

**SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH OF TEA
PLANTATION WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF A TEA
ESTATE IN WEST TRIPURA DISTRICT**

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BARNALI DAS



CENTRE OF SOCIAL MEDICINE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

NEW DELHI-110067

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RECOMMENDATION FORM FOR EVALUATION BY THE EXAMINER/S

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This is to certify that the dissertation/thesis titled SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH OF TEA PLANTATION WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF A TEA STATE IN WEST TRIPURA DISTRICT.....submitted by Mr/Ms...BARNALI DAS.....in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of degree of M.Phil/M.Tech/Ph.D of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, has not been previously submitted in part or in full for any other degree of this university or any other university/institution.

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Rama V. Baru

Signature of Supervisor

Date: 05/11/2020

Rajib Dasgupta

Signature of Dean/Chairperson

Date:

Dedicated to
my Parents Smt. Madhuri Das and Sri Tanmay Behari Das,
my children Megh (Debaleen) and Chand (Sangeet),
my Family
for their constant encouragement, support and help
and
Tea Garden Workers of Tripura
without whom this thesis would not have been possible

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Abbreviations

- AAA— Administrative Cum Account Assistant
- AASAA—All Adivasi Students' Association of Assam
- AATTSAA—All Assam Tea Tribes Students Association of Assam
- AADMK-- All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
- ACMA—Adivasi Cobra Militants of Assam
- ACMS—All Assam Mazdur Sangha
- AD—Anno Domini
- ADC—Autonomous District Council
- ADF—Adivasi Dragon Fighters
- AITUC—All India Trade Union Congress
- ANC—Ante Natal Care
- ANLA—Adivasi National Liberation of Assam
- ANM—Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife
- Alb—Albumin
- APA—Adivasi Peoples' Army
- APPL—Amalgamated Plantation Private Limited
- ASHA—Accredited Social Health Activist
- ATTF—All Tripura Tiger Force
- ATTS—Anna Thotta Thozhilalar Sangam
- BDT—Bangladesh Taka
- BC- Before Christ
- BCF—Birsa Commando Force
- BJP—Bhartiya Janata Party
- BMI—Body Mass Index
- BOD5-- Biological Oxygen Demand5
- BP—Blood Pressure

BPL—Below Poverty Line
 BSA— Body Surface Area
 BT/CT—Bleeding Time/ Clotting Time
 BTRI—Bangladesh Tea Research Institute
 CAGR—Compound Annual Growth Rate
 CCTPW—Co-Ordination Committee of Tea Plantation Workers
 CDPWR—Committee for Defence of Plantation Workers Right
 CHC—Community Health Centre
 CIS—Commonwealth Independent States
 CITU—Central Indian Trade Union
 COVID 19—Corona Virus Disease outbreak 19
 CPI— Communist Party of India
 CPI (M)—Communist Party of India (Marxist)
 CSM&CH—Centre of Social Medicine & Community Health
 CT—Computed Tomography
 CTC—Cut, Tear and Curl
 CV—Co-efficient Variation
 DGP—Director General of Police
 DMK—Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
 DOTS—Directly Observed Treatment, Short-course
 ECCE —Early Childhood Care and Education
 ECG—Electrocardiography
 e. g— (L. *exempli gratia*; for the shake of example)- for example
 et al—L. *et alii* – and others
 etc— L. *et cetera*; -- and other similar things
 F-ICTC—Facility Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre
 GeM—Government-e- Marketing

GOI—Government of India
GNM—General Nursing and Midwifery
GST—Goods and Service Tax
Hb—Haemoglobin
HBsAg—Hepatitis B Surface Antigen
HMIS—Health Management Information System
HIV—Human Immunodeficiency Virus
H/M—Head Master/ Head Mistress
HMS—Hind Mazdur Sabha
H/S—Higher Secondary
html—hypertext mark-up language
http- hypertext transport/ transfer protocol
ICS—Indian Civil Service
ICU—Intensive Care Unit
IERB—Institutional Ethics Review Board
i.e. (L. *id est*; that is)—that is to say
IFC—International Finance Corporation
ILO—International Labour Organization
IMR- Infant Mortality Rate
INTUC—Indian National Trade Union Congress
IPD—In Patient Department
IPHS—Indian Public Health Standard
JNU— Jawaharlal Nehru University
JSS—Jana Shikhsa Samiti
Kg—Kilogram
LCA—Labour Catchment Area
LMF- Licentiate of Medical Faculty

LPF—Labour Progressive Front

MC—Municipal Corporation

MLA—Member of the Legislative Assembly

MNC—Multi National Corporations

MNREGA—Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

MP—Malaria Parasite

MPW—Multi Purpose Worker

MPS—Multi Purpose Supervisor

MUAC—Mid Upper Arm Circumference

NFHS—National Family and Health Survey

NGO—Non-Government Organization

NLFT—National Liberation Front of Tripura

NP- Nagar Panchayat

NRHM—National Rural Health Mission

NSS—National Sample Survey

OBC—Other Backward Class

OBG—Obstetrics and Gynaecology

OPD—Out Patient Department

OT—Operation Theatre

p— page (plural pp)

PCM—Paracetamol

PDS—Public Distribution System

PHC—Primary Health Centre

PLA—Plantation Labour Act

PNC—Post Natal Care

PPP- Public Private Partnership

RBS—Random Blood Sugar

RBSK—Rastriya Bal Swashtha Karyakram
Rs. —Rupees
RTI—Reproductive Tract Infection
SC—Scheduled Caste/ Sub Centre
SLI—Standard Living Index
SNCU—Sick New Born Care Unit
SS-- Suspended Solids
ST—Scheduled Tribe
STD—Sexually Transmitted Disease
STI—Sexually Transmitted Infection
TANTEA—Tamil Nadu Tea Plantation Corporation Limited
TB—Tuberculosis
TDS—Total Dissolved Solids
TE—Tea Estate
TPM—*Tripura Praja Mandal*
TRGMP—*Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parisad*
TSR—Tripura State Rifles
TTAADC—Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council
TTDC—Tripura Tea Development Corporation
TNV—Tripura National Volunteers
TUJS—*Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti*
TV—Television
UK—United Kingdom
UNICEF—United Nations *International* Children’s Emergency Fund
UPASI— United Planters Association of South India
US—United States
USA—United States of America

UTUC—United Trade Union Congress

VCTC—Voluntary Council and Testing Centre

VD—Venereal Disease

VDRL—Venereal Diseases Research Laboratory Test

VHND—Village Health and Nutrition Day

Vol—volume

WHO—World Health Organisation

www — World Wide Web



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INTRODUCTION

“Hamar didi pati tule

Koroi gacher anre,

Kala gamcha mathay liye

Bejan maya lage.”

Jhumur Song, (Goala 1997, p.5)

‘My elder sister plucks tea leaves

Under the shade of the Koroi tree,

In a black cloth around her head she gathers them

Oh! How compassionate I feel for her.’ (Translated by Sang Lee)

Jhumur songs in “Chilomilo” float in air while workers are plucking tea leaves in tea gardens of Tripura. The song of happiness, the tale of sorrows, the sweat of their hard work expressed in “Chilomilo” in Tripura or “Sadri” in North Bengal or ‘Bagania’ in Assam all are same.

The tea industry in India started its journey in the year 1853 AD after the export of twelve tea boxes to London from Calcutta (<https://landrevenue.assam.gov.in/information-services/tea-land-administration-in-assam>). The British started tea industry in Assam. Later on, the industry had spread to other parts of India. Darjeeling tea of North Bengal become the famous tea in world because of its special flavour and taste. We always come across the photograph of ladies plucking tea leaves with smiling face on the packet of tea. Is it so? The smiling face holding a basket on her back and plucking tea leaves happily is it the reality of the tea garden workers? The beverage, which almost all families take (India is the largest tea consuming country in the world) in the morning and start their journey of the day, comes to their cup so easily?

When the tea industry was first established it needed workers. The workers who can work hard, workers who can be manipulated by the employer so that the production of tea can be more and profit can be more. This Agri-based industry is a labour-intensive industry. But not everyone can do that hard work with low wages and sustain themselves in all adverse condition. There came the search of labour who can withstand all adversities. The tribes, the lower castes, the poor people of already displaced, oppressed, exploited by money lenders, Zamindars, Shahukars became victim of their situation and landed in tea gardens and coal mines. They

migrated alone, along with families, friends or relatives to far places away from their original place in search of better livelihood. Again, they were trapped by middlemen, 'Arkathi's, 'Girmit's, with false promises of better life and landed in another world of exploitation, deprivation, lost their freedom and dignity and became indentured labour in the tea gardens of different places of the Indian subcontinent. During British era and after independence their condition has not changed much. They still suffer. Generations have passed, the new generation has listened stories of their forefather's migration to tea gardens but they still are tea garden workers. Majority of these workers are still fighting for their rights, for basic necessities. Still they are to get minimum basic human dignity in broader outside society.

In India tea plantations are situated in North Bengal, hilly areas of North-Eastern states and South India. The major tea producing states are Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Other than these states tea also produce in Tripura, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Odisha. Tripura is the fifth tea producing state among all the states (Ministry of Labour and Employment, GOI, 2008-2009, Das 2020). British established tea industry other parts of India but in Tripura it was the monarchy that took initiative to establish the tea industry in Tripura.

In this thesis the researcher tried to bring out the political, and economic reasons for establishing the tea industry in Tripura. The thesis tries to bring out the social determinants of health of tea garden workers in Tripura through an interdisciplinary approach.

First chapter of the thesis looks into development of tea industry in India from the British period to after independence. The chapter divided into two broad headings, i.e. tea industry before independence and tea industry after independence. Before independence after the discovery of tea the British took hold the tea industry in India. They exploited Indian economy and its people through tea industry (LaFavre 2013). This section also highlighted the process of labour recruitment in the tea industry in its initial stage. There were laws for recruitment of labourers to the tea estate, but most of the time which were violated by recruiters. The oppression and torture by owners and managers of tea estate made workers to resist those exploitation through 'rioting', 'mobbing' and 'gathering' against owners and managers of tea estates (LaFavre 2013; Kar 1981; Kar 1984; De 2015; Das 2016; Sarkar 2015; Duara and Mallick 2012; Behal and Mohapatra 1992). This section also explains the booming of tea industry and export of tea to other countries of the world. India became major tea export country in the world, though later on India came down to 2nd position in terms of export of tea.

The second section tries to look into the workers situation after independence and welfare measures taken by democratic Indian government to ensure workers social security and safety and to upgrade their condition. There were formation of different political agencies and trade unions to address workers grievances. After independence there were changes in tea industry, many of the British agencies left tea gardens and there were changes of ownership of the tea plantation (Mukherjee 1978; Tharian 1984; Bhowmik 2011). But workers condition has not changed much. The tea industry saw a setback. China came to first position pushing India in second position in export. There was competition in the international market. New countries started producing tea and taking over the market. This resulted in a crisis in the Indian tea industry (Rao and Hone 1974; Nagoor 2009; Laskar and Thapa 2015; Mazumder Basu, Bera and Ranjan 2012). The factors which are causing decline of the tea industry in India is also discussed in this chapter (Tharian 1984; Bhowmik 2011; Hazarika 2011; Sharma 2013; Shah 2013; Phukan 2015; Sarkar 2015; Das 2016).

