the teachers

were the primary facilitator for learning and knowledge sharing for these children and despite the efforts of the teachers, transactional distance based on language and other gaps was high for a few students in the school.

We wanted to know if regularity to school, both of the teacher and students was a barrier, and found that more than 90% students said that they were regular to schools and their teachers also came to the school every day. This number was similar for both tea and non-tea garden area schools. If children were absent, it was mainly due to ill-health, but what was slightly alarming was that about 24% girls said that they missed school during their menstrual cycles. This number was as high as 34% in non-tea area schools for girls. There could be many reasons for this, lack of proper toilets and social norm being two of those.

Additionally, during the process of interviewing teachers, we found that many students had dropped out of school due to COVID induced deprivations. The teachers mentioned that while the cases of child marriage for girls had increased, many girls had to also drop out due to increasing burden of care work at home. For boys, it was mainly the need for supporting the household that pushed them into paid labour (Interviews with teachers, dated 8th March 2022)

In order to capture the student's experience of schooling, two direct questions were asked to them. Firstly, what did they like most about their school and secondly, what they disliked the most. An overwhelming majority of students irrespective of the area in which their school was located and irrespective of their genders, said that they liked the opportunity to study. The second most popular answer, again irrespective of the type and location of the school was that the students, was about meeting their friends in schools. Thirdly, the students expressed that they liked the teachers in their schools. For the second question, students mostly said that there was nothing as such to dislike about their schools, but when further probed, many pointed out that there was lack of adequate infrastructure, this being the top most answer especially in the non-tea garden area schools. The second top answer in non-tea garden area schools was also that classes were not taken regularly, but the percentage of students who said that was relatively small (17%).

When the same question was asked to the teachers about the challenges they faced in the school, a high percentage of teachers from both kinds of schools said that irregular attendance of students was an issue. However, our data did not capture this and one reason could possibly be the self-reporting by students. Almost equally high percentages of teachers from the tea garden region school said that parental illiteracy was a major issue that they had to deal with. The teachers from non-tea garden area

school also pointed this as an issue, but not in equally high percentages. This could add to the challenges of the teacher, as discussed earlier. This also highlighted a critical point that needs reiteration: recognising that teachers teaching children from marginalised backgrounds face greater challenges and therefore the need for targeted capacity building of teachers in this regard becomes indispensable. This becomes especially important, as the children from these schools did belong to households with poor socio-economic conditions and therefore, the provision of quality education at the school formed a significant part of opportunities that they must have to enhance their freedoms and capabilities.

The school management and the government/education department become key actors in this process of providing adequate quality education provisions and teacher training. The next section deals with their perspectives on the challenges faced by these schools and their vision for the schools.

9. Perspective of School Management and Education Officials and the role of SMCs

We interviewed three tea estate management officials, two block education officers from Jorhat and Lakhimpur, one district programme officer from Tinsukia, one school sub-inspector from Sonitpur and two welfare officials from Tinsukia and Lakhimpur each. Almost all the officials and management personnel said that the lack of awareness regarding education in the community was the top issue faced by the schools. Three of them also pointed out specifically that the parents were not interested in sending their children to schools. There was no difference seen in the responses of the management personnel or education officials. When asked as to what were the steps taken by them to address these issues, organising the community awareness programmes and working with SMCs were the most common answers.

We found that SMCs were constituted in all the sample schools, where 47% of the members were female and 53% of the members were male. This did not meet the RTE norm of more than 50% representation of female members in SMC. The disaggregated data at the school level showed that 41% of the schools (19 schools) did not meet this norm.⁷ About 70 % of the members were parents, which was as per RTE norms. Some of the SMCs in the tea garden area schools also had representation from village heads, panchayat members, ASHA, ANM and Anganwadi workers. About 55% of the SMC members in tea garden area schools were from the tea garden community. This was congruent for tea garden management schools also, where more than half of the SMCs in tea garden management schools were tea garden communities. This showed that the SMCs in the tea garden area schools were relatively more representative.

Although we could not get much information on the frequency of SMC meetings, we did find that when meetings were held, the top discussion point for non-tea garden area schools was the lack of basic infrastructure at the schools. This was the second most discussed topic in SMC meetings held in tea garden area schools. When we look at this with the perspectives gained from the previous sections on quality education provisions, we find resonance with the critical issues, which was mainly infrastructure (as highlighted in the report) with the SMC meeting discussions. This points to the fact that the SMCs were aware of the issues that ailed their schools. However, the issue of bad maintenance of available infrastructure or cleanliness, a major issue observed during the fieldwork, did not appear to be discussed as often.

⁷ We could not get the SMC composition data from one of the schools.

Teacher shortages was the second most popular agenda point in SMC meetings, some of the discussion with school management and education officials also hinted towards lack of teachers at the schools, which is further corroborated with our data on PTR at the school level. However, the issue of language or incomprehensibility of the teaching by students, did not seem to be an issue that the SMCs ever discussed.

This analysis provides two important pointers. One, that the government officials and other school managers rarely self-introspect and largely indulge only in responsabilising others; this is obvious from the fact that they cite parental illiteracy and lack of interest as the only challenges while not even mentioning the issues of inadequately trained teachers or badly maintained infrastructure. Two, the SMCs also seem to be concerned about what the school can ask for and get from the government rather than discussing the functioning of the school and finding solutions for locally relevant problems. Nevertheless, it is true that the provision of the entitlements at the school level also depends on what they receive, including the grants, by the government. We examine that next.

10. Grants at the School Level

We closely assessed the grants provided to these schools to look at two things, firstly, to see the difference between the grants in terms of tea garden and non-tea garden area schools and secondly, to see if the difference in RTE compliance and related provision of quality education through the above discussed entitlements could be explained through grants at the disposal of the schools. The following section elaborates these results.

The number of grants in Government/Provincialized schools were more than the grants for recognised/aided schools while the tea garden management schools did not get any grants (Table 22). Therefore, the comparison of grants is only between government/provincialised schools and aided/recognised schools. Infrastructure grants were obtained by all of the 25 government/provincialized schools while only one of the 15 schools were provided with the infrastructure grant in aided schools. Of the 25 government/ provincialized schools, grant for sports material and eco clubs were received by 21 and 17 schools respectively while 5 schools and 3 schools got grants for science and maths teaching kit and uniform respectively. Grants for Science and Maths Teaching Kit, Uniforms, Kitchen Garden, TLM, self-defence activities, SMC, Swachh Bharat, tree plantation were available for government/provincialised schools. Grant for infrastructure, TLM and funds from panchayat were received by one aided school each respectively. The average grant amount was around Rs. 27000 in government/ provincialized schools while it was Rs. 42000 in aided/recognised schools (Table 23). However, it is only 3 schools that have got one grant each with one aided school getting panchayat fund of Rs. 120000.

