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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF SMALL TEA PLANTATIONS (STP) ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF TEA GROWERS IN RAJGANJ BLOCK OF JALPAIGURI DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Tea, esteemed as the "National Drink," holds profound cultural and economic importance globally. Countries including China, India, Kenya, and Sri Lanka have longstanding traditions of tea cultivation. In India, tea plantations have flourished across 16 states since 1835, particularly in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. The recent rise of Small Tea Plantations (STPs) and Small Tea Growers (STGs) in India, notably since the 1990s, represents a significant trend. STGs, characterized as cultivators with plantations up to 10.12 hectares and no tea factory, have notably transformed Bengal's agricultural landscape, particularly evident in North Bengal's Rajganj block, where pineapple fields have transitioned into tea gardens, catalyzing substantial socio-economic change. Tea cultivation serves as a stable source of employment and income for small and marginal farmers. Socio-economic indicators like literacy rates, income distribution, and occupational structures have experienced notable shifts before and after 2005, suggesting positive trends in educational engagement and economic advancement. The study aims to investigate the drivers behind the rapid expansion of small tea plantations and their socio-economic impacts on growers in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri district. Total 210 samples have been randomly selected from five G. P. for interview in order to avoid the bias of primary data. The collected data has been processed and analyzed by suitable statistical and cartographic techniques, table and diagrams. Q-GIS software's have been used to show the necessary maps. The small tea cultivation could pave the way for sustainable growth and rural industrialization, particularly in regions like Rajganj block, contributing significantly to socio-economic development.

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INTRODUCTION

Tea is the most popular non-alcoholic drink in the world. It is called as the "National Drink". It has a big and glorious history. Its plays an important role in the sector of world trade. Tea cultivation is an example of plantation agriculture. So many countries (China, India, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Myanmar, Iran, Bangladesh etc.) are doing the practices of tea cultivation. Tea plantation also takes a vital role to the development of the economic condition of a country as well as the tea growers. On the other hands, tea industry is one of the most important rural based agro-industry. So many rural peoples are practicing of tea cultivation like a crop for the development of their economic condition and better livelihood. In India, tea plantation was successfully established in 16 states, among them Assam, West Bengal, Tamilnadu and Kerala account for about 95 per cent of the country's total tea production (Hazarika & Borah, 2013) and it was started in the year 1835 in Assam. Assam is the pioneer of tea production and known as the "Garden of the Tea World" (Sengupta, 2009).

And now a day, 'Darjeeling Tea' is the world-famous tea and it has an important role on economy. But the concept of Small Tea Plantation (STP) and Small Tea Growers (STGs) are the very recent phenomenon which was broadly started in India since 1990s. Tea board of India adopted the concept of STGs during the eighth five-year plan (Hannan, 2008). Various organizations speak about small tea cultivation. The 'Tea Board of India' has defined small tea cultivators as those having tea plantation up to 10.12 hectares or 25 acres of land and have no own tea factory and only producing the tea leaves. It's providing an ample opportunity for self-employment of the rural educated unemployed youths (Baruah, 2008). A number of youth generation of India initiated the process of growing tea in highlands vacant areas. The initial experiment was largely successful and attracted others to enter similar ventures (Hannan, 2013). The history of Small Tea Plantation (STP) in Bengal started from North-Bengal through the transforming of traditional pineapple fields into tea gardens due to lack of processing units, cold storage and problem of demand and the market. Most of the pineapple growers of North-Bengal took the opportunity of

this condition and transformed their land from pineapple to tea plantations (Tea Board, 2007; Majumdar, 2008; Hannan, 2013). Relatively low capital required for investment, favorable climate condition, less risk of failure than others crop, self-employment opportunity, available labour and irrigation facility and a locally available market for green tea leaves turned this new effort of a section of local and enthusiastic youth into a big success story (Tea Board, 2011). Gradually, the traditional crop areas had been transformed as a Small Tea Plantation (STP) in North Bengal. In North Bengal, tea plantation has mainly been concentrated in Darjeeling, Uttar Dinajpur, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri districts. Jalpaiguri district is one of the most important districts for the cultivation of tea. The district witnessed a glorious history of tea plantation. In Jalpaiguri, tea plantation was set up on the bank of Tista River near Gajoldoba in the year 1874 with the help of Richard Haughton, the pioneer of tea plants in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri district. Saraswatipur Tea Estate was the first tea garden of Rajganj Block as well as Jalpaiguri district. After that, it had spread around the Gajoldoba Tea garden and the other parts of Rajganj CD block. After Gajoldoba Tea Garden, there are so many tea gardens and tea estates are built up within the block. These are Saraswatipur Tea Estate, Sikarpur Tea Estate, Paul Tea Estate, Fulbari Tea Garden, Goyel Tea Garden, Bonik Tea Garden, Kundu Tea Garden and so many Medium and Small Tea Growers (STGs). Gradually, the tea plantations in Rajganj block have been increasing day by day. In the same way, where, in the year of 1890 had only one tea estate in Rajganj block but in the year of 2010 the number of tea estates are 14 and more than 10,000 small tea growers were growing up during 1874-2010 (Tea Dictionary-West Bengal, 2010) and it has been also increasing day by day. So Rajganj block is one of the important blocks of Jalpaiguri district in respect to tea plantation. Moreover 50 per cent of the farmers in Rajganj block have their small tea gardens, which are play a vital role on the socio-economic condition as well as the life style of the farmers.