The second chapter includes literature review and conceptualization of the problem. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is literature review about tea garden workers living, working conditions (Mazumder and Roy 2012; Hassan 2014; Pal and Hussain 2016; Chowdhury, Hasan and Karim 2011; Xaxa 1996; Bhowmik 1996; Kalam 1996; Duara and Mallick 2012; Chatterjee 2014; Srinivasan 2016; Rasaily 2003), health status (Kundu et al 2013; Medhi et al 2006; Biswas et al 2002; Borgohain 2013) and cultural perception of illness and health seeking behaviour (Chowdhuri and Verma 2002; Chowdhuri 2014; Das 2014). This leads to the research questions and objectives of the thesis. There are very few studies on the social determinants of health of tea garden workers in Tripura and different types of ownership of the tea garden of Tripura. The second section is about methodology of the research. The selection of tea estates, permission taking from tea estates, pilot study, ethical clearance from the ethics review board of JNU and finally the field work. The problem faced during field work also has been discussed here.

The third chapter addresses the first objective of the thesis. This chapter is about the evolution of tea industry in Tripura, social, economic and political reason behind the establishment of tea industry in India. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is about the establishment of tea industry in Tripura by the monarchy, the recruitment of labour, Bengali entrepreneurs coming to Tripura and giving out land to them by monarchy for establishing tea industry. Philanthropic action of Maharaja, to rescue stranded labourers at Assam due to Chargola exodus and bringing them to Tripura, which in turn met the shortage of labour in the

tea garden of Tripura. Here in Tripura also workers migrated from other places of India and Bangladesh in search of livelihood by 'Arkathi', or middlemen (Chib 1984; Goala 2001; 2003; 2010; Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995; Panika 1998; Chakraborty 2012). There was reluctance among local tribes to work in the tea estate as labourers (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995). There was law made by 'Maharaja' to address labour issues (Chakraborty 2002). During monarchy also tea industry faced problems due to inexperience planters, inadequate machinery, labour shortage, unscientific planting of tea bushes and shade trees, during great depression of 1930's (Chakraborty 2002; Chakraborty 2012).

Second part of the chapter deals with the tea industry after the merger agreement of 1949, when Tripura joined the Indian union. During this period there were many changes with the transition from monarchy to democracy. There were legal provisions for protection of labour and there was formation of trade unions. The rule which maharaja made were discarded. The new rule The Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954 along with Plantation Labour Act 1951 was implemented. There were changes on the political front. There was problem of insurgency like other North-Eastern state. Due to changing political social scenario there was changes in ownership of tea plantation. There were three types of ownership. The ownership pattern has an effect on the workers socio-economic conditions and health status. In the industrial front tea of Tripura is exported to other countries and states.

The third section look into the workers identity in the broader society. How they see themselves and find themselves with in local tribes and Bengali society. In return how broader society accepted them and what social, political and democratic identity they have in Tripura.

The fourth chapter has tried to contrast and compare two types of ownerships in the tea plantations, one is privately owned and another is workers co-operative. The chapter starts with the history of establishment of both the tea estates. Both the tea estates were privately owned but later on one tea estate changed to workers co-operative due to death of owner without any heir. Government intervention to establish co-operative and giving the tea estate to one of left governments activist to start co-operative proved fruitful. There is difference between the structure and composition of the two tea estates. The facilities provided by the management also varies at both the tea estates. The privately-owned tea estate is running at loss whereas co-operative tea estate is booming in business. They have their own factory, own packaging and marketing system. Their tea is known as Durgabari Gold Tea. They bought another tea estate. Whereas the privately-owned tea estate had to shut down its factory due to insurgency problem.

They are now surviving by selling green tea leaves to other tea estates. Though both the tea estate could not provide all the facilities entitled to provide to workers according to PLA-1951 and The Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954 but the workers co-operative could provide more facilities to its workers.

Food security and reasons for the success of workers co-operative also has been discussed in this chapter.

The economic and social condition affects the health status of people. The fifth chapter is divided into five sections. The first section deals with the workers self-reported morbidity. The morbidity profile represents that there is no difference in suffering from seasonal diseases or minor ailments across hierarchy of workers. The second section elaborates different health services available, accessible, affordable and acceptability across different categories of workers. Office staffs or sub staffs or higher officials suffers from non-communicable diseases more and most of them prefer to access private allopathic health services. That accessibility ranges from local private practitioner, nursing home to private hospitals outside of the state. They use home remedies along with allopathic treatment.

The workers of the private owned tea estate for minor ailments uses home remedies at the initial stages of illness, if not cured buy medicine from allopathic pharmacy from market or goes to nearby Primary Health Centre for treatment. They access district or state medical college hospital if diseases are not cured at PHC. Usually when referred from PHC or sometimes if they feel that the disease will not be addressed by PHC they straightway go to district or medical college hospital. The workers access private allopathic treatment if every measure fails to cure the diseases. They go to neighbouring state Assam (Silchar) for availing treatment.

Whereas workers co-operative tea estate workers go to private allopathic facilities more compared to privately owned tea estate. The distance of availing treatment is also less than private owned tea estate. They access PHC, district or state medical college hospital.

Both the tea estates workers in some specific cases consult Homeopathic or Ayurvedic treatment facilities. They access faith healers, local Ayurvedic personnel or herbalist when the causes of diseases cannot be explained or gynaecological (Leucorrhoea) cases more.

The third section of this chapter tries to understand the health perception of workers across hierarchy. The workers perception on health ranges from hygiene to psychological health. They relate their 'being healthy' with hygiene—personal, environmental, relation with others-

family, relatives, friends, happiness at home and work place, doing work, rest, food, food and 'good food', maintaining regularity, wages, education, entertainment and emotional wellbeing. The perception of 'healthy' differs across hierarchy, among male and female, younger and older people.

Fourth section of this chapter deals with the maternal and child health along with contraceptive measure taken by the workers of these two tea estates. It has been revealed that there is no infant and maternal mortality in the co-operative tea estate with in last twelve years where as the privately owned tea estate has infant mortality. Regarding access to institutional delivery also co-operative tea estate is way ahead than privately owned tea estate. There is hundred percent institutional delivery at co-operative tea estate. Decision making power regarding contraceptive measure by women workers is also better than women of privately owned tea estate.

The fifth section describe about the constraints faced by workers to access the allopathic health services.

There is only difference about workers health status is incidence and prevalence of tuberculosis among workers and infant mortality rate among them. The workers co-operative tea estate free of tuberculosis for 4-5years except one recent case. The patient is temporary factory worker. Whereas at private owned tea estate there is incidence and prevalence of tuberculosis is more. There is mortality also due to tuberculosis. The workers or the family members of the workers suffering or suffered from tuberculosis.

The health of a person not only free of diseases or illness but also related to persons social economic status in a society. Economic condition gives persons to avail basic amenities of life. Here the health statuses of workers are better at workers co-operative tea estate than the private owned tea estate. The workers co-operative is better performing and providing better basic facilities to the workers. Tea plantation is a closely confined society. The closely confined society of different tea plantation differs in relation of production. This in turn effects the health of workers. So, it can be said that "Health is a socially produced phenomenon" (Rasaily 2003).

The sixth chapter is discussion and conclusion. It discusses overall study. Health of a person depends on subjective perception, social and cultural factors. Subjective perception again depends on societal and cultural factor in which the person resides and lives. The chapter discusses the different phases of transformation of tea industry in Tripura. This chapter also discusses changes of work situation and problems faced by tea industry and workers during the

COVID-19 Pandemic. The change in the ownership pattern due to economic, social and political reasons brought different types of ownership in the tea industry. But the workers remain same. They are the generations of workers who came to Tripura or were brought to the state in search of livelihood. The private ownership declined and there are government owned tea estates and workers co-operative. The study which is conducted in the west Tripura district where maximum number of tea estates are there, took two types of ownership pattern of tea estate. The ownership pattern and the relation between the workers varies in the tea estates. The sense of having possession of the tea estate gives workers of co-operative tea estate a sense of responsibility and security. They collectively think for betterment of tea estate. The co-operative tea estate which started in 1978 now became one of the successful tea plantations. Forty years back the workers were dying and starving now do not think about hunger rather they think about giving better life to their new generation through education. The health status of the workers also better than the privately-owned tea estate. Their decision making regarding their reproductive health is also better. Better economic condition, job security and availability of better basic amenities allows them to think about other aspect of life. This reflect in their perception of being healthy. The workers 'being healthy' revolves around children education, 'if I work', 'taking treatment on time', 'maintaining regularity' etc. whereas privately owned tea estate workers relate their being healthy to 'food', 'good food', 'availability of basic amenities', 'entertainment', 'tension' other than which workers of co-operative tea estate mentioned. With availability of basic amenities and secured income the workers perception on being healthy also changed. Workers 'felt need' make them seek treatment from different health systems.

Their illness seeking behaviour depends upon their perception about disease, available, accessible and affordable health system. The illness seeking behaviour also varies according to hierarchy of workers, diseases they suffer and duration of sufferings. Most of the cases they try home remedies at initial stage. Economic status also play role in accessing allopathic and private allopathic system of medicine across hierarchy. Their 'felt need' and behavioural approaches, socio-economic status as well as their cultural perspective of diseases causation leads to illness seeking behaviour. Lastly the chapter ends with some suggestion to improve workers situation at private owned tea estate.

CHAPTER 1

Evolution of tea industry in India: Colonial and Post-independence

Introduction

After discovery of tea in India around 190 years back British took hold of the tea industry. Tea became a major revenue generating agricultural product. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section of this chapter looks at the history of the tea industry in colonial era and second section looks into post-independence era. It starts with the history of setting up of tea industry in different parts of India. The tea industry is labour intensive therefore needed workers. Labour contractors acted as middlemen and they sourced workers from different parts of India who started working in the confined tea estates. These migrant workers faced high mortality during their voyage and afterwards due to arduous climate and unhealthy working conditions in the tea estates. (Rao 1946; LaFavre 2013; Kar 1981). Their working condition, exploitation by owners and other higher officials of the tea industry and worker's resistance against that exploitation are also discussed here. (LaFavre 2013; Kar 1981; 1984; De 2015; Das 2016; Sarkar 2015; Duara and Mallick 2012; Behal and Mohapatra 1992). Meanwhile, the tea industry also expanded its business in other parts of the world. It became the national drink in many countries. There was competition among tea producing countries in the world. India holds a significant place in terms of production, consumption of tea and export of tea in other parts of the world. Since the setup of the tea industry from the colonial period to independence there has been a cyclical increase and decline of tea export for Indian tea to different countries of the world. Competition for Indian tea came mainly from China, and Sri Lanka in the international market. Tea industry faced a major setback during the Great Depression of the 1930's and measures were taken by the managing companies and tea producers to revive the tea industry in the international market. (Mukherjee 1978; Tharian 1984; Misra 1987; Behal and Mohapatra 1992; Karmakar and Banerjee 2005; Sarkar 2015).