Table 22: Types and number of grants in schools

Type of Grant	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Grand Total
Number of schools	25	6	15	46
Eco and Youth Club	17			17
Fee Waiver	1			1
Infrastructure Development	25		1	26
Kitchen Garden	2			2
Panchayat fund			1	1
Salashishi	1			1
Science and Maths Teaching Kit	5			5
Self-Defence	1			1
SMC	1			1
Sports Material	21			21

Type of Grant	Government / Provincialised	Tea garden management	Government aided / recognized	Grand Total
Stationery purchase	1			1
Swachh Bharat Abhiyan	1			1
TLM material	1		1	2
Tree Plantation	1			1
Uniform	3			3
Annual Grant	1			1

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

Table 23: Average grant amount in Government and Aided schools

Average Grant Amount	Government / Provincialised (INR)	Government aided / recognized (INR)	Grand Total (INR)
Eco and Youth Club	11912		11912
Fee Waiver	180000		180000
Infrastructure Development	49019	5000	47326
Kitchen Garden	5000		5000
Panchayat fund		120000	120000
Salashishi	450		450
Science and Maths Teaching Kit	10000		10000
Self-Defence	1000		1000
SMC	200		200
Sports Material	12857		12857
Stationery purchase	5000		5000
Swachh Bharat Abhiyan	5000		5000
TLM material	500	2500	1500
Tree Plantation	5000		5000
Uniform	66300		66300
Annual Grant	75000		75000
Grand Total	27183	42500	27724

Source: Survey conducted by CBPS and PBET in March 2022

The tea garden management schools which are deprived of the grants (mainly grants for infrastructure, sports material and eco club) has potential of adversely impacting students on their learning and cocurricular activities.

11. Scholarships Available to Students

There are multiple scholarship schemes in Assam across different departments for which people from the tea garden communities are eligible. We had detailed interactions with department representatives from Directorate of Secondary Education, Department of Elementary Education, Welfare of Tea Tribes Department, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment etc. Based on these discussions, some of the schemes that are currently in implementation at state and national level are discussed below. There are two major schemes for the tea and ex-tea garden communities in Assam focussing on the education of children, i.e., the pre-metric scholarships, post-metric scholarships (Simon Singh Horo Scholarship). Some of the other schemes which are not specifically focussed on tea-garden communities but for students belonging to various other communities also include the tea-garden community students, provided they are eligible as per scheme rules and the relevant documentation is submitted for the scheme. Currently, the tea garden and ex-tea garden communities are considered under the OBCs. A brief analysis of each scheme is provided below also discussing the challenges in accessing the schemes, especially for children belonging to tea-garden communities.

Pre-Matric Scholarships for students from tea-garden community:

Under this scheme, pre-matric scholarships are provided to students of class 9th and 10th from the tea garden communities. The amount of scholarship is Rs. 3000 per annum. These are provided to students belonging to tea garden communities (around 120 castes classified as such; 96 major castes and 10-15 sub-castes). The scheme is implemented by the Welfare of Tea Tribes Department (WTTD) in the state and is funded completely by the state. While applications complete with all documentation typically get approved, furnishing of all documents is a challenge, especially for tea garden workers located in remote plantations. Students find it most difficult to furnish the caste certificate and bank account details. Procurement of caste certificates needs incurring of expenses in form of travel charges, fees and loss of wages. Similarly, parents find it difficult to open bank accounts for their children, especially when PAN cards are required for the purpose. Because of these reasons, applications of many students get rejected at this stage.

Simon Sing Horo Special Scholarship (Post Matric Scholarship):

Simon Singh Horo is a scholarship scheme launched by the Tea Tribal Welfare Department for students from Assam belonging to tea garden community. Under this a total of Rs.10,000/- per student is provided to students belonging to tea garden community of Assam who have passed HSLC/HSSLC under the Equivalent Education Council recognized by Assam (Seba)/Assam Higher Secondary Education Council (AHSEC) or Government of Assam. The issues under this scheme are similar to the ones that occur for provision of pre-metric scholarships.

Pre-Matric Scholarships for SC / ST/ OBC and minority students:

These are centrally sponsored schemes which are provided to students from class 6 to 10. The scholarship amounts vary depending on the class the students are in, their gender and the category of scholarship for which they are eligible.

The scholarship amounts reported⁸ in Assam were Rs. 1500 per annum for OBC students who are day scholars and Rs. 5000 per annum for OBC students who are hostellers and these are provided for students from class 1 to 10. For ST students, from class 1 to 8, the amount is Rs. 1200 per annum and for students of class 9th and 10th, the amount is Rs. 3000 per annum for day scholars and Rs. 6250 per annum for hostellers. The scholarships are provided through direct benefit transfer to students or their parents accounts. Application process has also been made online where students apply through scholarship portals. Documents required for the application are income certificate (certifying that parent's income is below Rs 250000 per annum), caste certificate, Aadhar card and bank account details. Students and their parents have to apply through the national scholarship portal by themselves. Schools are not entrusted with the responsibility of facilitating such applications and the few teachers that we interacted with in Assam mentioned that they are not aware of such scholarship schemes.

Pre-Matric Scholarship for differently abled students:

Pre-matric scholarships are provided to differently abled students of all grades in Assam. The amount of scholarship is Rs. 200 per month. These are provided to students who are differently abled (more than 40% disability as certified by qualified medical practitioners). Around March – April, advertisements are issued in various state / national newspaper inviting students to submit their applications. Students collect the form from Sub-Divisional Welfare Offices and submit it at the same place. The sub-divisional welfare offices scrutinize the applications and send it onward to the

⁸ In consultation with representatives from Welfare of Plain Tribes and Backward Classes department

department at the state level. Further scrutiny takes place at the state office (scrutiny involves checking for fishy applications, genuinely of school, age as verified from photograph etc). Once the students are enrolled, the details are sent to treasury for disbursement to their accounts. So, unlike the scholarship for students from the tea garden community, the application process here is manual while disbursement process is online for both cases.