Tea cultivation provides work and income throughout the year for at least 8 to 10 months which attracted small and marginal farmers to this sector (Tea Board of India, 2011). It would be worth assessing the socio-economic achievements of these unprivileged sections as socio-economic plays a key role as an agent of change. In this study, author has restricted the analysis only in assessing the causes of increasing small tea plantations and its impact on socio-economic condition of growers in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri district. Rajganj block, located in the south-western part of Jalpaiguri district has a substantial proportion of small tea growers. As of now, most of the scholars of the related field, have worked to document the increasing of tea plantation in the West Bengal as a whole and limited scholarly works are addressing the small tea plantation in Jalpaiguri district. Therefore, the present study is devoted to probing what factors are responsible for increasing the small tea plantation and its impact on socio-economic condition of growers in Rajganj Block of Jalpaiguri district.

Study Area: The study area Rajganj block is situated in the South-Western part of Jalpaiguri district. It lies roughly between the 26°33'22" North latitude to 26°52'08" North latitude and 88°30'31" East longitude to 88°39'38" East longitude. It is located 24 km towards west from district head quarter Jalpaiguri.

Rajganj block head quarter is Rajganj town. The block is bounded by Matigara (Siliguri) block toward north-west, Phansidewa toward west, Jalpaiguri Sadar block toward east, Mal blocks toward North-East and Bangladesh international border towards south-west. The block covers an area of 613.96 Sq.km which is account for about 20.17% of the total geographical area of the district. The block is divided into twelve (12) Gram Panchayats namely Kukurjan, Sukhuni, Majhiali, Sannasikata, Panikouri, Binnaguri, Fulbari-I, Fulbari-II, Dabgram-I, Dabgram-II, Mantadari and Sikarpur.

Objectives of the study

The present study is aimed at the following objectives

- To find out the causes of increasing Small Tea Plantations (STP) in the study area.
- To find out the impact of Small Tea Plantation (STP) on the socio-economic condition of tea growers of the study area.

Database and methodology: The present study is based on the collected data from primary and secondary sources.

Data base: Primary data have been collected from the field survey and with the help of interview method of the Small Tea Growers (STGs) of various gram panchayats (G.P) of Rajganj block. In the first stage, out of 12 Gram Panchayat of Rajganj block, 5 Gram Panchayats has been considered as an independent sampling unit. In second stage, 210 growers have been randomly selected as a sample from five G. P. for interview in order to avoid the bias. On the other hand, secondary data have been obtained from various secondary sources such as Tea Board of Jalpaiguri, Tea Board of West Bengal, Tea Board of India etc. along with different journals, magazines, newspapers and internet and existing literature available on the topic.

Data processing, analysis and presentation: The collected data has been processed and analyzed with the help of some suitable statistical techniques. The result obtained is being presented with the help of suitable cartographic techniques; table, diagrams etc. have been prepared for the purpose. Q-GIS software's have been used to show the necessary maps.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General information of Small Tea Growers (STG) in Rajganj Block: The Small Tea Plantation (STP) in Rajganj block creates significant opportunities for employment and a source of income. It serves as a primary cash crop not only in Rajganj block but also in Jalpaiguri district. According to respondents, more than 50 percent of households in Rajganj block have tea plantations. Currently, there is a rapid increase in tea plantation activity in the study area. To better understand this rapid growth of small tea plantations in Rajganj block, the researcher has divided the total time period into two: before and after 2005. The aforementioned Table 1 and figure illustrates the distribution of Small Tea Growers (STG) in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri district during two distinct time periods: before and after 2005. Notably, 73.33 percent of tea growers began practicing tea cultivation after 2005, compared to only 26.67 percent before 2005.