After independence the Indian government tried to give some social security to tea garden workers by implementing different laws and Plantation Labour Act 1951. The system of managing agencies were abolished. British companies were allowed to do business by paying high taxes or were compelled to leave (Mukherjee 1978; Tharian 1984; Bhowmik 2011). Although The tea industry in India expanded in its initial phase, the export of tea was declining due to various reasons and Indian tea export started declining in the international market. In the meantime, the domestic consumption of tea was increasing. China took the lead in exporting tea pushing India down to second place. India was exporting tea to the market of countries which had bilateral treaty with India. (Rao and Hone 1974; Nagoor 2009; Laskar and Thapa 2015; Mazumder Basu, Bera and Ranjan 2012;). The position of India in export of tea

has been pushed down to fourth place in recent years due to emergence of new countries in the international market. (Wagh 2014). Along with the problem of export tea industry also facing internal problem in different areas inside the country. Those factors had been discussed by several authors. (Tharian 1984; Bhowmik 2011; Hazarika 2011; Sharma 2013; Shah 2013; Phukan 2015; Sarkar 2015; Das 2016).

Many different trade unions came up and several political parties voiced their concerns about the interests of workers as well as of owners. Many times, negotiations took place between the trade unions and Government as well as with the Tea Owners' Associations about workers' demands. (Sarkar 2015; Biswas undated).

I. Tea industry, colonial raj: North East and North Bengal

History of consumption of tea dates back to long ago. There are some interesting old stories how tea has been discovered and became a drink. There is a story in Japan that one Buddhist monk "*Bodhidharm*" was meditating near a wall of China for nine years. Once he fell asleep. When he woke up, he felt guilty and cut his eyelashes. Those eyelashes became roots and gradually became a tree. From that tree, leaves were boiled in hot water and a drink was made. That is 'tea' which has a property of keeping people awake. (Bhattacharjya 1984). Another story says that emperor *Shen-Nung* of China (2700 BC) was the first person to introduce tea among the Chinese. He was a very successful emperor and also possessed a scientific mindset. He ordered that everybody should drink water by boiling. One day while he was traveling along with his personnel, he became tired. He wanted to drink water. Suddenly in that boiling water some leaves fell in and the colour turned brown. The emperor was curious and drank little bit of that water. To his astonishment he felt rejuvenated with energy. Gradually it spread in China. (Bhattacharjya 1984; Debnath 2012)

During the 6th century drinking tea was introduced in Japan through a Japanese Buddhist monk *Yeisei*. He went to China and came to know about tea. On his way return to Japan he brought some tea seeds from China and introduced tea in Japan. Tea became a popular drink among kings and other elite class people of Japan. Gradually common people also started drinking tea. They made drinking tea a classic art. They introduced 'Japanese Tea Ceremony', 'Tea House'. From 'tea house' developed a new architecture- '*Chashitsu Architecture*' (a specially constructed house for holding tea party). Elite people started a tournament 'Tea Tournament'. This was a competition to name different tea brand. (Debnath 2012).

Gradually tea spread to Europe. Father Jasper De Cruz was the first among Europeans to taste tea during his mission to China for preaching Christianity in China. He was from Portugal. Portuguese started business with China. (Debnath 2012). So, from Asian artistic reign to European industrial business “tea” started evolving.

Tea industry in India is about 180 years old. Tea is produced by more than thirty countries of the world. Among them the prime producers are China, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, and Indonesia. These five countries produce 76% of world's tea and exports 79% of world's tea. India contributes 26% of world's total tea production. (Laskar and Thapa 2015; Das 2020).

India was the single largest producer of tea until 2005. Now it ranks second to China in tea production. The country produces mostly three varieties namely CTC (cut tear & curl) 88%, “orthodox” tea 10% and green tea 2%. India is the largest tea consuming country and the most commonly consumed variety of tea is CTC and 22% of world's consumption of tea is in India only. It is also largest producer and consumer of black tea. (Arya 2013; Das 2020). Tea plantations are mostly situated in hilly areas and interior places in North-Eastern and Southern states in India. Major tea producing states are Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Tea is also grown in Karnataka, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Bihar & Orissa but to a small extent. (Ministry of Labour and Employment, GOI 2008-2009; Das 2020). Among these Tripura is the 5th tea producing state in India. Tea is an Agri-based industry where more than two million people work. (Das 2020).

The history of tea consumption in India dates back to 12th century. In Assam Singpho and Khamti tribes were consuming this beverage since long. A Dutch traveller named Jan Huyghen Van Linschoten recorded this long ago in Assam. The Major General of East India Company, Robert Bruce in 1823 also made a similar observation and got interested. He negotiated with the tribal chief Bishagaum and tried to test the leaves scientifically. In 1830 Charles Alexander Bruce who was brother of late Robert Bruce dispatched the tea samples to the Botanical Garden of Calcutta. In Botanical Garden of Kolkata, it was identified as a different variety of ‘Cha’ not the Chinese variety. It was named as “Camellia Sinensis Assamica”. (www.teahelpindia.com accessed on 14/11/2015; Das 2020). In the year 1838, 12 boxes of tea manufactured by Singpho Chiefs were exported to London from Calcutta. (<https://landrevenue.assam.gov.in/information-services/tea-land-administration-in-assam>; Das 2020). After discovery of tea British started tea industry in India.

Formation of plantation and labour recruitment

During the colonial period, British established tea industry after the discovery of tea in Assam. These tea plantations and the industry required large tracts of land and were also labour intensive. But due to the arduous working conditions in plantation it was difficult to get adequate supply of labourers. The British used different means to recruit labourers. Tea industry was the most profitable industry for the British. They used many methods to get hold of the industry. LaFavre (2013) argues that East India Company employed oppressive techniques on the tea companies' in order to extract resources and materials from India. They created a world of work relations in these tea estates. This consisted of tea estate owner, manager, staff, sub staff and mass population of labourers who were exploited by their employer. In several ways these planters exploited India and Indian people through the tea business. (LaFavre 2013).

One of the most oppressive tea company was the Assam Tea Company. It was formed by a group of British merchants on 12th February 1839. The Assam Company united with the Bengal Tea Association on 16th January, 1840 and this region (Bengal and Assam) became the world's largest tea growing region. They became the worst abusers of tea plantation workers in Asia. (LaFavre 2013).

LaFavre highlights how the East India Company oppressed Indians by levying high inequitable taxes and this model later on helped tea companies to exploit the local inhabitants and make profit in the tea industry. Assam Company sustained the oppressive working conditions in the tea gardens by increasing Indian taxes and dividing working forces. This in turn became an obstacle in the development of India. The exploitative terms of engagement between the colonial state and the Indian population benefited European nations economically, politically as well as socially. (LaFavre 2013). LaFavre also highlights the reaction of labourers against oppression, illiteracy and poverty in the tea garden.

William Pitt's India Act of 1784¹ provided almost sole sovereignty to the East India Company to make "requisite laws, constitutions and ordinance" in India. This Act actually increased

¹ In August 1784, William Pitt, the then British Prime Minister passed the Pitt's India Act 1784 in British Parliament. The Board of Control which consists of Board of 6 Commissioners who looked for affairs of India. The board was given full access to the East India Company's record. It had power to send Governors to India and full authority to alter them. The Act separated political and commercial activities of the Company. The Act provided joint government +of the company and British crown. The company was represented by the Directors and the crown was represented by the Board of Control. There was a secret committee of 3 members who worked

fraudulence in the company and this was later reflected in the tea industry too. The activities of East India Company resulted in a system known as “Black agents”. They dislodged Indian brokers who were known as “*dadni*” and middleman in Indian business. Due to their dislodgement the Indian merchants and traders became dependent on British Entrepreneurs. This resulted to a corrupted environment in the trade and company in this way accumulated wealth. This model later on reflects in tea gardens also. (LaFavre 2013).

Another practice of corruption was through the Mughals. The British used to pay bribes to them if they increased taxes on commodities and European taxes were eliminated. Later on, this result in a law known as Waste Land Grant Rules of 1838. (LaFavre 2013).

Following the increase in consumption of tea the British merchants formed a company in London on 12th February, 1839, known as Assam Company. This company’s main goal was to suppress monopoly of Chinese tea. The Waste Land Grant Rules allowed government to grant land free of revenue for the first twenty years. Another rule, Fee Simple Rules of 1862, Revised Fee Simple Rules of 1874 and New Lease Rules of 1876 gave opportunity to British planters to own large amount of land at a concessional rate. This created an unequal relationship between local businessman and planters who had to pay high taxes compared to the British. Thus, the merchants, traders, labourers and peasants were marginalized. Assam Company acquired large amount of land but half of it was cultivated and the remaining half were kept for future use. Local people could not get hold of land and they could not venture to invest in the tea industry as it required high amount of capital. British were not paying tax but Indians were to pay tax of two rupees per acre to the British. (LaFavre 2013).

The British by hook or crook established their monopoly in the tea industry. Maniram Dewan² who was with the Assam tea Company left to start his own tea industry but his land was termed as rice producing land and he had to pay high taxes because of which he became bankrupt leading to closure of his industry. Even when he was excelling in Business Assam Company labelled him a rebel. They alleged that he incited rebellion against the British during the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 in Assam. He was arrested in Calcutta and kept in Alipur for few weeks and

as link between Board of control and Court of Directors. All civilians and military officers were ordered to provide full account of their property within joining of two months of their post.

² Maniram Dewan (17th April 1806-26th February 1858)- his name was Maniram Dutta Baruha, he was commonly known as Maniram Dewan or ‘Kalita Raja’. He was the first Indian tea planter who grow tea commercially in Assam. he established ‘cinnamara’ tea garden at Cinnamara in Jorhat. He established another tea plantation at Singlo/Selung in Shibsagar.

then brought to Jorhat. He was hanged publicly on 26th February in the year 1858. After his death the Company captured his land. (LaFavre 2013).

In the initial period there was shortage of labour in tea plantation. British recruited Chinese labourers in the tea garden of Assam but faced problem with them as they demanded high price and refused to work if the situation was not in their favour. Due to this, the British gradually tried to recruit local Assamese and Naga people for this work. They were recruited under supervision of Chinese labourers so that they can learn the art of plucking tea leaves. But those people were paid lower wages than the Chinese. These labourers were referred as ‘taklars’ or tea makers by the British. But they were hard to control and reluctant to work in the plantation at low wages and often left the garden without any prior information. They even hampered the work by doing strike or demonstration on payment days. Chinese workers even died of Malaria or Kalazar and local people were reluctant to work and risk their life for such low wages. British feared to employ local tribes in plantation as labourers fearing that they will negotiate for better wages. (De 2015).

Due to the nature of work and working conditions local Bengali and Assamese people were reluctant to work in the plantation and hence were labelled as “lazy” by the planters. It was observed that the cultivation of rice could be done with less labour and therefore they were not inclined to work in the plantation which was much more arduous. (LaFavre 2013).

So, the planters brought labourers from far off places like Bengal, Orissa, Chota Nagpur, Central Province, United Province, Nepal, Bombay and Madras of different ethnicity and race like Santhals, Mundas, Kols, Gonds, Konds, and Kharias to work in the plantation. (Bordoloi 2015).

“The Munda and Gond from Bihar; Santal, Tanti and Bhumij from Bengal and Bihar; Oraon from Bihar and Orissa; Savara from Bengal, Bihar and Orissa; Goala from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh; Lohar from Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh; Khond from Andhra Pradesh; and Boya from Tamil Nadu”. (Kar 1984, p.14).

