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Intergenerational Occupational Mobility among the Tea Garden Labourers in Undivided Sonitpur District of Assam

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ABSTRACT

The study entitled 'Intergenerational Occupational Mobility among the Tea Garden Labourers in Undivided Sonitpur District of Assam' focused on nature and pattern of occupational mobility in the tea plantation sector of the study area and tried to study the socio economic status of the tea garden labour for the same in the light of labour working within and outside the sample Tea garden. In order to analyse the pattern of intergenerational occupational mobility the study used Transition Matrix which refers to change in social status between different generations within the same family. The study also tried to find out various reasons for Occupational Stagnancy as well as Occupational mobility among the Tea garden labourers of Assam.

KEY WORDS*: Intergenerational occupational mobility, Transition Matrix, Horizontal Mobility, Vertical Mobility.

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INTRODUCTION:

Occupational Mobility is an important factor in the study of economics as Labour is the major factor of Production, affect growth and production. It is an activity through which person can procure income. Along with Occupation, income, education, status, gender, race, environment, culture etc. are some of the determinant that help us to know the potential social mobility of the group of people. Among these Occupation plays a vital role in determining pattern of social mobility. A major function of labour market is to allocate people efficiently to ensure each worker find the right job. In 1931 Schumpeter[1] emphasized the continuous reallocation of resources across heterogeneous production units. In the literature on social mobility, occupation is considered as good indicator of social status, income and living standards. A low degree of Intergenerational Occupational Mobility implies that the advantages and disadvantages inherent in the occupational status of one generation are transmitted to next generation. Hancock *et al.*[2] in 2007 pointed out that a situation of low mobility across generation may be favourable for families that are in fortunate socio-economic circumstances, but in the case of families that are less fortunate, low mobility often entails Social exclusion, material and human capital impoverishment and restriction on the opportunities and expectation that would otherwise widen their capabilities to make choices.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To analyse the pattern of Occupation Mobility among the Tea Garden Labourer of Undivided Sonitpur District of Assam.
2. To analyse the reasons behind observed Occupational mobility among Tea Garden Labourer of Undivided Sonitpur District of Assam.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The study attempts to address the following questions-

1. What are the causes behind observed occupational mobility among the Tea Garden Labourers of the study area?
2. What is the pattern of observed occupational mobility among the Tea Garden Labourers of the study area?

AREA OF STUDY:

Undivided Sonitpur district of Assam is selected for the purpose of study. The main reason behind selecting Sonitpur district as an area of study is that the Tea-labour community is the largest community among all other communities in the district with over 6, 00,000 which is about 31.12 per cent of the total population in the district[3]. he total number of Tea Garden is 62 including world largest Tea-Gardens, Monabarie. Undivided Sonitpur comprised of Biswanath, Tezpur and Gohpur Sub-division.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY:

The study used both Primary and Secondary data. Secondary data are collected from Assam Statistical Handbook, Handbook for Assam Tea Association, Office of Assam Chah MazdoorSangh, Laboure office, Tezpur; Regional Office of Tea Board, Biswanath Chariali, Tezpur. Primary data are collected from 148 sample household of four selected Tea Garden of undivided Sonitpur District. Multistage sampling technique is used to collect the Primary data. The stages of sampling are-

1. First Stage- District Level
2. Second Stage- At Tea Garden level
3. Final Stage- At Labour Household level.

The sample Tea Garden is selected on the basis of concentration of highest and lowest number of Labourer with respect to selected sample division. After that sample household from each sample Garden is selected on the basis of 5 per cent of total number of household.

Intergenerational occupational diversification can be analysed on the basis of Transition matrices. It refers to change in social status between different generations within the same family. The detail methodology is discussed in the section of Analysis part.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

The study tried to analyse the nature of employment and type of employment in the Tea plantation sector in the study area. The study mainly concentrated on the Intergenerational Occupational Mobility within and outside the Tea garden and emphasis on pattern of occupational mobility and causes behind various factors for occupational rigidity prevailing in the study area.