Location Map of The Study Area

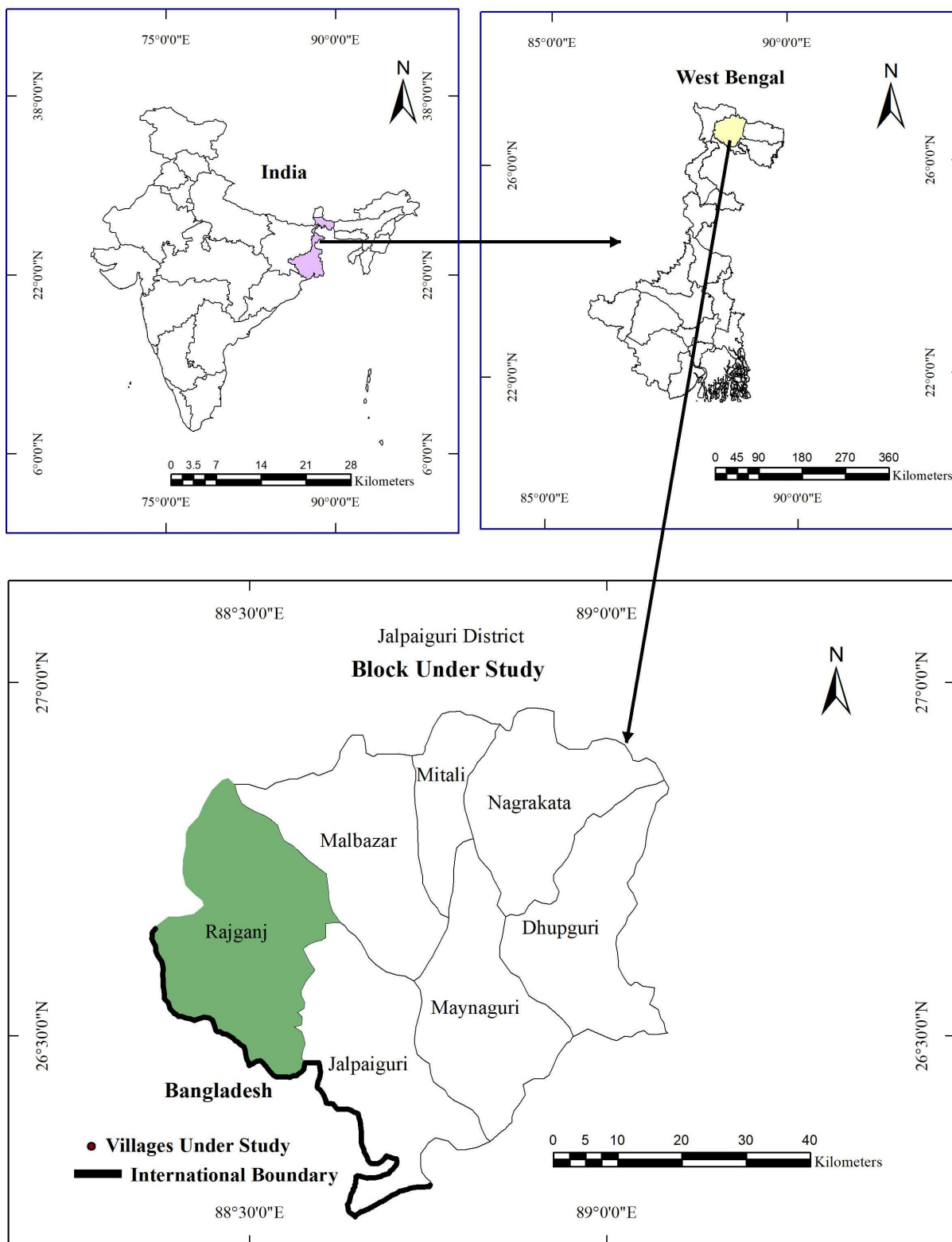


Fig. 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Small Tea Growers (STG) in Rajganj Block

Time	Number of STG (%)	STG in Percentage (%)
Before 2005	56	26.7
After 2005	56+154=210	73.3
Total	210	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

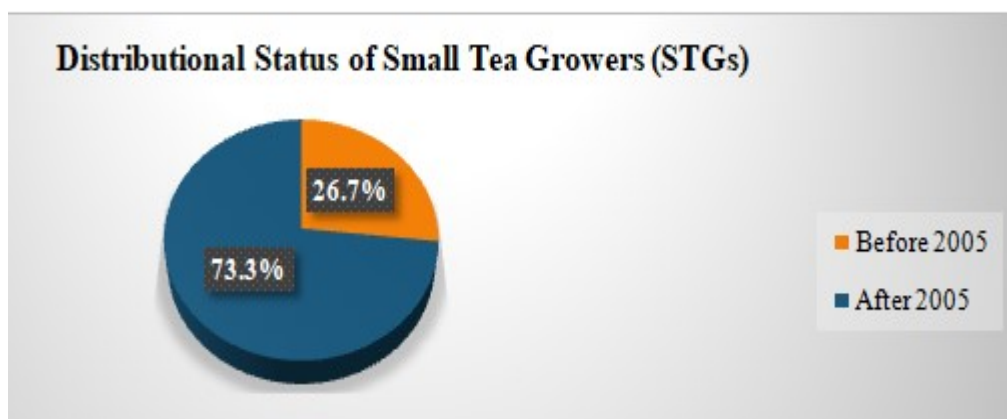


Fig. 2.

Table 2. Farm size wise distribution and growth of Small Tea Growers (STGs) in Rajganj Block

Farm size (In Bigha)	No. of Tea Growers Before 2005 (%)		No. of Tea Growers After 2005 (%)	
	Respondent (STGs)	Percentage	Respondent (STGs)	Percentage
Up to 5	40	19.1	124	59.1
6-10	14	6.7	54	25.7
11-15	02	0.9	12	5.7
More than 15	Nil	Nil	20	9.5
Total	56	26.7	210	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