National Means cum Merit Scholarship:

This is a centrally funded scheme and is in effect from the year 2008 onwards. Under this scheme, students of class 8th appear in an examination conducted specifically for the purpose of award of scholarship and if selected, are awarded scholarships of Rs.12,000 per annum for 4 years (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades). The objective of the scheme is to award scholarships to meritorious students of economically weaker sections to arrest their drop out at class VIII and encourage them to continue the study at secondary stage. For Assam, the number is 2411 at present. Within this overall number, there are proportion limits for each of these categories (7.5% for SC/ST, 15% for OBC and 4% for physically disabled) and the state needs to adhere to this prescribed norm. Once the students are selected post both the examinations, the scholarship amount is transferred to their accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer. The department of Secondary Education is responsible for implementation of this scheme.

Scholarship Scheme for Girl Students belonging to Minority Community:

The scholarship scheme for girl students belonging to minority communities is a state government funded scheme and was launched in the year 2018 -19. Under this scheme, girl students studying in class 10th and belonging to minority community are provided with scholarship of Rs.2000 per annum. The definition of minority community includes Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Parsi communities. The department of Higher Education is responsible for implementation of the scheme in the state while the allocation of budget is done under Social Welfare department. However, there is a limit of maximum 2 students per family who are eligible for the scholarship. For the year 2021-22, 28,000 applications were received for the scheme out of which 22,184 applications were approved (79%). The rejections are mostly because of lack of sufficient documentation.

Some of the major concerns that hamper the process of availing the above scholarships have been listed below:

1. *Exclusion Errors deserve attention*

Most of the scholarships are now being disbursed through direct benefit transfer. While this ensures reduction of pilferage to some extent, this also gives rise to the possibility of exclusion of certain categories of students. The need for documentation required (bank account details, caste certificate, Aadhaar card, etc.) makes the process difficult to reach for migrant and itinerant populations. The efforts required to fulfil all the documentation required also excludes people such as daily wage labourers because of the cost required to ensure fulfilment of such conditions. This is specifically relevant for tea garden communities as well. Feedback from our field visits also suggested presence of rent-seeking practices for the issuance of certificates, especially in case of caste certificates, which acts as a deterrent.

2. *Duplication of administrative efforts*

Similar schemes are being implemented across multiple departments and this results in duplication of efforts and difficulties in coordination.

3. *Lack of support and facilitation in the application process*

There is absence of support for individual online applications where students are not necessarily fully aware of all the requirements, and also have limited or no access to internet.

Recommendations:

1. One should follow models that enable greater support and facilitation in the application process, and school can play a greater role in this. The Rajasthan model for pre-metric scholarship can serve as a good example for this, where significant benefits have been observed arising out of streamlining the process of application and consolidation of student information at school level. The applications for scholarship schemes are made at the school level through the single portal of Shala Darpan in Rajasthan.
2. There is a need to reduce excessive documentation as multiple documents are being collected for many scholarship schemes even without the need for doing so. For instance, in Assam, the eligibility in Chief Ministers Special Scholarship Scheme in Assam is not linked to caste and yet students are required to submit the caste certificate.

12. Conclusion

The sample schools cater to most marginalised sections. This is especially true for the tea garden area schools where population of tea garden communities is higher but their presence is significant in non-tea-garden areas as well. The quality of education provisioning and school grants become critical in these schools. While not much difference between the tea garden schools versus the non-tea garden schools were observed in terms of provisioning, certain patterns worth noting emerged. These are:

1. Teachers: While both tea-garden and non-garden area schools are not fully compliant for the RTE norms for teachers (PTR as well as qualification), the non-compliance is more common in the tea-garden areas as compared to the non-tea-garden areas. Within tea-garden areas, the situation is worse for tea-garden management schools as compared to government and aided schools, although those are also worse than their counterparts in the non-tea-garden areas.
2. Infrastructure: The analysis of infrastructure including the maintenance and usability shows that the situation in the aided schools is almost alarming and calls for immediate action. The government schools appear to have had provisions but much weaker maintenance while the tea-garden management schools fare worse in provisions and but better in maintenance. There does not seem to be any notable difference between tea-garden and non-tea garden areas on these grounds.
3. Entitlements: In case of fulfilling the entitlements, the tea garden area schools, including the tea-garden management schools seem to fare better than the non-tea-garden area schools though the difference is not necessarily high. Overall, the schools in two regions do not seem to be very different in terms of the RTE compliance and creating an enabling environment; improvement is needed in both the regions. However, aided schools continue to fare worse than others in both tea-garden and non-tea-garden areas.
4. School management: The government officials and other school managers rarely self-introspect and largely indulge only in responsabilising others (parents and community) while the SMCs focus on what they can get from the government rather than discussing the functioning of the school and finding solutions for locally relevant problems.
5. School grants: There is not much difference between the grants received by the government and aided schools while the tea management schools do not receive any grants from the government except for support in Midday meals and text

books. This hampers their capacity to invest in enabling environment. The infrastructure grant should be flexible to allow the school management committee to engage with the range of requirement (with a ceiling).

This converts itself into the following main features for the three kinds of schools that we studied:

1. Government schools: These schools have pucca buildings although the number of classrooms is at times inadequate. The maintenance and hygiene is poor. The usability of facilities such as toilets despite presence is also poor. Although these schools also do not fully comply with the RTE norms when it comes to PTR and teacher qualification, they are better placed than the-tea-garden management schools. The non-compliance is higher for the government schools in tea-garden areas as compared to non-tea-garden areas. Although the student entitlements are largely available, the functioning of the school leaves much to be desired. The use of local language is almost absent.
2. Aided schools: These schools, though not fully compliant, are better than government schools in being compliant to the PTR and teacher qualification norms of the RTE. However, they are much worse in term of infrastructure and its maintenance not only compared to government but also compared to tea-garden management schools. Even though they receive almost all the grants accessible to the government schools, they fare much worse in providing the key entitlements such as midday meal, uniforms and textbooks to students.
3. Tea-garden management schools: These schools are the worst in terms of fulfilling the PTR and teacher-qualification related norms of the RTE. They, however, fare better than others when it comes to the maintenance and usability of the infrastructure even though they do not always have the desired infrastructure facilities. These schools also do not receive any grants from the government other than receiving support for the midday meals and textbooks. They report highest use of the local language and better provisioning of the midday meal.