The description above shows the diverse regional and social backgrounds of the labourers who came to work on the plantations in Assam during that period.

These workers were easy to exploit as they were immigrants, they could not go back to their native place so easily and they were not allowed to mix with local people. As they were from different places it was easy for the planters to divide them on the basis of religion, language,

caste and different ethnic groups. Planters said that Bengali people are weaker than Bhagalpuri, Chittagong and Dacca people. In reality many Bengali Muslims died as they could not tolerate the climate and mortality rate was as high as 35%. They were even kept illiterate so that they could not demand or exercise their rights. They were paid low wages, but managers used to get high amount of salary. Profits of tea industry were mostly in the hands of owners and managerial staff. There was class solidarity among them. But they never invested money for the wellbeing of the locals. As a result, North Bengal and Assam remain under developed. (LaFavre 2013).

Labourers coming to work in tea gardens were recruited by contractors. In India Europeans in Assam introduced the indentured system of labour recruitment in 1859. Planters established contacts with the contractors based in Calcutta. The city served as Centre for labour contractors and this became a large labour recruitment industry for planters. These contractors were licensed contractors. They used to employ middlemen like “*arkattis*” to get labourers from different areas. These “*Arkattis*” were male or female. They could convince their people to come and work in the plantation. These ‘*Arkattis*’ used cunning and nasty means to lure people through fraudulent methods by telling them that there were many opportunities if they work on plantation. They usually targeted poor people, destitute women or who were going through hardship of life. (LaFavre 2013; Duara and Mallick 2012; De 2015). To study the situation of labour in plantation a commission was established by the Government of Bengal. According to the commission’s recommendation Inland Emigration Act, Bengal Act III of 1863 was passed to get control of emigration in Assam. This 1863 Act III was enacted to regulate and licensed the labour recruitment. After this Act labour recruitment were increased. (LaFavre 2013; Sarkar 2015). Kar’s (1981) study details the Bengal Act III of 1863,

“This Act Provided that all recruiters should be licensed, that every intending emigrant should be produced before the magistrate of his own district, should be examined as to his willingness and physical fitness to emigrate, and then should be sent to central depot, where he was to put under contract (not exceeding a period of four years). The steamers and boats carrying the coolies to the labour districts were also licensed. The Act did not apply to a labourer who came to Assam without the intervention of a recruiter or contractor, but this exception meant little in practice”. (Kar 1981, p.11).

But this law could not do anything better as death rate of labourers had not come down rather it had increased continuously. Death rate was as high as 140 to 556 per thousand in the year 1865 to 1867. Savur (1973) observes that in reality this law was abused by contractors as they used to recruit large number of unlicensed sub-recruiters. The labourers were emigrated by

false promises and district registration system was also not effective to check the abuse of the law. (Kar1981, p.11).

Later on, Bengal Act III of 1863 was amended in 1865. New law, Bengal Act VI came in force. This law had “prescribed minimum wages, the limited hours of work (9 hours per day, and 6 days per week)”. (Kar 1981, p.11). It had also stated that maximum contract with immigrant labour would be maximum of three years and not beyond that and also stated that every estate should have a hospital, even a protector and an inspector of labourers should be there to visit and supervise the garden and labour-authority relation. But this Act also did not work and in 1868 government of Bengal appointed a Commission of Enquiry to examine the condition and prospects of tea cultivation in Assam including Sylhet. They found that still emigrations of labourers were done by false promises and death rate was higher due to poor living conditions like “bad housing, overcrowding, impure water and insufficient or unsuitable food.” (Kar 1981, pp.11-12) The commission made proposal that labourers should be recruited by garden itself through the garden *sardars*.

It was realized that indenture system of labour recruitment through “*arkattis*” were not as cost effective as planters thought and there were concerns regarding the way ‘*arkattis*’ dealt with labour recruitment. So, planters started adopting another means of recruiting labour. In 1870 ‘*sardari*’ system were introduced which proved beneficial for planters. (De 2015).

The ‘*sardari*’ System of recruitment recommended by the commission was not initially acknowledged by government of Bengal. Bengal Act II of 1870 though recognized ‘*sardari*’ recruitment system but sustained some provision of 1863 and 1865 Act i.e. provision of medical examination, contract signing by labourers before they were dispatched to tea district of Assam and supervision conditions during transit to the tea garden. Until 1915 two systems i. e. contractor’s and *Sardari* system of labour recruitment were there in Assam (Kar 1981, p.12). After 1926 gradually the indenture system of labour recruitment was abolished and ‘*sardari*’ system got popular. Managers of tea estates recruited ‘*sardars*’ through the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association. This organization was formed in 1877 in Calcutta by of all the estate managers. (De 2015).

The ‘*Sardars*’ were mainly people from the community itself. They too used means of luring people like dressing like those in a good position. They even offered to clear debts of prospective workers. Throughout India this practice was employed. (LaFavre 2013; Duara and Mallick 2012; De 2015). These ‘*sardars*’ were paid commission by the planters. This

commission was paid according to the gender of the workers. The contract money or '*girit*' were rupees 12 for male worker and rupees 8 for a female labourer. The contracts usually were sealed by thumb impression of the labourer. (De 2015).

These observations have been corroborated by other authors too. *Sardars* in North –Bengal region used to give loan to poor peasants and artisans to clear the debt of “*zamindars*” and “*sahukars*”. In this way the labourers fell in the trap of “*sardars*”. So, when they could not pay the loan back, they had to travel far land in search of work and usually they landed up in the plantation. (Sarkar 2015; Duara and Mallick 2012).

These workers usually had to agree to work in the tea plantation for four or five years and then return to their native place. But the wages were so low they could not even sustain themselves properly neither they could make any savings. Even if they desired to go, they were so far from their native place that it was difficult for them to return. (Das 2016).

Assam Tea Company used another measure to tie down the labourers to the plantation by allotting plot of lands to cultivate. As British monarchy allotted 2/3 of land of a tea estate to form tea plantation to the company and another 1/3 of land to remain without plantation it became easier for them to allot small plots to workers for their sustenance. Those who bought land by taking loans were compelled to work in the plantation. The tax was high for rice cultivating land and price of necessary commodity in the market were high. So, to sustain themselves they did not have any other means but to work on the plantation. (LaFavre 2013; Sarkar 2015).

During 1858-59 nearly 84,915 workers came to Assam to work as tea garden labourers. As the area of plantation increased, immigration of labourers also increased. During 1871-1901 periods near about 1, 80,000 labours came to Assam from different region of country. (Das 2016)

During the 1930 to 1940 number of emigrant labourers in Assam tea garden was studied and statistical data was generated. (Rao 1946). Rao (1946) collected data from the Labour Department of India and showed the trends in emigration, employment, wages and mortality of the labourers. In the table below it can be seen that large number of females, male, children came to Assam during the decade following 1930.

Table 1.1: Annual figures of emigration to the Assam Tea Gardens

Year	Men	Women	Children	Total
1930	33,510	14,117	12,169	59,796
1931	30,245	13,362	9,912	53,519
1932	23,247	14,986	12,764	50,997
1933	15,412	12,552	11,937	39,900
1934	17,483	14,617	15,860	47,960
1935	7,317	6,286	6,365	19,968
1936	8,436	7,587	7,856	23,879
1937	10,286	8,979	8,577	27,842
1938	12,645	10,729	9,641	33,015
1939	11,014	9,933	9,315	30,262
1940	9,488	7,792	7,497	24,777
1941	6,835	6,095	6,066	18,996
1942	5,512	4,810	4,249	14,511
1943	19,267	19,198	19,575	58,040
1944	16,457	12,925	13,558	41,940

Source: Rao MV Seshagiri, 1946, "A Statistical Study of Labour in the Assam Tea Plantation", *Sankhya: The Indian Journal of Statistics (1933-1960)*, Vol. 7.No. 4 (Jul. 1946), pp 445-448 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.30 AM from JSTOR

The table shows that migration was decreasing from the initial period i. e. 1930 to the later period i.e. 1942. The author argued that several factors were responsible for this decline. World War II had some contributions, as during this period there were strict instructions regarding the

recruitment of native labourers to the tea garden in some districts, i. e. strict rule to recruitment of only family members. Due to the war labourers were in demand for military purposes also.

But it can be said that gradually labour recruitment from outside Assam were decreasing. An additional factor was that recruitment of labour by the system of middlemen reduced and was replaced by labourers recruited directly through contractors.

In North Bengal i.e. Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai region labour recruitment were “free”. Labourers were brought from Chotanagpur area. This area was known as “Labour –Catchment area” (LCA), mainly for Dooars and Terai region. The Mundas and Oraons were brought from there. Initially for the Darjeeling region, labourer was brought from plain Bengal area, but they were unsuitable for the work as they could not tolerate the climate of Darjeeling. So East India Company brought labourers from Nepal. Caste oppression, debt, slavery or bondage was some of the reasons why Nepalese migrated to Darjeeling. During this time the Nepalese were taken in the army but lower castes like Kamis, Sarkis, Damais were not taken as soldiers but as ‘laskars’, to give their service to the regiment. British government maintained the social and military hierarchy in the regiment. Even occupational untouchables were not given to do household works. As a result, a large amount of people started to migrate in Darjeeling and settled there. (Paul 2015).

In Dooars and Terai region lands were largely controlled by Muslim *Jotedars* and Rajbanshi sharecroppers. The Company took these lands by various means from the Rajbanshies, Meches, Totos, and Lepchas for tea plantation. From 1889-1895 and 1931-1935 land holdings were generally possessed by Marwaris and Europeans reducing amount of land owned by Rajbanshies, Meches and Muslim *jotedars*. Land ownership too increased among Oraons and Adivasi communities from 1.16% to 7.14% as they were given cultivatable land for subsistence cultivation. Mainly, *sardars* who saved money, bought land and became *Jotedars*. Later though government tried to lease land through land distribution system, most of the Adivasis were unable to afford it. Even Rules and Regulations made it easier for *jotedars* to sell their land to Marwari entrepreneurs and traders and immigrants from East Bengal. (Paul 2015).

In the South ‘maistri’ was the intermediary person through whom wages were paid. They were the people who supplied labourers and they were paid commissions for that. Most of the time they were from higher caste people. They too functioned like “sardars” having a labour gang of 20-40 people. They were responsible for workers welfare and discipline. This system was known as ‘kangani’ system. In 1951 this ‘kangani’ system was abolished. But the system of

exploitation did not abolish. The same posts were rejuvenated and ex-labour contractors were recruited as field supervisors. Though there was no commission system but they got fixed wages and the system of exploitation of labourers remain same. (Savur 1973). Wages of labourers also had categories. Men were paid more than female and children. Before 1900 wage for men was Rs.5.00 and for women Rs. 4.00. The “*hazira*” and “*tikka*” were the two systems by which wages were paid to them. Often women and children were paid arbitrarily. Women’s jobs were termed as unskilled job. (Das 2016)

Types of labourers: their health

In 1934 Tea District Emigrant Labour Act (XXII of 1932) came into effect, there came two categories of labours; settled labour and “*Faltu*” or “*Basti*” labour means temporary labours. (Das 2016). The ‘*basti*’ labours came to work in the plantation from adjacent area and did not stay in the residential area of the garden. These ‘*basti*’ labourers were mainly contract- expired labourers who settled down near the tea plantation areas.