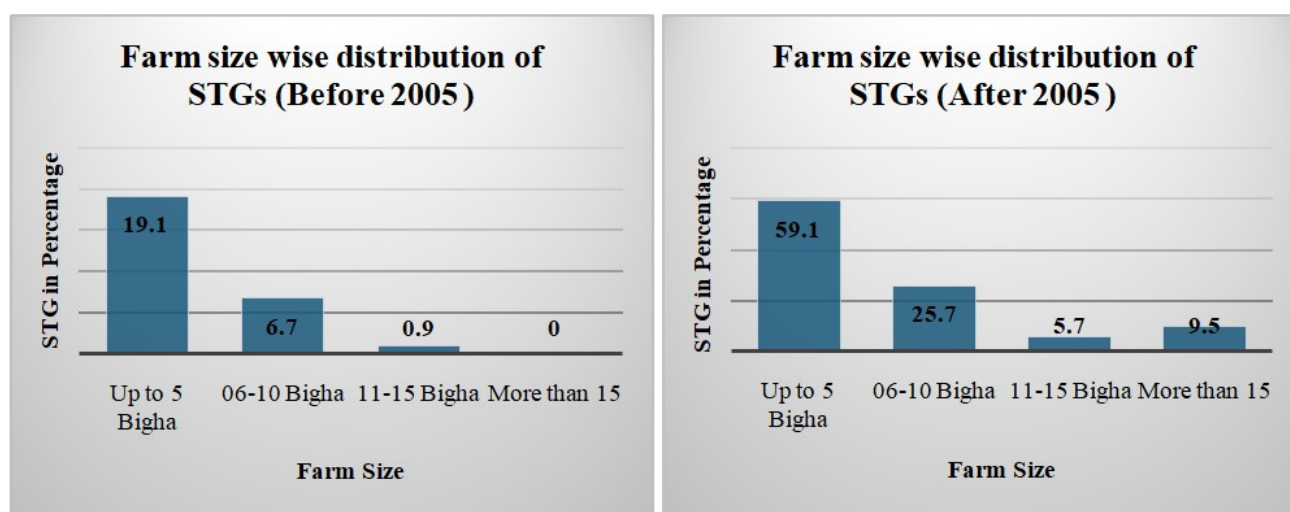


Fig. 3.

Table 3. Occupation and Income Source of Small Tea Growers

Occupation	Income Source
Only 1 occupation	Tea Garden.
2 occupations	Tea Garden and Agriculture, Tea Garden and Service, Tea Garden and Business.
3 and more occupations	Tea Garden, Agriculture, Business and Service.

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

Table 4. Distribution of Small Tea Growers by Occupational Structure

Occupational Structure	Small Tea Growers Before 2005		Small Tea Growers After 2005	
	Respondent (STGs)	%	Respondent (STGs)	%
Only 1 occupation	Nil	0.0	04	1.9
2 occupations	34	16.2	124	59.1
3 occupations	16	7.6	50	23.8
More than 3 occupations	06	2.9	32	15.2
Total	56	26.7	210	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

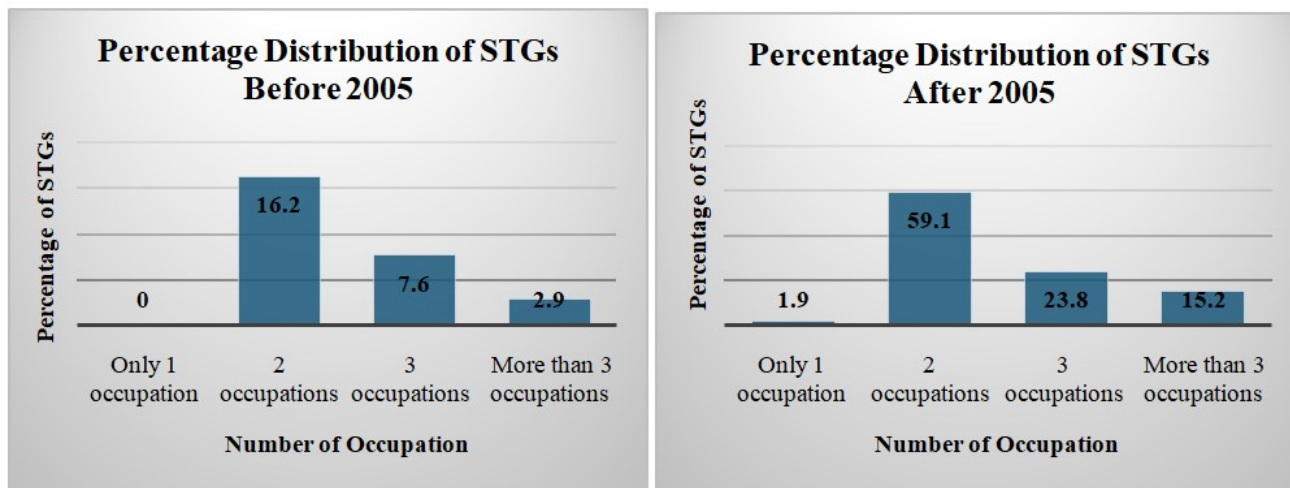


Fig. 4.

Table 5. Distribution of Respondents by Monthly Income

Monthly Income in Rs.	Small Tea Growers Before 2005		Small Tea Growers After 2005	
	Respondent (STGs)	Percentage	Respondent (STGs)	Percentage
Below 10000	22	10.5	72	34.3
10000- 20000	16	7.6	56	26.7
20000- 30000	10	4.8	42	20.0
Above 30000	08	3.8	40	19.0
Total	56	26.7	210	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023



Fig. 5.