Two recent developments need to be reported here. One, the Government of Assam has recently announced that all tea-garden management schools (400+) in the state would be 'provincialised'.⁹ Two, the state government has also started the process of merging

⁹ <https://www.time8.in/assam-budget-2022-over-400-schools-in-tea-garden-areas-to-be-brought-under-state-govt/>
<https://www.sentinelassam.com/north-east-india-news/assam-news/assam-govt-to-take-over-400-schools-in-tea-garden-areas-under-its-ambit-583069>

the elementary education and secondary education departments.¹⁰ The two separate directorates for elementary and secondary education are to be merged to form directorate of school education¹¹, which appears to be a good move to consolidate the provisioning of school education in the state. Rationalising and re-planning the schools to provide the entire elementary education of eight years and working out a pathway for continuing the secondary education together may become more prudent for managing and better provisioning of education.

However, the findings of this study point towards several issues from the perspective of providing an enabling environment for promoting quality education while fulfilling the RTE norms that need to be addressed while going forward with these measures:

1. Teachers: The state government now not only has the responsibility of making all schools, including the recently provincialised tea-garden-management schools, RTE compliant in terms of both PTR and teacher-qualification. This translates itself into commitment for a higher recurrent expenditure on education, which means the share of expenditure in the total budget must go up in coming years. This becomes especially critical in the context where the share of the expenditure as a proportion of total expenditure of the state has been declining since 2015-16 from 19% to 11% in 2019-20. The state can also access innovative resources available for the purpose.¹²
2. Teacher preparedness: Considering that the state and aided schools are largely for children from relatively marginalised population groups, it becomes imperative to prepare teachers to teach them with compassion and competence. Parental illiteracy is a challenge that they need to address through their own teaching rather than continuing to identify as a challenge. What emerged from the study is that the government schools are far more restrictive in using local languages and this needs to change. Similarly, considering the pandemic related challenges and the fact that Assam is prone to natural disasters such as floods, teachers also need to be trained in providing localised solutions for education in emergency. All this implies the need for a higher investment in better-designed and more frequent

¹⁰ <https://www.northeasttoday.in/2021/11/17/assam-cm-announces-merger-of-seba-ahsec-from-2022/>

¹¹ <https://www.ndtv.com/education/merger-of-lower-primary-middle-english-schools-prevent-dropouts-in-assam-chief-minister>

¹² The Tea board India also has schemes to provide capital grants for educational institutions in tea garden areas that can be used for creation and augmentation of infrastructure. The criteria for grants is that the institution be in tea garden area catering to at least 25% of students from tea garden workers.

teacher training programmes. Here, Samagra Shiksha funds and knowledge support can play a major role.

3. Infrastructure: The state is highly dependent on aided schools but the level and quality of infrastructure seems to be very poor there in both tea-garden and non-tea-garden areas. The state needs to find ways to influence aided school managements to invest in their infrastructure. This issue may be an important one for the recently provincialised tea-garden management schools, as the level of infrastructure is poor as well. This again translates itself into commitment for a higher recurrent expenditure on education.
4. Infrastructure maintenance, hygiene and entitlements: The study clearly showed that both government and aided schools do not fare well in maintenance of existing infrastructure while tea garden management schools though limited in the presence of infrastructural facilities seemed to be better in maintaining those. This raises the issue of accountability and development of norms for better maintenance as a marker of school performance. Considering that huge amounts of resources have been and are likely to be invested in creating infrastructure, maintenance become critical for enhancing efficiency on one hand, and for ensuring that these investments really become a source of better school environment. Better maintenance and school functioning would also help in better performance in provisioning of entitlements for students such as midday meal arrangements, uniform distribution and scholarship enrolments.
5. School management: Like school teachers, it is also important for the school managers (including administrators and community) to engage with the issue of marginalisation to find a solution rather than viewing it as a continued challenge and disadvantage. Both administrators and community bodies such as SMCs need to be trained in problem-solving skills taking the local issues into account rather than just knowing about their procedural roles and responsibilities, here too, Samagra Shiksha can play an important role. Coupled with empowered teachers, this will make the school system resilient and empowered.

Apart from these, consultations with various stakeholders revealed recommendation likes - inclusive policies by the school management, especially tea garden management like compulsory transportation for students who come from far and have to travel long distances, payment of wages (as compensation) to SMC members when they attend SMC meetings, inclusion of helper teachers from the local community to facilitate the use of home language in classroom processes.

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Annexure 1

Key Features of Tea Garden Management Schools as Observed in the Study

Type of School	Elementary Schools till grade 5	
	Assamese Medium	
	Affiliated to Assam State Board	
Profile of Students	Mainly Tea Garden Communities	
	50% Female and 50% Male (Mixed)	
Teachers	Avg PTR 57: 1, variation – as high as 104: 1 and low as 32:1	Does not meet RTE norms
	Presence of Tea Garden Community teachers	
	Use of home language of the child – 6 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	Most teachers underqualified as per RTE norms	Does not meet RTE norms
	Contractual nature of employment – daily wages	Does not meet RTE norms
	Underpaid – INR 205/day	
	No regular training	Does not meet RTE norms
School Infrastructure	Pucca Building – mostly well maintained	Meets RTE norms
	No boundary wall – 4 out of 6	Does not meet RTE norms
	Playground in usable condition- 4 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	Functional Ramp in half of the schools – 3 out of 6	Not Clear
	Functional Separate Toilets for Girls – 5 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	Arrangements for Library	Meets RTE norms

	– 4 out of 6	
	Clean Drinking water – 3 out of 6	Not Clear
	Separate kitchen for MDM – 6 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	Separate classroom for each grade – 2 out of 6	Does not meet RTE norms
	Chairs and Tables – 1 out of 6	Does not meet RTE norms
Child Entitlements	Free uniforms – 6 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	Free Text books – 6 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	Regular MDM – 6 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	Scholarships – 1 out of 6	Does not meet RTE norms
Experience of Education	High number of children had subject level difficulties	Does not meet RTE norms
	High Child labour and Child marriage reported during COVID period	Does not meet RTE norms
SMC	Presence of SMC – 6 out of 6	Meets RTE norms
	SMC composition – 50% women – 2 out 6	Does not meet RTE norms
	SMC composition – presence of tea garden communities	Meets RTE norms
	Regular SMC meetings – Last meeting held 2 to 3 months back	Does not meet RTE norms
	Development of School Development Plan (SDP)	NA
Grants	No grants are received by Tea management schools while all the 25 Government /provincialized schools received infrastructure grants	

Annexure 2

Tool A: Mapping of School Resources and HM Interview

Note: The purpose of this tool is to map the various school resources present at the school. The resources comprise of human as well as other resources like library, desks, chairs and so on. The process of filling this tool will be based on two methods i) School and Classroom Observation (SCO) and ii) Interview with the Head Teacher or any senior teacher in the school (TI). The questions that are to be filled through SCO have been marked separately from the questions that will be filled by interview with teachers. Some of the interview questions (bold) in the beginning can be filled by the interviewer before the interview