Children were employed in jobs like plucking, hoeing, weeding and nursery work and removal of shrubs which are harmful for tea plants. Yet they were paid less. (Das 2016).

We have seen recruitment of labour contractors was on a hire, based on commissions. As a result, they never thought of labourers’ welfare. Mortality rate of labourers were higher in the year 1861, 1863 during their voyage to Assam from mainland areas. It was 10 to 12% and even in one case it reached as high as 50%. (Kar 1981, p. 10).

The British tea companies kept wages low, as a result there were diseases, high rate of mortality and malnutrition among workers. However, most of the authors did not elaborate what type of diseases or how much mortality was there at that time. (LaFavre 2013; Sarkar 2015).

Rao’s study in 1934 to 1941 period showed mortality rate was higher among garden labourers than the rest of the Assam. Rao’s study compared the death rate of garden labourers with that of the general population. He was able to provide some data on the percentage of death due to different diseases.

Table 1.2: Comparison of the death rates of garden laborers with the general death rates

Year	Death rates per thousands		Difference observed
	In gardens	In Assam	
1934	22.6	19.0	+3.6
1935	22.6	20.5	+2.1
1936	22.8	18.6	+4.2
1937	22.9	20.9	+2.0
1938	23.1	20.9	+2.2

Source: Rao MV Seshagiri, 1946, "A Statistical Study of Labour in the Assam Tea Plantation", *Sankhya: The Indian Journal of Statistics (1933-1960)*, Vol. 7.No. 4 (Jul. 1946), pp 445-448 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.30 AM from JSTOR

Now if we observe the diseases from which labourers died at that period

Table 1.3: Percentage of death due to the several diseases

Year	Respiratory	Malaria	Dysentery	Diarrhoea	Anaemia
1934	16.7	11.0	9.6	6.0	6.5
1935	19.0	12.5	13.0	6.5	6.4
1936	19.7	12.5	11.5	6.6	6.0
1937	18.8	12.3	11.3	6.9	6.0
1938	20.5	11.0	11.6	6.6	6.1
1939	18.6	11.8	11.6	7.6	5.8
1940	18.0	10.4	9.5	6.6	5.6
1941	14.8	11.9	9.4	7.2	6.4

Source: Rao MV Seshagiri, 1946, "A Statistical Study of Labour in the Assam Tea Plantation", "Sankhya: The Indian Journal of Statistics (1933-1960), Vol. 7.No. 4 (Jul. 1946), pp 445-448 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.30 AM from JSTOR

The table shows that rate of respiratory diseases and malaria was very high among these labourers. Authors argued that this may be due to climatic conditions of Assam and therefore more labourers suffered from respiratory diseases.

Workers resistance against exploitation

To protect planters and owners from labourers' unrest and strike, The Workmen's Breach of Contract Act 1859 was introduced. According to this Act workers could not leave the plantation before the contract was over period that was five years, later the duration of contract was reduced to four years. In this law provision of arrest and punishment was there under Indian Penal Code section 492. Inland Emigration Act of 1882 further strengthened the planters' interest. This introduced "free emigration and unlicensed labour recruitment". (Sarkar 2015, p.8). It also said that "deserting or absconding workers criminally punishable". (Sarkar 2015, p. 8) but such workers can be arrested by planters "without any warrant". (Sarkar 2015, p. 8).

As there were large number of labourers but only few British managers, to control the labourers, to prevent their disobedience and desertion "*chowkidar*" and watch dogs were employed. (Savur 1973; LaFavre 2013; Sarkar 2015). The intermediaries who were hired to recruit labour belonged to the upper castes. To discipline the labourer's planters used different means of punishment, like "striking off the name of recalcitrant workers, underscoring the weight of leaf plucked, beating, kicking and other forms of corporal abuses as well as sexual violence against women workers". (Sarkar 2015, p. 11). Pay withholding was another measure to punish and disciplining workers. (Sarkar 2015). Workers were kept in isolation and prevented from making contact with the local people outside plantations. In some cases, planters even prevented labourer to produce rice in the land as it interfered with the plantation work and tea profit during nineteenth century. (LaFavre 2013; Sarkar 2015).

There were growing numbers of incidents of "rioting, mobbing, assaults and unlawful assembly" in the plantation of Assam. (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, p.62). Act I in 1882 led to increase of these incidence more in Surma valley of Assam. By the end of century, the "unlawful assembly" and "rioting" increased and prosecution reached to 272 per year. (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, p.62). In 1903 there was violent clash in Rowmari Garden in Lakhimpur District between "coolies and management". (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, p.62). In July 1903 the coolies of the garden collectively assaulted the manager who was a European and the Indian subordinates. The injury was so grievous that the European manager had to return to England for treatment. (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, p.63).

The assault of manager of Rowmari garden was due to the reason that during the rainy season management usually provided umbrellas but, in that year, they provided broad rim hats (Jhampi), in the rainy season by citing reason that with umbrella the production will be less.

Though officials said that due to prestige issue the workers agitated but further investigation revealed that the garden had been strict in work related matter. As in monsoon holding umbrella in one hand and plucking with the other hand will hamper the productivity so the management to keep productivity higher granted 'jhampi' instead of umbrella. It was not only in Rowmari but in other gardens also that the management faced resistance from workers. Authors referring to the government emigration act argued that in the Assam the labour unrest was more in comparison to any part of country and Ceylon. They argued that it is due to the nature of recruitment system of labourers through 'Arkattis', and penal system related to it in Assam. In other parts of country 'sardari' or 'sirdari' system of recruitment was there. Here the authors cite Chief Commissioner of Assam, J. B. Fuller's argument, states the causes of labour unrest in Assam were more than in other parts of India. (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, pp. 63,64).

"First, the lack of a garden sirdari system of recruitment and management of labour, put the European management directly in contact with the labour force. Without an authoritative spokesman to give vent to their grievances, the conflicts over minor grievances assumed violent proportion. Secondly, and more importantly, the power of private arrest in particular and the penal contract system in general rendered service in the plantations extremely unpopular. The high cost arkatti recruitment put such a premium on the coolie, that penal powers were utilized much too severely". (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, p.65).

The chief commissioner also argued that "by allowing the private power of arrest of deserters, the Government had closed the most effective safety valve against the occurrence of labour disturbances and rioting". (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, p.65). He too noted that "the widespread use of penal power turned Assam into a land of prison, thus materially hampering natural flow of labour to Assam". (Behal and Mohapatra 1992, p.65).

The Act I of 1882 "free emigration" system was the Act first to be amended. The *Arkatti* system was changed by the Act VI of 1901. It stopped the unlicensed recruiting in Assam. Under section three of the Act government once again started the supervision and registration of labourers who were migrating to Assam. Special Concession was granted to Tea Districts Labour Supply Association, which was the centralized recruiting agency. Now planters were forced to take up the responsibility of direct recruitment to get the benefit of concession. Second legislation was the Act XI of 1908. The penal powers and local contract of Act I from the Surma Valley was withdrawn completely. The power of private arrest was withdrawn from the valley completely. (Behal and Mohapatra 1992).

Act XIII of 1859 Act was abolished in the year 1926 after protest from labours, assault to planters, strike and nationalist criticism. (Sarkar 2015). The Chargaola exodus of 1921 played a significant role in this matter. In response to the inhuman behaviour of British planters' collective resistance was shown by the workers in the form of protests. In 1880 onwards these protest number was increasing and at least 500 cases of unlawful assemble of workers happened. The historiographical work of Bose focused on, the labour movement in India in special reference to Assam tea garden plantation labour. This employed different sources like novels, newspapers clippings, books and drama, and other writings from that period. Through this Bose tried to show that the collective resistances of labourers were not reflected in the labour studies of that time. During and after the Chargaola Exodus of May 1921, in almost all tea gardens of Assam strike broke out. However, in Chargaola more than 50% labourers left the tea garden forever. Thousands of labourers travelled on foot to nearest railway station of Chandpur. When the labourers could not be restricted from leaving tea garden, police and the administration open fired on them, where women and children were also present. The labourers were totally unprepared for this. A nationwide protest followed after this incidence. Workers of Bengal Railway and Inland Streamer Navigation protested against this brutality by organizing strike. (Bose 1985; Das 2020)

Tea industry and its expansion

The tea industry was expanded in three phases in India. In the first phase after 1865 the characteristic was to give away the estate and gardens to managing agencies. Assam Company gave its gardens to Shoene, Kilbern & CO. for management. The large tea estate and small gardens were amalgamated and placed under large scale enterprises under the control of managing agents. (Sarkar 2015). Almost 61% tea gardens were controlled by seven big managing agencies like Gillanders Arbhutnot and Co., James Finlay and Co. and Berry and Co. etc. at the end of the century. These 'managing agency system' looked after budgetary control, cultivation and manufacturing advice, exchange staff controlling and staff recruitment at higher level. The producer, banker, broker, shipper and distributor all were interrelated through directorship. So, a number of companies were controlled by a small group of peoples, but these companies were all separate from each other legally. (Tharian 1984; Behal and Mohapatra 1992).

In second phase after 1870 tea industry was financed by British resident in India and by reinvestment of surplus. This surplus was from undistributed and dividends of already existing tea companies. (Sarkar 2015; Behal and Mohapatra 1992).

The third expansion took place till the turn of the century against falling tea prices. In between 1880s to 1900s tea prices fell by half. Falling price had an effect on labour recruitment methods and plantation labour system structure. (Behal and Mohapatra 1992).

Tea trading and problem faced by Indian tea industry

We can see how the tea trading scenario in the colonial era influenced Indians.

In the year 1839 first consignment of tea was shipped to London from India. Eight chests were sent and auctioned at Six to thirty-four Shillings/pound. First auction started in May 26, 1841 by Lyal & Co. at Mincing Lane, London. It was the Centre for tea activities before World War II. (Karmakar and Banerjee 2005).

In India, the first auction of tea started in Calcutta in the year 1861, 27th December (Karmakar and Banerjee 2005) and in south India it was Cochin in 1947.

Now there are many auction centres like Guwahati, Coonoor, Amritsar, Siliguri etc. (Karmakar and Banerjee 2005).