Table 6. Distribution of Respondent by Educational Status

Educational Status	Population Before 2005		Population After 2005	
	Population	Percentage (%)	Population	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	11	19.6	21	10.0
Literate	45	80.4	189	90.0
Total	56	100	210	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

Table 7. Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Level of Educational	STGs (Respondents) Before 2005		STGs (Respondents) After 2005	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Primary (up to Class- 5)	9	4.8	39	20.6
Middle School (Class-6-8)	13	6.9	53	28.1
High School (Class-9-12)	18	9.5	72	38.1
Above H.S (>Class-12)	5	2.6	25	13.2
Total	45	23.8	189	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

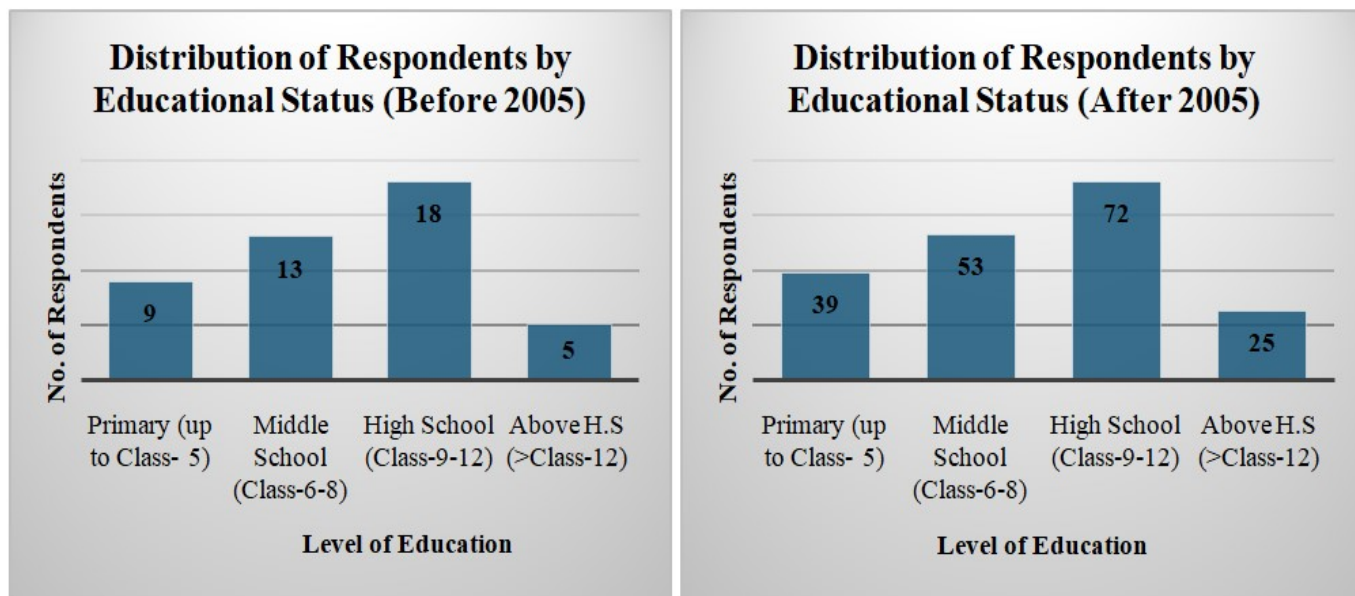


Fig: 7.

Table 8. Distribution of Respondents Family Members by Educational Status

Educational Status	Population Before 2005		Population After 2005	
	Population	Percentage (%)	Population	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	28	12.5	57	6.8
Literate	196	87.5	783	93.2
Total	224	100	840	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

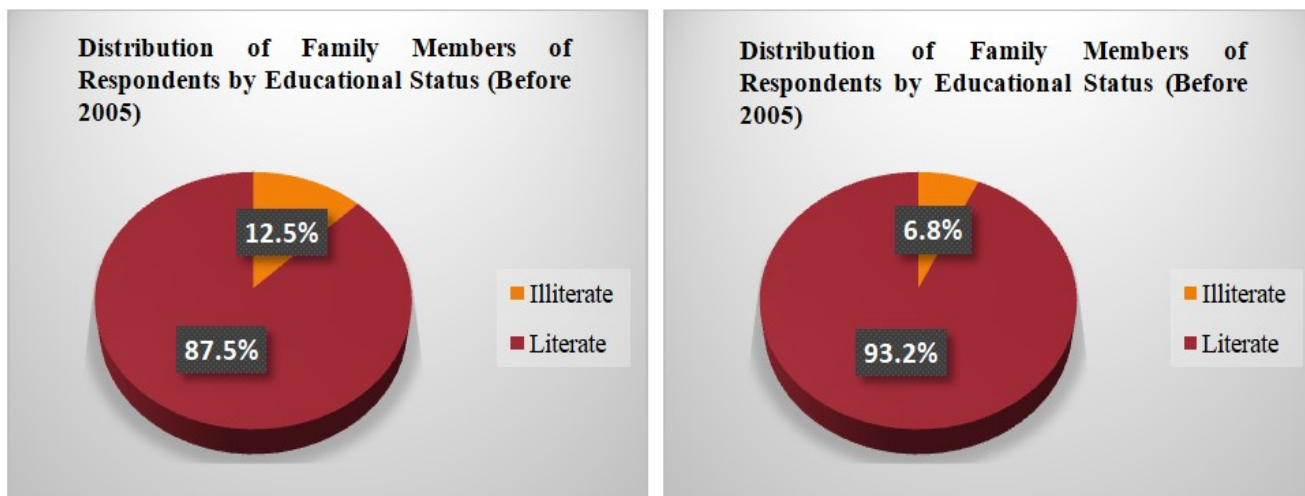


Fig: 8

Table 9. Distribution of Respondents Family Members by Level of Education

Level of Educational	Population Before 2005		Population After 2005	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Primary (up to Class- 5)	36	4.6	137	17.5
Middle School (Class-6-8)	48	6.1	177	22.6
High School (Class-9-12)	96	12.3	385	49.2
Above H.S (>Class-12)	16	2.0	84	10.7
Total	196	25.0	783	100

Source: Compiled by the Researcher from Field Survey, 2023

Prior to 2005, farmers in the study area showed little interest in tea plantation. However, post-2005, they increasingly engaged in these practices, driven by the prospects of employment opportunities and economic growth for tea growers.