Section 1A: School Profile – To be collected through Teacher Interview (TI)

i)	District in which school is located <i>Note: Should be filled before the interview</i>		
ii)	Block in which school is located <i>Note: Should be filled before the interview</i>		
iii)	Name of the school		
iv)	School Code <i>Note: Please refer to the list of school codes</i>		
v)	Type of school management	Government / Provincialised	1
		Tea Garden Management	2
		Govt aided / Recognised	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777
vi)	Type of school – area	Tea Garden	1
		Non-Tea Garden	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777
vii)	Type of school – grades	Lower Primary (Class 1 – 5)	1
		Upper Primary (Middle School) (6 – 8)	2
		Secondary (9 – 12)	3
		Composite	4 (mention classes that are

			<i>taught)</i>
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777
viii)	Medium of Instruction	Assamese	1
		English	2
		Hindi	3
		Urdu	4
		Sadri	5
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777
ix)	Board to which school is affiliated	Assam Board	1
		CBSE	2
		ICSE	3
		NIOS/SOS (Open School)	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777

Section 2A: Teacher and Admin Profile – To be collected through Teacher Interview (TI)

Number	Name (i)	Gender (ii) (M/F)	Caste (iii)	Religion (iv)	Designation (v)	Teaching Experience (in years) (vi)	Highest Qualification (vii)	Grades that the teacher teaches (viii)	Contractual / Regular (ix)
1									
2									

Note: Please use the code sheet below to fill the applicable codes

Codes for 2 A

Caste (iii) <i>Note: If the person belongs OBC category which also comes under tea garden community, please mark both codes.</i>	General	1
	Other Backward Caste	2
	Scheduled Caste	3
	Scheduled Tribe	4
	Tea Garden Community	5
	Others, please specify	999
	Don't know	888
	Refused to answer	777
Religion (iv)	Christian	1
	Muslim	2
	Hindu	3

	Sikh	4
	Others, please specify	999
	Don't know	888
	Refused to answer	777
Designation (v)	Head Master	1
	Teacher	2
	Admin Staff	3
	MDM Cook	4
	Cleaner	5
	Proxy Teacher	6
	Teacher Volunteer	7
	Others, please specify	999
	Don't know	888
	Refused to answer	777
Teaching Experience (vi)	1-2 Years	1
	3-5 Years	2
	5-10 Years	3
	More than 10 Years	4
	Less than a year	5
	No Experience	6
	Others, please specify	999
	Don't know	888
	Refused to answer	777
Highest Qualification (vii)	Up till class 8	1
	Class 10 pass	2
	Class 12 pass	3
	BA/B. Sc/B.Ed./B.Com.	4
	TET pass	5
	MA/M.Sc./M.Ed./M.Com.	6
	Diploma	7
	MPhil	8
	PhD and above	9
	Others, please specify	999
	Don't know	888
	Refused to answer	777

3A: Enrolment - To be collected through Teacher Interview (TI)

Grades	Male	Female	Caste of child – top one caste (please enter as per code in 2A)	Caste of child – top two caste (please enter as per code in 2A)
1				
2				

4 A: Child Entitlements - To be collected through Teacher Interview (TI)

i)	Is hot cooked meal served in the school?	Yes	1
		No, never	2
		It was served before Covid but not now	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777
ii)	If yes for question i), then ask, what is the frequency of MDM?	Daily	1
		Most days in a week but not daily	2
		Sometimes in a week	3
		Rarely	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777

iii)	If yes, how many children are going to eat today? / How many children had their meal in school today?	Enter total number of children		
iv)	Is this number same as the number that existed before Covid?	Yes	1	
		No	2	
		Others, please specify	999	
		Don't know	888	
v)	How many students got 'Take-Home Ration' during the pandemic?	Enter total number of children		
vi)	Do you incur any costs for providing MDM in School	Yes	1	
		No, never	2	
		Others, please specify	999	
		Don't know	888	
vii)	If yes, list them with average monthly expenses (Cooking, cleaning, vegetables, oil etc)	Item	Cost (INR	Explanation
		Cooking expenses (if cook is not part of the staff permanent/ contractual)		
		Transport expenses (of grains, vegetable, fuel etc)		
		Cleaning expenses (including person hired for cleaning)		
		Fuel expenses (LPG/any other)		
		Vegetables		
		Eggs		
		Others, please specify	999	
		Don't know	888	

viii)	Do you get any grant or funds for the above-mentioned incurring expenses towards MDM	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ix)	Is this sufficient or not?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ix)	If yes, what is the amount received (in Rs/month/annum)	Amount/Month Amount/Annum	
x)	How was MDM arranged during school closure?	Direct Beneficiary Transfer (DBT) to bank account	1
		DBT and part cash in hand	2
		DBT and food grains	3
		Cash and food grains	4
		No alternate arrangements for MDM	5
		Food sent to the houses of children	6
		Food to be picked up from the schools	7
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xi)	Are free text books given to students?	Yes, text books are given	1
		Yes, amount transferred to student's bank account for text books	2
		No, no system exists	3
		No but book bank exists	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xii)	If yes, provide the number of students availing the free uniforms	Number	

xiii)	Are free uniforms given to students?	Yes, uniforms are given	1			
		Yes, DBT for uniforms is done	2			
		No	3			
		Others, please specify	999			
		Don't know	888			
xiv)	If yes, provide the number of students availing the free uniform for this academic year. If not this academic year, mention 999 in xiii and put the number for previous academic year	Number				
xv)	Is there any scholarship given to students?	Yes	1			
		No	2			
		Others, please specify	999			
		Don't know	888			
xvi)	If yes, for vi), then please fill the below table for the period 2020-21?					
	Name of scholarship	Criterion for scholarship	Number of students	Class of students	Total Amount received	Frequency
xvii)	Is there any transport facility provided to children? Like school bus? <i>If not, move to question number xxiii</i>	Yes	1			
		No	2			
		Others, please specify	999			
		Don't know	888			
xvii i)	If yes, provide the number of students availing the transport facility	Number				
xix)	Do the Students pay for the transport facility	Yes	1			
		No	2			
		Others, please specify	999			
		Don't know	888			
xx)	If yes, how much do each student pay (per month/annum)	Amount in INR/Month Amount in INR/annum				

xxi)	Is payment by students enough to pay for expenditure incurred on transport?	Yes	1		
		No	2		
		Others, please specify	999		
		Don't know	888		
xxii)	If no, please mention the additional amount paid for this expense? (Per student/month/annum)	Amount in INR/Month Amount in INR/annum			
xxii i)	Are there any other services that are provided to the students? If no, skip the next question	Yes	1		
		No	2		
		Others, please specify	999		
		Don't know	888		
xxiv)	If yes, please fill the table below				
SL. No.	Incentives provided	Number of students	Criteria	When was it last given (month and year)	Supplied by State 1=Yes 2= No (if 2 mention source)
1	School Bag				
2	Shoes				
3	Bicycle				
4	other				