Misra (1987) showed the problems faced by Indian tea industry in the international market, and its competitiveness with Sri Lanka and Indian tea industry during the period of 1880-1910. Due to rapid spread of tea cultivation and production during the period of 1863-1865 there was a depression in the tea market during 1865-1875. This was overcome by this industry by year 1880 and by this time Indian tea established its market in the UK due to better quality of Indian black tea over Chinese tea. Till 1888 Chinese black tea dominated the market in UK, but from 1890 onwards India took the lead and became the main supplier of black tea in the European nations. The area of plantation increased between 2, 83,925 to 5, 68,554 acres from 1885 to 1910. For Assam it was increased by 65% and in Bengal it was 25%. Due to increase in the area under plantation there was also increase in production. In 1885 production was 71.5 million lb and in 1910 it was 263.6 million lb. The author argued that production of tea was not only due to 'better cultivation process, maturing of tea plants' but also due to coarse plucking as there was increase in demand. Assam contributed 2/3rd and Bengal produced 1/4th of total production of Indian tea. But the quality of Assam tea decreased due to coarse plucking. On the contrary Darjeeling and Dooars produced better quality of tea due to better geo-climatic condition and more variety of tea bushes, i.e. of China *Jat*. During 1900-1910 there was suspension of production of tea in the eastern region was due to overproduction. The production increased during 1896-1904 due to the newly planted tea which become matured and started

production of tea by 1895-1896. The Author here argued that the production of tea increased due to rational labour application, introduction of machinery 1880 onwards which was applicable in all stages of tea processing and due to this tea production increased in manufacturing stage. The consumer market was of great influence to raise the demand of tea and production of tea. At the international level countries like UK, Holland, New Zealand, Australia, US, Germany, Canada, Ireland, Russia consumer of tea increased and almost all countries it became a national drink. Asian and African countries were comparatively consuming less. High income countries were consuming 93% of total production of Indian tea. Author here showed increase in consumption Indian tea in the international market over the year. Consumption of tea rose from 355.9 million lb to 392.1 million lb in international market but supply of Indian tea was only 55.3 million to 87.1 million lb. The author compared this with Ceylon (Sri Lanka). (Misra 1987).

Table 1.4: Competition of China, India and Ceylon teas in the UK in between 1866 to 1896

(Tea exported by the concerned country to the UK as percentage of total consumption in the UK.)

	1866	1876	1886	1888	1890	1894	1896
China	96	83	59	43	30	12	10
India	4	17	38	47	52	55	56
Ceylon	-	-	3	10	18	33	34

Source: Misra Bhubanes, 1987 "Investment and International Competitiveness: Indian Tea Industry, 1880-1910" "Economic and Political Weekly," Vol.22.No.6 (Feb.7, 1987), pp.230-238 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.20AM

He also compared the export of Indian tea to other countries with that of Ceylon.

Table 1.5: Sales of India and Ceylon tea in third markets outside UK in 1890-1899(in thousand lb)

Year	India	Ceylon
1890	8,900	4,500
1891	12,500	6,600
1892	10,029	9,583
1893	14,027	13,138
1894	14,149	14,563
1895	16,815	19,923
1896	19,206	23,465
1897	22,413	29,131
1898	26,020	36,400
1899	29,858	38,880

Source: Misra Bhubanes, 1987“Investment and International Competitiveness: Indian Tea Industry, 1880-1910” *“Economic and Political Weekly,”* Vol.22. No.6 (Feb.7, 1987), pp.230-238 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.20AM

Though export of black tea was dominated by China till 1888, gradually Ceylon and India were coming in the market. This was pushing China out of market. Export of tea brick, green, tablet and dust tea increased for China. But India and Ceylon did not show their interest to export these types of tea. Main markets for Indian tea were Australia, UK, US, Russia, Canada, Persia and south East Asian countries. Around 96.3% of total production was exported in between 1885-1910 to these countries. Major export was to UK, on an average 88% but between 1880-81 to 1910-11 the export fell by 71%. During the year 1895-96 this decline was more due to over production in India. From mid 1890s there was an increase in export to Russia, Canada

and Turkey but export to UK declined. Even in Persia the export of tea declined due to overproduction in India and production of low-quality tea. In US export of Indian tea could not make any progress as they are mainly green tea consumer. Hence China and Japan captured that market. In European countries export of Indian tea increased in between 1904-05 but after that it declined, except in Russia where there was a steady progress. (Misra 1987).

Table 1.6: Exports of Indian Tea to the principle foreign countries (in 000lb) (1880-81 to 1910-11)

		1880-81	1885-86	1895-96	1900-01	1905-06	1910-11
Total Production		--	71,526	1,43,408	1,97,461	2,21,712	2,63,605
Total export		46,414	68,784	1,37,710	1,90,305	2,14,224	2,54,301
Countries	To UK	45,416	66,640	1,23,947	1,66,171	1,66,591	1,82,935
	Australia	807	1,766	6,774	9,094	7,146	8,782
	Russia	--	--	486	772	9,988	31,121
	Turkey	6	25	1,372	3,858	3,846	3,916
	Persia	10	31	3,188	2,429	1,102	312
	Canada	--	--	407	1,724	15,018	8,444

	US A	68	98	581	1,765	2,174	2,343
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Source: Misra Bhubanes, 1987“Investment and International Competitiveness: Indian Tea Industry, 1880-1910” “*Economic and Political Weekly*,” Vol.22. No.6 (Feb.7, 1987), pp.230-238 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.20AM

The author argued that the fall of export to other countries was mainly due to the neglect of planters to venture in new markets. The causes were inefficient management, imprudent investment, other than the coarse plucking of leaves which lead to decline in the quality of tea. India started losing its market to UK due to all these reasons and Ceylon tea was gaining. (Misra 1987).

During the Great Depression International Tea Agreement was made among the tea producers in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia in 1938. Due to fall in tea price at the international market the production of tea was kept low through this agreement so that supply in the market becomes less. Till 1948 expansion of area was prohibited except for 5% expansion. When this agreement was also found inadequate voluntary restriction was imposed by the managing agencies. Only fine tea leaves were allowed to pluck and by this process production of tea were controlled and supply of tea was restricted in the international market. Here it can be mentioned that normal plucking of tea leaves is “two leaves and a bud”, less than that is known as “fine plucking” and more than that is known as “course plucking”. By this process 85% production of tea was restricted in India. This strategy led to a rise in price of tea and profits were huge but cost of production increased. In 1950 it was seen that British companies had 43% more production cost than Indian companies. But there was no modernization and expansion in the industry. British companies did not grow internal assets and resources. The huge profits were gone to abroad in the form of dividend and shareholders. In 1956 Plantation Inquiry Commission on Tea shows that if there was limitation of half of the dividend by companies the increase of internal sources would have been 25%. (Tharian 1984; Mukherjee 1978).

II. After independence: tea plantation and government in North-East and North Bengal

After independence the Indian Government tried to improve situation of workers through various laws. Other sections of the working classes also were struggling to get their demand fulfilled. In the year 1951 at Indian Labour Conference in Delhi workers strongly demanded rational wage fixation. In 1952 statutory minimum wages were fixed for the tea plantation workers. So, planters now had to accept the law or violation would lead to prosecution under Minimum Wages Act of 1948. Other Acts were also passed to give protection to workers. Such as Payment of Bonus Act, legislation for Provident Fund and Gratuity, Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, Factories Act of 1948 to provide security to workers. (Bhowmik 2011). By implementation of Plantation Labour Act 1951, government tried to uplift the workers situation and tried to provide social security through different measures. Even this did not help much. The situation worsened again due to the fall in tea price since early 1990's.

In the other hand in North Bengal the ownership of the tea estate was changing against the backdrop of independence. Mukherjee has tried to bring out how the ownership had changed in North Bengal from Bengalee entrepreneurs to Marwari. These Bengalee entrepreneurs started a joint stock public limited tea planting and manufacturing companies between 1879 and 1933. This was controlled directly by the board of directors consisting of the Bengalees of Jalpaiguri. He took 16 such companies out of 43 for the study to know the shift of directorship from one Indian community to other. The author argued that due to the economic characteristic of tea plantation in the initial phase Bengalee entrepreneurs invested capital in this industry, despite they were 'absentee' entrepreneurs and they had other means of economic generation sector mainly service sector. But after independence the business environment changed and the industry demanded active participation from entrepreneurs' which did not go well with the 'absentee' 'Bengalee' entrepreneurs. (Mukherjee 1978).

After independence Indian government as well as state governments took some measures to restrict the British managing agencies, like Government increases tax, restriction on capital export, building its own auction Centre. In the year 1970 government abolished managing agency system in India. In south in Kerala and Tamil Nadu Government imposed high tax on British controlled companies to pay high tax on agricultural income and in land ceiling and restricting reserve area. (Tharian 1984).

The British companies initially started disinvesting and moving to the East Africa, withdrawing their capital. Another strategy adopted by them was collaborating with Indian capital. (Tharian 1984).

Tea trading scenario: post-colonial to till date

From the colonial period till date tea industry has gone through ups and downs in the international market. In the previous section tea trading scenario during colonial era was discussed. In tea trading scenario in next section this has been discussed elaborately till date.

Rao and Hone (1974) describe policy failure in tea industry during the period of 1960-1970. Due to low investment in marketing and promotion, Indian tea suffered in international market. Expansion of land under tea cultivation was not as much in India and Sri Lanka but in African countries there were expansion of acreage under tea. Replanting in Indian tea bushes since 1967 was behind of Sri Lanka though replanting did not exceed more than 50,000 acres during 1962-63/1971-72 but there was increase in production more than the target of 460 million kg in the year 1973. Production difficulty in 1974 was due to issues like diesel oil crisis, shortage and high price of nitrogenous fertilizer, herbicide, and pesticide, bad weather and Dooars strike in 1969 and the production could not reach the limit which was set by the International Arrangements for the stabilization of Tea Prices. (Rao and Hone 1974).

Following tables shows the planted area and production of tea during that period.

Table 1.7: Area planted with tea (in hectares) (all in rounded figures)

	Year	1961	1971
Country			
India		333,000	358,000
Sri Lanka		238,000	242,000
Kenya		18,000	50,000
Uganda		8,000	19,000
Tanzania		8,000	14,000
Malawi		12,000	16,000

**Source: Rao K B K and Hone Augus 1974, “India and the World Tea Economy”,
“Economic and Political Weekly”, Vol.9. No.28 (Jul.13, 1974), pp 1111+1113+1115-1118
 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.23 AM from JSTOR**

Table 1.8: Indian Tea production (million kg)

Year	Production
1961	354.4
1967	384.8
1968	402.5
1969	393.6
1970	418.5
1971	433.3
1972	454.0
1973	469.0

Source: Rao K B K and Hone August 1974, “India and the World Tea Economy”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol.9. No.28 (Jul.13, 1974), pp 1111+1113+1115-1118 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.23 AM from JSTOR

Due to increase in domestic demand, export of tea was not possible. Though production of tea increased more than 3%, consumption increased more than 6%. So, it was impossible to export 200 million kg in the year 1975 and 1976 after less production of tea in 1974 unless domestic demands were not decreased. Again, Indian tea bushes were years old which need to be replaced and replanted. Here government took some initiative to help the industry through various schemes and loans.

..... “the Tea Machinery Hire Purchase Scheme from 1960, which can loan up to 6 lakhs per garden; a Tea Plantation finance scheme with loans of up to Rs13,750 per hectare; and a Replanting Subsidy Scheme from October 1968 which from 1972 allows Rs. 5000 for plain gardens and Rs. 6000 for hill gardens for each hectare of average bushes replanted. In the second half of 1972, moreover, the Reserve Bank of India instructed the commercial banks to lend on terms to the industry”. (Rao and Hone 1974, pp. 1115).

In major non-communist countries the exports were declining but it was growing in bilateral markets during 1961-1972. During the fifties the Indian tea export price was very high due to high excise and export duties which were 10-15% of the export price of teas. The author here showed the export of Indian teas to different countries during 1961 to 1974 and production and export and domestic consumption. (Rao and Hone 1974).