Consequently, traditional farmers have been converting their agricultural and fallow land into tea plantation fields, leading to a significant surge in the number of STGs in Rajganj block post-2005.

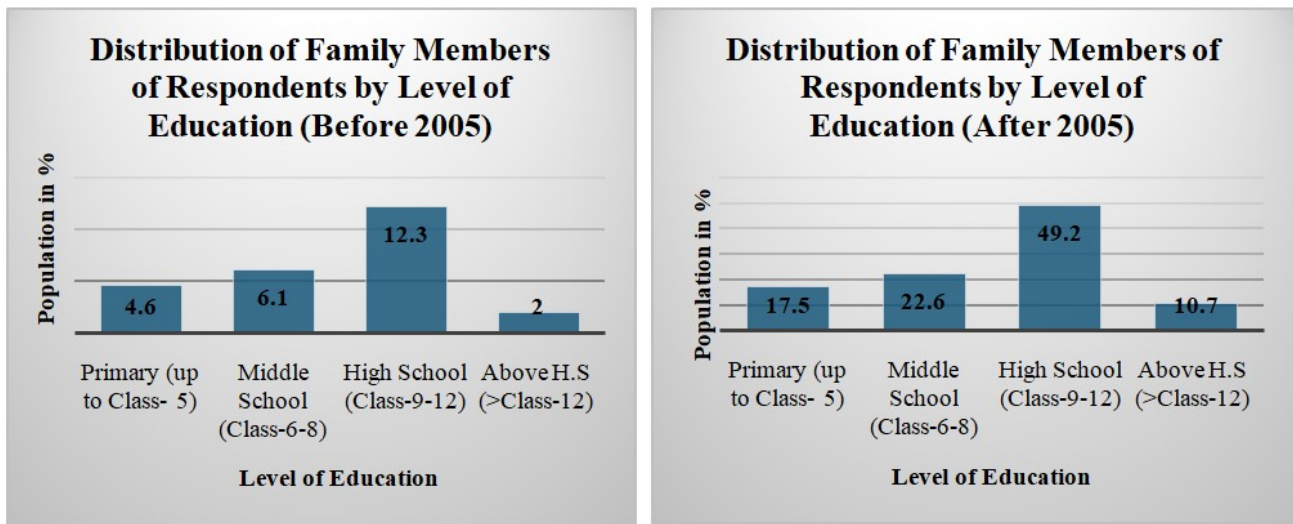


Fig. 9.

Table 2 and figure illustrates the distribution of Small Tea Growers (STGs) in the study area based on farm size. Farms are categorized into four groups according to size: up to 5 bigha, 6-10 bigha, 11-15 bigha, and more than 15 bigha. Before 2005, among 210 respondents, the majority of growers (19.1 percent) in Rajganj block operated very small farms (up to 5 bigha), followed by 6.7 percent with farm sizes ranging from 6-10 bigha, and 0.9 percent with farm sizes of 11-15 bigha. There were no recorded growers with farm sizes exceeding 15 bigha in the study area during this period. However, after 2005, the landscape changed. The highest proportion of growers (59.1 percent) came from very small farms (up to 5 bigha), representing a significant increase in percentage compared to before 2005. Similarly, 25.7 percent were from the 6-10 bigha category, which also changed before and after 2005, and 5.7 percent were from 11-15 bigha. Notably, the distribution of small tea growers with farm sizes exceeding 15 bigha changed rapidly. While there were no recorded growers in this category before 2005, they constituted 9.5 percent of growers after 2005. Overall, the data indicates a significant shift in farm size distribution among tea growers in the study area after 2005, with a notable increase in the prevalence of smaller farms and an emergence of larger-scale tea farming operations.

Causes to Increasing of Small Tea Plantation (STP) in Rajganj Block: After 1990, So many local peoples of Rajganj block are used their left fallow areas, waste land, grazing lands, high lands and bamboo field for the purpose of tea cultivation. But now, the farmers have been converted their agricultural land into tea plantation fields. The main cause to increasing the tea plantations are

Less Risk of Failure: It is one of the important causes to increasing the tea plantation in Rajganj block. In the tea plantation practices have less risk of failure than other crops, that's why so many people have been joining in the field of tea plantations to converting their agricultural lands.

Low Capital Investment: To producing the green tea leaves need a low capital investment than the other crops. At the time of planting the tea plantation needs some capital but after the plantation it take less amount of capital.

Multi-crop Cultivation: Small tea growers are cultivating some other crops in the field of tea plantation such as medicinal plant, neem, eucalyptus etc. which are enhancing their income from the production of these crops.