5 A: School Infrastructure – to be collected through observations. In case you are unable to get the information, you can ask the HM or Senior Teacher. Please note that the questions related to Finances and grants need to be asked to the HM or Senior Teacher.

i)	Distance covered by students to come to school – rough estimates?	Less than a km	1	...%
		About 2-3 Kms	2	...%
		About 5 Kms	3	...%
		More than 5 Kms	4	...%
		Others, please specify	999	
		Don't know	888	
ii)	Type of school building <i>Note: Pucca House: Built with cement,</i>	Pucca	1	
		Kutcha	2	
		Semi Pucca	3	

	<i>brick, concrete (roof); Semi Pucca House: Built with Soil, brick, without concrete roof; Kutcha House: Built with soil, wood, cane, bamboo</i>	Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iii)	What is the condition of the school building?	Well maintained and painted	1
		In need of some minor repair work	2
		Not in a good shape, needs major repair work	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iv)	What is the condition of the school premises?	Clean and hygienic	1
	<i>Note: clean and hygienic premises will have proper waste disposal mechanisms, no cattle/animals or animal dung, no stagnant water, no harmful insects and so on.</i>	Unclean and unhygienic	2
		Moderately clean and hygienic	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
v)	Does the school have a boundary wall?	Yes – permanent boundary wall	1
	<i>Note: Permanent wall will be an all-weather concrete wall. Make shift/temporary wall will be made of bamboo, thatched leaves, ropes and so on.</i>	Yes – make shift/temporary boundary wall	2
		No	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
vi)	Do you get Annual Maintenance Grant from government to maintain the school buildings and	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please	999

	others			specify	
				Don't know	888
vii)	If yes, please fill the below table				
SL. No.	Annual Maintenance Grant - Heads	Amount	Criteria	Was it given last year (2020-21) 1= Yes 2=No	Was this amount enough 1: yes 2: No If not what was the additional amount spent, if so. Mention additional amount including nil, if nothing was spent
1					
2					
viii)	Does the school have a playground?	Yes – in a usable condition			1
		Yes – but not in a usable condition			2
		No			3
		Others, please specify			999
		Don't know			888
ix)	Do you get grant for getting sports materials? (Ignore this if included in Annual Maintenance Grant)	Yes			1
		No			2
		No, Sports materials are supplied to us			3
		Others, please specify			999
		Don't know			888
x)	If yes, what is the frequency of this amount?	Annual			1
		Once in 2/3 years			2
		More than 3 years			3
		Others, please specify			999
		Don't know			888

xi)	Does the school have a ramp? <i>Please note down this response if the school building is multistorey, if the building is single storey but needs steps or is elevated from the ground level. If these conditions don't apply, please mark code 4</i>	Yes – functional ramp	1
		Yes – but not functional	2
		No	3
		Not applicable	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xii)	Does the school have separate toilets for girls?	Yes- functional separate toilets for girls	1
		Yes – but girls' toilet is not functional	2
		No – no separate toilets	3
		No – no toilets in the school for both boys and girls	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xiii)	Is there a library in the school?	Yes – separate library with age-appropriate books	1
		Yes – but no separate library room, book shelves in staff room/classroom	2
		Yes – but always locked and non-functional	3
		No	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xiv)	Do you get grant for getting library books? (Ignore this if included in Annual Maintenance Grant)	Yes	1
		No	2
		No, library books are supplied to us	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xv)	If yes, what is the amount?	Amount/annum..... Amount/month.....	
xvi)	If yes, what is the frequency of this	Annual	1
		Once in 2/3 years	2

	amount?	More than 3 years	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xvii)	Are there computers in the school that students can use?	Yes – functional computers with internet	1
		Yes – functional computers with no internet	2
	<i>Note: this question is not meant for computers used by the admin staff.</i>	Yes – but not functional	3
		No	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xviii)	Do you get grant for maintaining computers? (Ignore this if included in Annual Maintenance Grant)	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xix)	If yes, what is the amount?	Amount/annum.....	
		Amount/month.....	
xx)	If yes, what is the frequency of this amount?	Annual	1
		Once in 2/3 years	2
		More than 3 years	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xxi)	Is there clean drinking water available for students?	Piped water	1
		No	2
		Other sources of clean water	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xxii)	Is there a separate kitchen for MDM?	Yes – separate kitchen within premises	1
		Yes – kitchen outside premises	2
		No – no separate kitchen	3
		Not applicable as MDM is not served	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

6A: Classroom Infrastructure to be collected through observations. In case you are unable to get the information, you can ask the HM or Senior Teacher. Please note that the questions related to Finances and grants need to be asked to the HM or Senior Teacher.

i)	Are there separate classrooms for each grade?	Yes – separate classrooms	1
		Yes – but divided by a makeshift/temporary partition	2
		No – multigrade classroom	3
		No – there are no classrooms for some classes	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ii)	Are the classrooms spacious and ventilated? <i>Note: Check if there are windows in the classroom and enough space for the students to move around.</i>	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iii)	Are there enough chairs and tables for all students in the classroom?	Yes – adequate for all students	1
		No – only for a few	2
		No – only for boys	3
		No – only for girls	4
		No chairs and tables	5
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iv)	Is there a blackboard/whiteboard in the classroom?	Yes – functional	1
		Yes – but not functional	2
		No	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
v)	Is there electricity in the classroom?	Yes – always	1
		Yes – but with power cuts	2
		No	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
vi)	Is there enough light in the classroom?	Yes	1
		No	2

		Others, please specify	999
	<i>Note: check for sources of light natural and electrical</i>	Don't know	888
vi	Is there any TLM displayed in the classroom?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
	<i>Note: TLM like maps, posters, globe and so on</i>	Don't know	888
vi	Do you get grant for TLM? (Ignore this if included in Annual Maintenance Grant)	Yes	1
		No	2
		No, TLM are supplied to us	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ix	If yes, what is the amount?	Amount/annum..... Amount/month.....	
x)	If yes, what is the Frequency	Annual	1
		Once in 2/3 years	2
		More than 3 years	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