Table 1.9: Production, Exports and Estimated Consumption of tea in India (thousand tonnes)

Year	Production	Exports	Domestic consumption
1961	354.4	206.3	139.6
1968	402.5	208.4	185.9
1969	393.6	168.7	203.3
1970	418.5	200.2	213.0
1971	433.3	191.6	222.0
1972	454.0	209.8	225.0
1973	469.0	205.0	240.0
1974	465.0	205.0	236.0

Source: Rao K B K and Hone Augus, 1974, "India and the World Tea

Economy", "Economic and Political Weekly", Vol.9. No.28 (Jul.13, 1974), pp 1111+1113+1115-1118 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.23 AM from JSTOR

The shift of export also was discussed by authors in this table we can see that how export trend changed. Domestic consumption increased over the years. India started exporting more teas to those countries with which she had bilateral agreements.

Table 1.10: India's Shipments to Major Markets, 1961 and 1972 (tones)

Free market		1961	1972
	UK	123,211	64,030
	W Germany	1,582	4,891
	Ireland	6,499	5,860
	Netherlands	1,600	11,938
	US	10,766	6,864
	Iran	3,853	3,321
Bilateral	Poland	--	6,611
	USSR	11,874	40,419
	Afghanistan	3,309	9,162
	Iraq	2,116	5,691
	Egypt	15,611	13,193
	Sudan	6,709	14,350
	Tunisia	330	3,091
Total		206,292	209,814

Source: Rao K B K and Hone Augus 1974, "India and the World Tea Economy", "Economic and Political Weekly", Vol.9. No.28 (Jul.13, 1974), pp 1111+1113+1115-1118 accessed on 29/08/2016 at 9.23 AM from JSTOR.

Authors argued that if Indian tea has to take in international market then the marketing and advertising must be done to increase domestic and international market. They also stressed on need of integrated strategy to rebuild India's tea sector. (Rao and Hone 1974).

Nagoor's (2009) work compared India's tea export to that of world.

Table 1.11: Tea export of India

Year	Percentage share in total agri-export	CGR in Quantity	CGR in Value	CV in Quantity	CV in Value	CGR value/CGR qty*100	CV value/CV qty*100
1981-90	20.16	-0.79	1.33	6.82	16.22	-168.4	237.83
1991-95	10.23	-6.86	-7.51	15.76	19.07	109.48	121.00
1996-00	8.11	6.93	6.66	14.44	21.77	96.10	150.76

Source: Nagoor B. H (2009) "Performance of India's tea exports: A comparative study of major tea exporting countries of the world"

In this table author showed tea export share of India to that of total agricultural exports, compound annual growth rate (CAGR) in terms of quantity and value, co-efficient variation (CV) and movement in value export (CAGR value/CAGR qty*100). This table shows that from 1981 to 2000 share of tea export declined in relation to total agricultural export.

Author showed production of tea in India in relation to other countries

Table 1.12: Share of teas in major producing countries in world production (percentage)

Year	India	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	China	Kenya	Others
Avg 1951-60	39.52	21.93	5.67	13.59	2.67	16.62
1961-70	34.24	20.07	4.00	14.97	5.59	21.13

1971-80	31.63	13.03	4.34	14.45	7.09	22.41
1981-90	28.42	9.36	5.51	20.27	6.17	30.27
1991-95	29.15	8.95	5.41	22.46	8.29	25.83
1996-00	28.69	9.84	5.71	22.91	8.87	23.99

Source: Nagoor B. H (2009) “Performance of India’s tea exports: A comparative study of major tea exporting countries of the world”

This table shows that from 1951 to 2000 there are decline of share of tea production in relation to Indonesia, China, Kenya. Decline in Sri Lanka’s production also seen. Gradually China was emerging as a major tea producing country pushing India to second place. Author argued that India’s domestic consumption was increasing and to meet internal demand export of Indian tea was decreasing over the year. (Nagoor 2009).

Table 1.13: Share of tea consumption in production in major tea producing countries (percentage)

Year	India	Sri Lanka	Kenya	China	Indonesia
Avg 1951-60	32.06	4.51	24.47	76.88	19.00
1961-70	46.01	5.22	9.05	80.14	23.78
1971-80	58.97	5.40	8.71	72.08	29.75
1981-90	66.92	6.97	15.71	66.61	30.70
1991-95	77.29	7.07	10.30	68.13	24.63
1996-00	76.78	8.11	9.29	68.22	45.61

Source: Nagoor B. H (2009) “Performance of India’s tea exports: A comparative study of major tea exporting countries of the world”

This table shows the increase in consumption of tea in India from 1951 onwards. Though China's domestic consumption was increased but they could export more due to higher production. (Nagoor 2009)

Table 1.14: Share of tea in major exporting countries in world export (percentage)

Year	India	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	Kenya	China	Others
Avg 1951-60	42.08	33.00	7.23	3.30	5.37	9.02
1961-70	34.80	35.44	5.66	10.06	5.50	8.54
1971-80	27.46	26.01	6.39	12.54	8.63	18.97
1981-90	21.91	19.57	8.88	12.18	15.80	21.66
1991-95	16.41	19.92	9.80	17.89	17.11	19.04
1996-00	15.48	20.96	7.12	18.84	16.38	21.22

Source: Nagoor B. H (2009) "Performance of India's tea exports: A comparative study of major tea exporting countries of the world"

Over the years India's export percentage was decreasing and China and Kenya were gaining market in international market. Author argued that due to increase consumption in domestic market and in international market due to increased supply of tea from other countries India's export suffered. (Nagoor 2009).

Recent crisis of Indian tea industry

From late 1990 onwards Indian tea industry is facing crisis due to emergence of new cultivators like Vietnam, Kenya, and Indonesia in the international market. Some other causes highlighted by author (Hazarika 2011) such as higher production cost and poor quality of Indian tea in international market, control of auction by brokers who tend to keep a lower price, higher existence of aging bush which leads to low production of tea and poor quality, higher

production cost in fixed expense like labour, fuel and power. She further argued that proper planning and fund utilization was not done, due to lack of statistical data. The consumers also were ignorant about the market structure. She mainly highlighted about the marketing of tea. The auction system, how it works and who were the actors participating in the auction to market the product in the international market. She showed that mostly it is the brokers who played the most important roles in tea auction starting from receiving of tea from producer till storing it in warehouse, and then quality measure and in bidding and finally selling to buyers. As tea cannot be stored for a long time so producer has to sell at a price fixed by the brokers. Buyers are mostly the big companies who deal with marketing and have their own network of packaging, blending, and marketing. These buyers co-operate with brokers to keep price low. In 1998 auction price was 76/kg and when auction price came down to 56/kg in 2003 many gardens suffered and closed down. Out of 54 gardens 20 were in West Bengal, 17 in Kerala, 11 in Assam, and 6 in Tripura closed down. Around 75% of tea had to be sold through auction and it was mandatory till the year 2001. Later this order was abolished. Now producer has freedom to sell their tea as they like. In the year 2007 Union Government launched “Special Purpose Tea Fund” to accelerate and rejuvenate the activity of tea garden. In this fund, the Centre will pay 25% subsidy to beneficiary gardens, 25% has to be bear by the garden and 50% will be given as soft loans by financial institutes. She further argued that as Indian tea is losing its international market it should look to improve its marketing strategy and think about domestic market too where tea is in demand now. (Hazarika 2011).

If we see the changing trend at the global as well as Indian market it is observed that area of tea cultivation increased from year 1991 to 2010. In China it is 45%, India 21%, Sri Lanka 7%, Kenya 5%, Vietnam 3%, Japan 2%, and others 17%. But production of tea remains same from 1991 to 1997, i.e., 2631.05 mkg. In the year 1998 tea production was 3026.13mkg, in 2000 AD 2928mkg, and 2001 onwards up to 2010 production increased at the rate of 3.48% as of compound growth rate. (Mazumder Basu, Bera and Ranjan 2012).

So, productivity of tea did not show any significant difference over the two decades. From 1991 to 2001 tea productivity increases only from 1026kg/ HA to 1100kg/HA. (Mazumder Basu, Bera and Ranjan 2012).

Dwebedi (1999) showed the trend of Indian tea export in international market from 1991 to 1997.

Table 1.15: Tea Export—India Vis-à-vis World

Year	World tea exports (M.Kgs.)	Export of Tea from India(M.Kgs)	Share of Indian tea in the World
1991	1071.17	202.91	18.94%
1992	1013.89	174.96	17.26%
1993	1152.92	175.32	15.21%
1994	1033.55	150.69	14.58%
1995	1083.53	168.00	15.50%
1996	1115.64	161.70	14.49%
1997	1145.41	203.03	17.72%

Source: Dwibedi H. N, 1999, “Production of Tea in India” 1999, K. P Bagchi & Company, Calcutta. pp 14-15, accessed from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi on 06/10/2016

Here author argued that export of Indian tea to international market was generally around 200 million Kgs yearly till 1991. After that there was a decline in export due to fall of USSR who was the largest buyer and was buying over 50% of Indian export. This was reversed by efforts of Tea Board and Indian exporters. The following table shows the Tea export trend during that period.

Table 1.16: Trend in Indian Tea Export during 1991 to 1997— ‘98

Year	Qty.(m. kgs)	Value (Rs. Crores)	Value (equi. In m. US\$)
1991-92	216.45	1212.27	533.1

China	Total production (m kg)	934.86	1028.06	1140	1257.6	1358.64	1370.00	1623.21	1789.75
	Percent of share in world's production	27%	28.72%	30.00%	32.54%	34.55%	33.70%	37.76%	38.7%
India	Total production (m kg)	945.97	981.81	986.43	980.82	979	966.40	988.33	1126.33
	Percent of share in world's production	27.36%	27.43%	26.00%	25.38%	24.90%	23.76%	23.00%	24.36%
Kenya	Total production (m kg)	323.50%	310.82%	369.61%	345.82%	314.20%	399.01%	377.91%	369.56%
	Percent of share in world's production	9.36%	8.67%	9.74%	8.95%	8.00%	9.81%	8.80%	7.99%

Sri Lanka	Total production	317.20	310.82	304.61	318.70	289.78	329.38	328.63	328.40
	Percent of share in world's production	9.17%	8.68%	8.00%	8.25%	7.37%	8.01%	7.64%	7.15%
Vietnam	Total production (m kg)	133.35	142.50	148.27	166.38	154.00	157.00	178.00	190.00
	Percent of share in world's production	3.86%	4.00%	3.91%	4.31%	3.92%	3.86%	4.14%	4.11%
Turkey	Total production (m kg)	135	142	178.00	155.00	153.00	148.00	145.00	147.00
	Percent of share in world's production	3.9%	4.00%	4.69%	4.00%	3.90%	3.64%	3.37%	3.18%

Indonesia	Total production (m kg)	156.27	148.85	137.29	137.50	137.50	129.20	119.65	137.25
	Percent of share in world's production	4.52%	4.10%	3.62%	3.56%	3.50%	3.18%	2.78%	2.97%
Bangladesh	Total production(m kg)	60.60	53.41	58.42	58.66	60.00	59.17	59.32	62.16
	Percent of share in world's production	1.75%	1.50%	1.54%	1.52%	1.53%	1.46%	1.38%	1.34%
Others	Total production(m kg)	450.84	463.76	473.49	444.31	487.36	508.44	497.17	474.18
	Percent of share in world's production	13.04%	13.00%	12.47%	11.50%	12.40%	12.5%	11.56%	10.25%

Total producti on	3457 .59	3579 .79	3796 .08	3864 .79	3931 .98	4066 .60	4299 .22	4624 .63
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Source: Laskar and Thapa, 2015, “A Study on the present scenario of Tea Industry in Assam-Challenge Ahead”, “Indian Journal of Applied Research”, volume 5, Issue 11, November 2015.