Self-employment: In Rajganj block, tea plantation provides so many opportunities for self-employment to rural peoples. Tea cultivation is a labour-based enterprise in which most of the tea plantation operations, like- plugging, sowing the tea, spraying, and sprinkling, taking the green tea leaves have been creating so many employment opportunities and remove the problems of unemployment.

Available of Labour Facility: Small Tea Growers (STGs) are doing the practices of tea plantation in most of the time with the help of their family members. Not only these, they also bring the labours from their village and the nearest villages. That's why they have no need to others skilled labours or capital.

Locally Available Market: Locally available of market facility is an impotent cause to increasing the Small Tea Plantation (STP) of the study area. There are so many tea industry built up in local area and some middleman (businessmen) take green tea leaves from the tea plantation field. That's why they have no any tension or pressure about the sales of green tea leaves.

Available of Irrigation Facility: Irrigation and tea plantation is related to each other. Well irrigation facility is playing a vital role to grow the tea plants. There are so many rivers (Tista, kortoa, chaul, Talma, Panga etc.) are flowing over the Rajganj block as well as Jalpaiguri district which are providing the water for the tea plantation through the irrigation. Cannel and tube-wells irrigation facility are available in the study area which are also provide the water for tea plantation.

More Profits: Tea is the more profitable crop than the other crops in the study area. Less risk of failure, low capital investment, multi-crops cultivation, available of labours facility, home labours are the key of more profits than the other crops.

That's why the farmers of the study area are practicing the tea cultivation in small size and has been converted their agricultural and others land into tea plantation field.

Socio-economic Condition of Small Tea Growers (STGs) in Rajganj Block (Before and After 2005): "Socio-economic condition" refers to the combined influence of social and economic factors on the overall well-being and quality of life of individuals, communities, or populations within a particular area or society. It encompasses various aspects of people's lives, including their income levels, employment opportunities, access to education, housing conditions, and overall standard of living. "STG" typically stands for "Small Tea Growers." These are individuals or groups of farmers who cultivate tea on relatively small plots of land, as opposed to the large-scale plantations that dominate much of the tea industry. Small Tea Growers play a significant role in many tea-producing regions worldwide, including areas like Rajganj Block in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal, India. Small Tea Growers often emerge due to various factors such as land reforms, government initiatives to promote small-scale agriculture, or the subdivision of larger tea estates. They contribute to the diversification of the tea industry and can have a significant socio-economic impact in their communities. However, they also face challenges such as limited access to resources like land, finance, and technical knowledge, as well as fluctuating market prices and competition with larger producers. Table 3 illustrates the income sources and occupations of small tea growers in the Rajganj block. The table categorizes the study area into three occupational groups: single occupation, dual occupations, and three or more occupations. Growers in the first category rely solely on tea gardens as their source of income.

For those with dual occupations, income stems from combinations such as tea gardens and agriculture, tea gardens and service, or tea gardens and business. Growers falling into the last category, with three or more occupations, derive their income from tea gardens, agriculture, business, and service. The table and figure above illustrate the percentage distribution of small tea growers (respondents) based on their occupation before and after 2005. The occupation of small tea growers (STGs) has been categorized into four groups: those with only one occupation, those with two occupations, those with three occupations, and those with more than three occupations. According to the dataset, out of 210 respondents, there is a significant increase in the proportion of tea growers engaging in two occupations after 2005, rising from 16.2% to 59.1%. Similarly, the percentage of growers with three occupations also increased substantially from 7.6% to 23.8% after 2005. There's a notable increase in the proportion of growers with more than three occupations after 2005, indicating diversification in their activities. While the percentage of growers with only one occupation remains low, there is a slight increase after 2005. So, this data suggests a diversification in the occupational structure of tea growers after 2005, with a significant rise in the number of growers involved in multiple occupations, potentially indicating a broader economic base and increased opportunities in the area. The table and figure above illustrate the percentage distribution of small tea growers (respondents) by monthly income before and after 2005. The small tea growers (STGs) have been categorized into four groups: those with monthly income below 10000, those with monthly income between

10000 and 20000, those with monthly income between 20000 and 30000, and those with monthly income above 30000. According to the dataset, out of 210 STGs, the highest proportion (10.5%) of small tea growers had a monthly income below 10000 before 2005 in the Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri district. This was followed by those with monthly incomes between 10000 and 20000, accounting for 7.6 (16) per cent of the respondents, while 4.8 per cent had monthly incomes between 20000 and 30000, and only 3.8 per cent of respondents had monthly incomes above 30000. Conversely, after 2005, 34.3 per cent of the STGs had a monthly income below 10000, with 26.7 per cent of respondents having monthly incomes between 10000 and 20000. Additionally, 20 per cent of respondents had monthly incomes between 20000 and 30000, while 19 per cent of STGs had monthly incomes above 30000 in the study area of Rajganj block. Overall, the data highlights a significant shift in the income distribution among tea growers after 2005, characterized by a substantial increase in the proportion of growers earning in every category compared to before 2005. This shift suggests potential changes in economic conditions or market dynamics impacting tea cultivation in the area post-2005. The table and figure above provide information about the educational status of respondents before and after 2005 in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri District. It reveals that, before 2005, 19.6 (11) percent of respondents were illiterate, while 80.4 (40) percent were literate. Conversely, after 2005, 10.0 (21) percent of respondents were illiterate, and 90.0 (189) percent were literate in the study area. The analysis compares the educational status before and after 2005 in the STG category. It highlights a significant decrease in the percentage of illiterate respondents from 19.6 percent before 2005 to 10.0 percent after 2005, indicating an improvement in literacy rates. Conversely, the percentage of literate respondents increased from 80.4 percent before 2005 to 90.0 percent after 2005.