7A: School Management Committee (SMC) To be collected through Teacher Interview (TI)

i)	Does the school have an SMC?	Yes	
		No	
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ii)	If no, ask why? <i>And end the interview here and move to the next observation-based section</i>	Not aware of SMC related requirements/norms	1
		Did not have the time	2
		Will be formed in the future	3
		Community not interested	4
		No use of SMC	5
		Others, please specify	999
	<i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	Don't know	888

iii)	If yes, then please fill the below table <i>Note: Please specify who the Adhyaksha is under the role and designation column.</i>				
	Member number (a)	Gender (b)	Caste (c)	Parent – yes/no (d)	Designation/Role (e)
		Total:			
	iv)	When was the last SMC meeting held?	2-3 weeks back – recently		
Last month			2		
2-3 months back			3		
More than 4-6 months back			4		
More than a year back			5		
Never took place			6		
Others, please specify			999		
Don't know			888		

v)	What were the top three agendas of the previous SMC meetings? (Check also from the minutes, if possible) <i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	School infrastructure	1
		Teacher shortage	2
		Non-literate community	3
		Teacher attendance issues	4
		Poverty in community	5
		Irregular attendance of students	6
		Lack of cooperation by government	7
		Lack of awareness in community	8
		Child labour	9
		Child marriages	10
		Apathy in tea estate management	11
		Lack of funds	12
		Scarcity of schools	13
		No entitlements for children	14
		Over worked teaching staff	15
		Non-payment of DBT	16
		MDM related issues	17
		Text books	18
		Scholarships	19
		Transport	20
		Uniforms	21
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

8A: Other observations – to be collected through observations only

i)	Are the students wearing uniforms?	Yes – all students are wearing uniforms	1
		Yes – but mostly boys	2
		Yes – but mostly girls	3
		No – only few students are wearing uniforms	4
		No – none of the students are wearing uniforms	5
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ii)	Are the students wearing shoes?	Yes – all students are wearing shoes	1

		Yes – but mostly boys	2
		Yes – but mostly girls	3
		No – only few students are wearing shoes	4
		No – none of the students are wearing shoes	5
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

To be filled in the End

A)	Name of the Surveyor	
B)	Date of Survey	
C)	Time of Survey – Start time and End time	
D)	Primary Respondent of the Survey – Name and Designation	

Tool B: Questionnaire for Children

Note: The purpose of this tool is to collect information about the children in school. These questions need to be asked to children studying in class 5 for primary schools, class 7 for middle schools and class 9 for secondary schools.

Important Instructions: Please introduce yourself to the teacher of the child and explain the purpose of the survey. Please answer any questions that they might have to the best of your knowledge. Please take permission before starting the interview. Let them know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions you are going to ask. Please let them know if that they are uncomfortable at any point during the interview, they can move on or stop the interview. There will be no adverse effect on them for not participating or answering any or all questions. Try to seek privacy while asking the questions, but if that is not possible, ensure a safe space to administer the survey. Please let the respondent know that all answers will be confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. Please assure the participant that the answers will be used only for academic purposes and will be made anonymous.

Please indicate with a tick mark if all the information above has been conveyed to the participant _____

Please indicate with a tick mark if the participant has agreed to be part of the survey

Please enter the school code

Questions for Children

Section 1B: Child Profile – To be collected for all children

i)	Name of the child		
ii)	District of the child's residence		
iii)	Block of the child's residence		
iv)	Age of the child (in years)		
v)	Gender of the child	Female	1
		Male	2
		Non-binary	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777
vi)	What language do you speak at home? <i>Note: Mother tongue</i>	Assamese	1
		Urdu	2
		Sadri /Adivasi	3
		Hindi	4
		Bangla	5

		Bhojpuri	6
		Oriya	7
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

Section 2B: Educational Profile

i)	Which class do you study in?	Class 1	1
		Class 2	2
		Class 3	3
		Class 4	4
		Class 5	5
		Class 6	6
		Class 7	7
		Class 8	8
		Class 9	9
		Class 10	10
		Class 11	11
		Class 12	12
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
		Refused to answer	777
ii)	How do you commute to school? <i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	Walk – unescorted – by self	1
		Walk – escorted – with friends/ family	2
		School bus	3
		Public transport	4
		Private transport	5
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iii)	Are you able to understand what the teacher teaches in class or do you face any difficulties?	Yes – can always understand	1
		Yes – can mostly understand	2
		No – can rarely understand	3
		No – can never understand	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iv)	If answer is no (code 3 or 4) then ask why, otherwise skip	Can't understand the language of the teacher	1
		Subject is difficult to understand	2
		Teacher teaches very fast	3

	<i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	Cannot focus in class	4
		Child is usually absent from class	5
		Not interested in what the teacher teaches	6
		Find it difficult to pay attention	7
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
v)	Who helps you with studies at home? <i>Note: Probe about tuition class</i> <i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	Tuition classes	1
		Male members of the household	2
		Female members of the household	3
		Self	4
		Friends and Neighbours	5
		NGO/collectives/support groups	6
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
vi)	Do you have the text books for the current class?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
vii)	Do you get hot MDM in school?	Yes – regularly (everyday)	1
		Yes – sometimes	2
		No – rarely	3
		No – never	4
		No – used to get it before covid	5
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
viii)	Do you have the school uniform?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ix)	Does your teacher come regularly to class?	Yes – always	1
		Yes – mostly	2
		No – rarely	3
		No - never	4
		Others, please specify	999

		Don't know	888
x)	Do you go regularly to school?	Yes – always	1
		Yes – mostly	2
		No – rarely	3
		No - never	4
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xi)	If answer is no, (code 2, 3 and 4) then ask why? <i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	Have to work outside	1
		Have to work at home and take care of siblings/elders	2
		Child care responsibilities	3
		Keeps unwell	4
		Not interested in going to school	5
		School is far	6
		Cannot understand what is being taught	7
		Does not score good marks/pass in exams	8
		Teacher does not come regularly	9
		Teacher does not teach well	10
		School is unsafe (this can be either the commute or the school itself)	11
		Friends do not go regularly	12
		Cannot afford the expenses	13
		Have tuitions	14
		Because of periods	15
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
xii)	What is it that you like most about school? <i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	Opportunity to study	1
		Meet friends	2
		Hot meals	3
		Teachers	4
		Mobility to step outside the house	5
		Time away from work	6
		Nothing much	7
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

xiii)	What is it that you dislike most about school? <i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	Studies	1
		Home work	2
		Cannot understand what is taught	3
		Teachers	4
		No MDM	5
		Cannot earn and make money while in school	6
		Not useful	7
		Exams	8
		Punishments	9
		Nothing as such	10
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

To be filled in the End

A)	Name of the Surveyor	
B)	Date of Survey	
C)	Time of Survey – Start time and End time	

Tool C: Questionnaire for Teachers

Note: The purpose of this tool is to collect information about the teachers, their perspective on quality of education and issues that they are facing in school. While administering please note that these questions need not be asked to all teachers, you can select a few teachers who would be free at the time of the survey to be your respondents. You can coordinate with the HM and arrange for the interviews to be scheduled. **Please make sure that the profile of the teacher is noted down in the HM interview** and we can match the name from this interview to get the profile information of the teacher.