Investopedia Dictionary defines- 'Occupational Mobility means change from one occupation to another.' In other words, Occupational Labour Mobility can be defined as the ease with which workers can switch career fields to find gainful employment or meet labour needs. Intergenerational Occupational Mobility refers to any change in social position of family members that takes place

from one generation to next. It shows the ability of a person or persons to move up or down the hierarchal structure of social transition.

Occupation distribution of workers: Within and outside the tea garden:

On the basis of this data collected through first hand primary research in four tea gardens of upper Assam, the paper analysis various factors on intergenerational occupational mobility among Tea garden labourer. We also probe into reasons behind the relative mobility or immobility of Tea garden labourer within and outside the tea garden. In this paper we categorised parents' occupation on the basis of wage rate. In other words, the study categorised occupation from high wage rate to low wage rate occupation as follows-

Categorising the occupation on the basis of Wage rate - (From high to low wage rate)

1. Private Salaried   2. Clerical worker in Tea   3. Factory worker in Tea
1. Business Holder   5. Agricultural Labour
6. Daily Rated Tea labour 7. Non-Farm Casual Labour

To study the distribution of workforce within and outside garden, attempt has been made to describe extend and pattern of occupational mobility among Tea garden labourer household, on the basis of primary survey. For the purpose of intergenerational analysis of occupational mobility, first we examine distribution of workforce who living within and outside Tea garden. The reasons behind selecting other employment opportunity outside the tea garden are different. But the mainstay remains the same. After that we construct intergenerational occupational mobility.

Intergenerational occupational mobility: Transition Matrix:

Intergenerational occupational diversification can be analysed on the basis of Transition matrices. It refers to change in social status between different generations within the same family. Each and every element in these matrices represents the workers in different occupation as the proportion of the total number of sons/daughters of Parents in the same occupation. Giddens[4] in 1997 analyse, distinguish vertical in between how far an individual is mobile in his or her career and how much his/her position differs from that of his parents. To measure social mobility Markov chain was first used in social mobility by Paris in 1995. Each society is characterised by Transition Probability Matrix so most of the proposed measures were based on the elements of Matrix. Ginsberg[5] in1971 proposed Semi-Markov process to measure occupation changes of a particular individual.

Thus, we can define Inter-generational Matrix as follows-

$$a_{ij} = \frac{\sum O_{ij}}{\sum O_j}$$

Where $\sum O_{ij}$ represent the number of workers in the ith Occupation whose parents were in the occupation j and $\sum O_j$ is the total number of workers whose Parents was in occupation j.

The term a_{ij} can be interpreted as the outflow from parents' occupation to son's occupation or transitional probabilities from parents' occupation to son/daughters' occupation. The diagonal element $a_{ij}, i = j$ represent the proportion of workers who have followed same occupational as their Parents. Thus, $1 - a_{ij}, i = j$ can be as measure of occupational mobility among the sons and daughters of Parents who were in the occupation j.

Table 1 Intergenerational Occupational Mobility Matrix within the Tea Garden

	Son/Daughter in					
Parents in	**O1**	**O2**	**O3**	**O4**	**O5**	**O6**
Daily Rated Tea Garden Labour (O1)	**0.60**	0.17	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.13
Non-Farm Labourer (O2)	0.48	**0.17**	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.09
Business (O3)	0.13	0.38	**0.25**	0.00	0.00	0.25
Clerical (O4)	0.0	0.25	0.13	**0.50**	0.00	0.13
Factory (O5)	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.00**	0.00
Agricultural Labourer (O6)	0.18	0.18	0.09	0.27	0.27	**0.00**

Source: Primary survey

Table No. 1 provides those parents who are Daily rated Tea Garden Labourers including Permanent and Casual, nearly 60 percent of their sons became Tea Garden Labourer; among those who are non-farm casual Labourer nearly 48 per cent became Daily rated Tea Garden Labourer; from those who practises different business has 13 per cent probability to become Daily rated Tea Garden Labourer; and from those who are engaged in clerical and factory worker within Tea Garden have less probability to became Tea Garden Labour. The main reason behind low probability of those workers in the tea garden who are engaged in Clerical or Factory staff received more wages and benefit than Daily Rated Workers. As they have enjoy more income than others, they are capable to provide more facilities like better education to their children and their children have more ability to absorb in the job market other than Tea Garden Labourer. From the Table 2 it is seen that the probability of horizontal mobility is more frequent than the vertical mobility within the Tea Garden. The Table 2 indicates that among all the occupation reported here the highest intergenerational

mobility of occupations has been in the categories of Tea Garden Labourer including Permanent and Casual, Non-farm Labourer respectively.