This suggests a positive trend in literacy rates over time in the STG category, with a higher proportion of respondents becoming literate after 2005 compared to before. The table and figure above illustrate the educational levels of respondents before and after 2005 in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri District. The educational categories are divided into four groups: Primary (up to Class-5), Middle School (Class-6 to 8), High School (Class-9 to 12), and Above High School (Above Class-12). From the dataset, it is evident that out of 189 Literate respondents, only 45 (23.8%) literate respondents before 2005, 9 (4.8%) respondents have completed Primary education, 13 (6.9%) respondents' upper primary education, High School (18), and only 5 (2.6%) respondents received education above high school level. Conversely, after 2005, out of 189 literate respondents, 39 (20.6%) respondents have completed primary education, followed by 53 (28.1%) respondents with education up to the middle school level, 72 (38.1%) with education up to high school, and 25 (13.2%) respondents with education above the higher secondary level in the study area. The dataset reveals a significant rise in the total number of respondents post-2005, indicating substantial growth in sample size or demographic shifts. At all educational levels, there are increased respondent numbers after 2005, indicating enhanced representation across educational categories. The High School category sees the most substantial increase in respondents, followed by Middle School, with Primary and Above H.S categories showing smaller but noticeable rises.

Overall, the data reflects considerable expansion in respondent numbers across educational levels post-2005. The table and figure above provide information about the educational status of the family members of respondents before and after 2005 in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri District. It reveals that, before 2005, 12.5 (28members) percent members were illiterate, while 87.5 (196members)percent were literate. Conversely, after 2005, 6.8 (57members) percent members were illiterate, and 93.2(783members) percent were literate in the study area. The analysis compares educational statuses before and after 2005, revealing a decline in the percentage of illiterate individuals from 12.5% to 6.8%, alongside an increase in the percentage of literate individuals from 87.5% to 93.2%. This indicates an overall improvement in literacy rates over time, with a greater proportion of individuals achieving literacy after 2005.

The table and figure above illustrate the educational levels of the family members of respondents before and after 2005 in Rajganj block of Jalpaiguri District. The educational categories are divided into four groups: Primary (up to Class-5), Middle School (Class-6 to 8), High School (Class-9 to 12), and Above High School (Above Class-12). From the dataset, it is evident that out of 783 literate members, only 196 (25.0%) are literate members before 2005, 4.0 (36)per centmembers have completed Primary education, 6.1 (48) per cent members upper primary education, High School 12.3 (96) per cent, and only 2.0 (16) per centmembers received education above high school level. Conversely, after 2005, out 783 literate family member, 17.5 (137) per centmembers have completed primary education, followed by 22.6 (177) per cent members with education up to the middle school level, 49.2 (385) per centmembers with education up to high school, and 10.7 (84) per cent members with education above the higher secondary level in the study area. This dataset provides the population distribution across different educational levels before and after 2005. It shows a significant increase in the total population after 2005. Additionally, there are increases in the populations across all educational levels after 2005, indicating potential improvements in educational access or enrollment over time. Overall, the data suggests a positive trend in educational participation, with more individuals accessing education across all levels after 2005 compared to before. The data also indicates progress towards achieving higher levels of education within the population, which can have positive implications for economic development, social mobility, and overall well-being.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study underscores the significant socio-economic impact of small tea plantations (STPs) and small tea growers (STGs) in Rajganj block, Jalpaiguri district. The findings reveal a notable surge in tea cultivation activities post-2005, driven by various factors including reduced risk, low capital investment, multi-crop cultivation, self-employment opportunities, locally available markets, and irrigation facilities. Moreover, the profitability of tea cultivation compared to other crops has led farmers to convert their agricultural land into tea plantations. The socio-economic condition of small tea growers has improved substantially after 2005. There's been a diversification in occupational structures, with a significant rise in the number

of growers engaged in multiple occupations. This diversification has contributed to increased income levels among small tea growers, as evidenced by the shift in monthly income distribution post-2005. Additionally, there has been a noticeable improvement in literacy rates among both small tea growers and their family members, indicating enhanced educational access and attainment. Overall, the study highlights the transformative impact of small tea plantations on the socio-economic landscape of Rajganj block. The findings suggest that tea cultivation has emerged as a vital source of income and employment for rural communities, leading to improvements in livelihoods, educational attainment, and overall well-being. However, further research and policy interventions may be needed to sustain and enhance the socio-economic benefits derived from small tea cultivation in the region. The emerging entrepreneurship in small tea plantation could be considered as new vision for the sustainable growth and development of the tea sector of Rajganj block as well as the Jalpaiguri district and in case of Jalpaiguri district, Rajganj block have the highest record of this scenery. This silent socio-economic revolution by the small tea growers in Rajganj block as well as Jalpaiguri district has been contributed significantly in the rural industrialization process.

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