Important Instructions: Please introduce yourself to the teacher of the child and explain the purpose of the survey. Please answer any questions that they might have to the best of your knowledge. Please take permission before starting the interview. Let them know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions you are going to ask. Please let them know if that they are uncomfortable at any point during the interview, they can move on or stop the interview. There will be no adverse effect on them for not participating or answering any or all questions. Try to seek privacy while asking the questions, but if that is not possible, ensure a safe space to administer the survey. Please let the respondent know that all answers will be confidential and will be not be shared with anyone else. Please assure the participant that the answers will be used only for academic purposes and will be made anonymous.

Please indicate with a tick mark if all the information above has been conveyed to the participant _____

Please indicate with a tick mark if the participant has agreed to be part of the survey _____

Section 1C: Profile – please check if the profile is noted in the HM interview. If not, repeat the questions from tool A – section 2 A.

Name of teacher

School Code.....

Section 2C: Teacher's opinion and perspectives

i)	For how long have you been teaching in this school?	Less than 6 months	1
		More than 6 months	2
		About 1-2 years	3
		About 3-5 years	4
		More than 5 years	5
		Others, please	999

		specify	
		Don't know	888
ii)	What subjects do you teach?	Mathematics	1
		English	2
		Assamese	3
		Hindi	4
		Social Science	5
		Science	6
		Arts and Crafts	7
		Games and Sports	8
		Urdu	9
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iii)	What languages do you use in class to teach and talk to your students?	Assamese	1
		Urdu	2
		Sadri /Adivasi	3
		Hindi	4
		Bangla	5
		Bhojpuri	6
		Oriya	7
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
iv)	Do you use TLM in classroom?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Sometimes	3
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
v)	If yes, can you give us two examples of the most used TLM by you?	Example 1:	Example 2:
vi)	When was the last training that you attended? If you	Less than 6 months back	1

	have not attended any training, please move to question number x) directly	More than 6 months back	2
		More than a year back	3
		More than 2 years back	4
		Never attended	5
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
vii)	Do you get allowance for attending the training	Yes	1
		No	2
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
viii)	If yes, how much? (In Rs)	Amount.....	
ix)	What was/were the topic/s of the training?		
x)	What are the issues you face as a teacher? <i>Note: Multiple choice answer</i>	School is remote	1
		Difficulty in commute	2
		Children from diverse background	3
		Non-literate parents of children	4
		Poor children	5
		Children do not have access to technology	6
		Parents do not want to send children to school	7
		High drop outs	8
		Child labour	9
		Irregular attendance	10
		Teacher	11

		shortage	
		Lack of facilities for teachers	12
		Low pay	13
		No/less frequent training	14
		Children do not understand the language	15
		Non-teaching work pressure	16
		Management not cooperative	17
		School environment not safe	18
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888

To be filled in the End

A)	Name of the Surveyor	
B)	Date of Survey	
C)	Time of Survey – Start time and End time	

Tool D: Questionnaire for Management and Education Department Officials

Important Instructions: Please introduce yourself to the respondent and explain the purpose of the survey. Please take permission before starting the interview. Let them know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions you are going to ask, also let them know that at any point if they feel uncomfortable and do not want to answer your questions, they can ask you to move on or stop the interview. Try to seek privacy while asking the questions, but if that is not possible, ensure a safe space to administer the survey. Please let the respondent know that all answers will be confidential and will be used only for academic purposes.

Please enter **school code** in case of tea estate management and venture school management interview

Section 1D: Profile

i)	Name	
ii)	Designation	
iii)	Name of school (In case of tea estate/ school management)	
iv)	District	
v)	Block / any sub-district unit	
vi)	Briefly elaborate on your responsibilities for school education <i>Note: This is an open-ended question, so please note down everything that the respondent says in details</i>	

Section 2D: Opinion and Perspectives

i)	What are the top 3 issues of school education in your area? For tea estate/venture school management schools ask – what are the top 3 issues that your school faces?	School infrastructure	1
		Teacher shortage	2
		Non-literate community	3
		Teacher attendance issues	4
		Poverty in community	5
		Irregular attendance of students	6
		Lack of cooperation by government	7

		Lack of awareness in community	8
		Child labour	9
		Child marriages	10
		Apathy in tea estate management	11
		Lack of funds	12
		Scarcity of schools	13
		No entitlements for children	14
		Over worked teaching staff	15
		Parents not interested	16
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
ii)	How do you plan to address these issues? <i>Note: This is an open-ended question, so please note down everything that the respondent says in details.</i>	Issue 1	Redressal
		Issue 2	Redressal
		Issue 3	Redressal
iii)	Can you list some of the specific issues present in tea estate schools? <i>Note: This is an open-ended question, so please note down everything that the respondent says in details.</i> <i>Skip question if school is in non-tea estate area.</i>		
iv)	What are the ways in which you support children from marginalised sections studying in your schools?	MDM	1
		Scholarships	2
		Free test books	3
		Free uniforms	4
		Fee concession	5
		Reservations	6

		Free education	7
		Extra classes – learning support	8
		Tracking and mainstreaming of OoSC	9
		Community awareness programmes	10
		Active SMC participation	11
		Nothing specific – no support	12
		Provide free hostels	`13
		Others, please specify	999
		Don't know	888
v)	<p>What are the motivations for investing in these schools? (For any management)</p> <p><i>Note: This is an open-ended question, so please note down everything that the respondent says in details.</i></p>		
vi)	<p>What is your vision for quality education in your schools? (For any management)</p> <p><i>Note: This is an open-ended question, so please note down everything that the respondent says in details.</i></p>		

To be filled in the End

A)	Name of the Surveyor	
B)	Date of Survey	
C)	Time of Survey – Start time and End time	