The following Table 2 provides Intergenerational Occupational Mobility among workers outside the Tea garden. Among those parents who work outside the gardens the picture is slightly different. Of all those parents who were Agricultural Labourer 21 per cent practise for the same outside the Tea Garden, 26 per cent work as Non-Farm Casual Labourer, 6 per cent are in business activities and 47 per cent are Daily Rated Tea Garden Labourer within the Garden. Therefore, here also we can observe that mobility of parents from garden to outside Tea Garden do not enforce children to move outside the garden. Almost 50 per cent of their sons engaged as Daily Rated Tea Garden labourer in different area who is migrated because of marriage. It is found that of all those parents who are Daily Rated Tea Garden Labour, children are moving to private job outside the garden whose probability is 0.67 and its shows a vertical movement of Occupational Mobility outside the tea garden. Less number of labourer are diversified their occupation to other sector like Business. Therefore this study reveals that the occupation of Tea Garden Labourer is not Stagnant or confined to occupation related to Tea garden. Meanwhile it is also north worthy to mentioned that although some of them leave the garden for better but mainstay is remains the same for both within and outside garden.

Table 2 Intergenerational Occupational Mobility Matrix outside Tea Garden

	Son/Daughter In				
Parents In	**O1**	**O2**	**O3**	**O4**	**O5**
Agricultural Labour (O10)	**0.21**	0.26	0.06	0.00	0.47
Non-Farm Casual Labourer (O2)	0.09	**0.24**	0.20	0.09	0.38
Business (O3)	0.18	0.06	**0.35**	0.06	0.35
Private Salaried (O4)	0	0	0	**0**	0
Daily Rated (Tea) (05)	0	0	0.33	0.67	**0**

Source: Primary survey

Occupational Mobility and Stagnation-Causes and Constraint:

The occupational diversification of Tea garden labourer can be categorised in two heads - Willingness to change the occupation and Capacity or Ability to do as mentioned in Mishra[6] in 2011 During survey the study recorded various reasons and constraint for occupational mobility.Most of the Tea garden labourer engaged as a Tea garden labourer year after year. Question have been asked to sample respondent about their responses on available other employment opportunities outside tea garden that whether they are would like to go outside garden for work if better opportunity is

available. About 77 percent of sample respondent responded 'YES' and 23 per cent of sample tea garden labourer responded 'NO'.

In about 30 per cent of tea labourers due to lack of education are not willing to leave the garden. They understand that as they do not have enough educational qualification to get absorb in job market. Since 31 per cent among the tea labourers would not like to leave the garden as because they're satisfied with their current job. Besides this about 27 per cent of labourers do not wish the same for being the lone family caretaker and other family related problems.

The study found those tea labourers who wish to go outside tea garden try to educate their children for better future. In the following table 64 per cent of tea labourers wish to go outside garden because, their current wage rate and other job allowances could not able to fulfil their basic requirement and other needs. Another 35 per cent of tea labourer considered that their locality is not healthy for their children's education and health.

CONCLUSION:

Therefore, from this discussion we can conclude that Within the Tea Garden Horizontal Mobility is stronger than Vertical Mobility. Horizontal Mobility is observed almost all occupations. But Vertical mobility can be observed only from Daily rated labour to Business holder within the Garden. The study on Occupational Mobility reveals that occupation of Tea garden labourer is mostly Stagnant. Various causes of Occupational stagnation are like lack of education, Location of Tea garden, social security provided by Tea management etc.

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