Tea exported from India from 2010 to 2011 was 213.79 m kg valued 2995.79 Crore. In 2010 India produces 0.99 billion kg tea (Shah 2013).

Import of tea also increased globally from 1991 to 2000, 1093 m kg to 1272 m kg and from 2000 to 2001 1333.01m kg to 1618.87 m kg. (Mazumder Basu, Bera and Ranjan 2012).

India contributes 23% of the total world’s tea production, 21% of its production is consumed by domestic consumer i.e. 80% of consumers. In export India is in fourth place, after Sri Lanka, Kenya and China. (Wagh 2014).

Major tea producing countries in Asia are China, Sri Lanka, India, African countries are Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and South American countries are Argentina and Brazil. Indian tea is mainly exported in Commonwealth Independent States (CIS), Germany, Holland, Poland & Australia. (Wagh 2014).

In the international market India is facing tough competition from Kenya and Sri Lanka. Kenya’s tea is better in quality & cheaper than Indian tea. Though India is the biggest consumer of its own production of tea but per capita consumption is low than other countries. (Shah 2013).

In the year 2013-14 domestic consumption of black tea was 911million kg, largest in the world. India now ranks fourth in the world in terms of export, which is now 232.92 million kg during 2015-16 and value is US\$ 686.67 million.

Table 1.18: Top export markets in terms of volume, 2015-2016

Name of the country	Volume (million kg)
Russian Federation	48.23
Iran	22.13
Pakistan	19.37

Source: Tea Statistic, [teacoffeespiceofindia.com>tea>te...](http://teacoffeespiceofindia.com/tea/te...) accessed on 05/09/2016 at 9.40AM compiled by researcher on 08/09/2016.

Table 1.19: Top export markets, in terms of value, 2015-2016

Name of the country	Value (US\$)
Russian Federation	102.48
Iran	87.39
UK	62.8

Source: Tea Statistic, [teacoffeespiceofindia.com>tea>te...](http://teacoffeespiceofindia.com/tea/te...), accessed on 05/09/2016 at 9.40AM compiled by researcher on 08/09/2016.

Production of tea in 2015-2016 is 1,233 million kg in India, comprising of 1,008.56 million kg produced in North India and 224.58 million kg in South India. In 2013 the area under tea cultivation and production is given below.

Table 1.20: Area under tea cultivation (end-2013) & production in 2013-2014

State/ Districts	Area under tea (in Th. Hectares)	Production (Million Kgs)
Assam Valley	270.92	581.03
Cachar	33.48	48.02
Total Assam	304.40	629.05
Darjeeling	17.82	8.91
Dooars	72.92	177.85
Terai	49.70	125.34
Total West Bengal	140.44	312.10
Other North Indian States (includes Tripura, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Manipur, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Orissa)	12.29	23.92
Total North India	457.13	965.07
Tamil Nadu	69.62	174.71
Kerala	35.01	63.48
Karnataka	2.22	5.52
Total South India	106.85	243.71
All Total	563.98	1208.78

Source: Tea Statistic, [teacoffeespiceofindia.com>tea>te...](http://teacoffeespiceofindia.com/tea/te...), accessed on 05/09/2016 at 9.40AM.

But from the year 2000 onwards situation of tea industry once again became worse as tea prices was falling and planters claimed production cost to be more than selling price. Many of them deserted gardens and in West Bengal 55 tea plantation were closed and workers were left behind without any means to sustain themselves. Dooars have been the most affected area. From 2001 to 2006 near about 1500 people died in tea plantation due to malnutrition. (Bhowmik 2011).

The tea industries faced crisis and many companies abandoned the garden in North Bengal during 2003-2004. Nearly 30 tea gardens were closed during that period. In the year 2015 Duncans illegally semi- closed 15 tea gardens. Workers were left to starve. Their dues were not paid. Electricity, drinking water supplies were cut off. Pension, provident fund was not paid. Even there were little done by unions or from government to restore the situation in those effected gardens. (www.thehindu.com>...> Harsh Mander accessed on 16/08/2016).

Factors causing crisis in tea industry

There are several factors responsible for crisis in Indian tea industry, such as labour unrest, abandoned gardens, fall in tea prices, decline in export, age old tea bushes etc. for which productivity of the tea has fallen. Several other factors were also emerging like, in Assam tea garden laborers were asking for ST (Scheduled Tribe) status same as in their home state but Assam government was reluctant to provide the ST status to this community. This caused unrest among labourers in Assam. (Sarkar 2015; Phukan 2015; Shah 2013; Tharian, 1984). These tea garden labourers in Assam are commonly known as “tea tribes”. In Barak valley and Brahmaputra valley these tea tribes are scattered in 793 registered tea gardens. There are 97 tea tribes struggling to get ST status in Assam. In the colonial period they were known as “depressed class”. In the house of Provincial Council of Assam four seats were reserved for them. There were four elected members in 1934-1947, but in 1950 these seats were de-scheduled. Adivasi Council of Assam first started the movement for ST status. In 1987 nine selected tribes were to get the ST status but it was hampered with the emergence of issue that entire tea tribe should get as ST status. On 5th August 2004 the Assam Assembly passed a resolution that along with six other communities’ tea tribes were to grant ST status. But Register General of India raised question of ST identity of these 97 tribes and terminology of “tea tribes”. So, the status remains same. In 1978 Ministry of Home Affairs recommended

major tribes, 14 major tribes to give ST status but the Assam government disagreed with the proposal and cited a reason that they are better off than local tribes. In 1988-89, All Assam Tea Tribes Students Association of Assam (AATTSAA) and in 1996 All Adivasi Students' Association of Assam (AASAA) demanded ST status for the tea tribes. There were incidences of state oppression for this demand in Assam. Even some militant organization like; Adivasi Cobra Militants of Assam (ACMA), Birsa Commando Force (BCF), Adivasi National Liberation of Assam (ANLA), Adivasi Peoples' Army (APA), Adivasi Dragon Fighters (ADF) are still struggling for ST status. (Das 2016).

In North-Eastern region militancy is also a prime factor which have had negative impact on the tea industry. Due to this many owners abandoned tea gardens and left. Some of the gardens are not working full-fledged. The workers who mostly solely depended on the gardens faced starvation. In Assam there was also ethnic conflict with the Bodo tribe in 1996. The Santhals were banned to enter in the forest and use forest products. This resulted in clash between them and Bodo tribes. (Sharma 2013).

Chawla showed the reason behind declining demand of tea. He pointed towards several factors like due to increase in living standard people are shifting to other drinks such as coffee, soft drinks and hot chocolates. Improved living standards increase in health consciousness of people, increase in consumption of green tea. Due to labour intensive production of tea since labour cost cannot be reduced so cost of production becomes higher.

Some other authors (Shah 2013; Phukan 2015) also showed several factors for which tea is not produced more in India. Those are labour shortage, climatic condition, and injudicious nutrient management. (Shah 2013). Same concern is seen in work of Phukan (2015), when she explored the causes behind shutting down of tea industry in India.

Trade unions and their role

After independence, trade unions played important roles in tea industry and also in favour of workers. Different trade unions came out to look after the demand of workers. As early as 1946 the first trade union movement was initiated and organized by Bengal-Assam Rail Road Workers Union. Biswas, in his work tried to bring out the history and growth of trade union movement in the tea industry with special reference to Dooars region of North –Bengal. The top leaders of trade union were mainly of from Bengali community and who were also a part of the central committees of the union. Government could not understand the misery of workers. The Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) was formed in 1947; the Hind

Mazdur Sabha (HMS) in 1948 and United Trade Union Congress (UTUC) in 1949 were formed. Under the leadership of Deo Prakash Rai, the Darjeeling District Chai Kaman Shramik Sangh was formed in early 1950's. This union was affiliated to the Gorkha League. In the 1960 National Union of Plantation Workers was formed by Dr. Maitree Bose. There was a Darjeeling District Chai Kaman Mazdur Union also under the banner of CITU. All these unions had different political entity. In 1989 another union was formed for plantation workers i.e. Himalayan Plantation Union. Almost all the workers are members of one or more than one union. Though there were multiple trade unions, plantation workers tried to form a common platform to address their issues. In 1962 all trade unions together formed Co-ordination Committee of Tea Plantation Workers (CCTPW). This committee dealt with issues like wages; bonus etc. again smaller unions have their own forum named Committee for Defence of Plantation Worker's Rights (CDPWR). In Tamil Nadu there are 22 such unions among workers and in Kerala AITUC, INTUC and CITU are mainly operating. Planters too have their own association in Assam and West Bengal. India Tea Association is the oldest planters' tea association. Other important associations are Indian Tea Planters Association, Terai Indian Tea Planters Association, and Darjeeling Planters Association, in Assam, Bharatiya Cha Parishad, Tea Association of India, Assam Tea Planters Association, in South India United Planters Association of South India (UPASI) is there. In spite of having so many unions the PLA 1951 is not fully implemented till now in any tea plantations. Issues regarding wages, allowances are not addressed properly. The other issues like housing, educational, healthcare is not reflected in the bargaining. (Biswas. retrieved from www.abhinavjournal.com on 16/08/2016 published date not available.)

There are issues of wage hike which is still low in Assam and North Bengal as compared to southern states. During the British era formation of union were forbidden in the tea estates. In present days unions are allowed but they have their own problems. There is less unity among them. Mainly dependence on employers, lack of participation, ignorance about their right, low female participation despite of 50% work force in the tea garden are some of the problems faced by union. Even those who raise issue of female interest are excluded from the tea plantation. So, union cannot act the way they should. Wage hike follows a procedure in Assam and Bengal that is of collective bargaining process, but in southern states it is declared through minimum wage notification. In Assam and Bengal union and representative from owner side decide wage by bargaining. The hikes workers want usually do not meet in the final decision. The union proposes an amount but planters don't agree with that. So bargaining process

continues till they come to a solution. Usually planters take so much time that by the time patience of union leaders get reduced. Planters systematically presents facts and figures showing that estate are going through loss or if wage is increased the estate has to close down. They lengthen bargaining process for a longer period of time, and there is always an underlying fear of permanent shutting down of the estate so union agrees with the reduced price. The wage hike is hence far less than what union proposes. Even government officials do not interfere in the process. Again, union leaders themselves are of “class”. They are mainly intermediaries between planters and workers. They are not workers of plantation also. Even in other sector like mining, manufacturing workers get higher amount (Sarkar 2015) than Tea plantation workers.

In Assam agreement occurs between two parties, INTUC affiliated ACMS officially has understanding and there is no worker unrest. But in West Bengal government also takes part and discussion between planters’ association and union leader become so lengthy that union allows government to intervene, however that too favours employees not the workers. Strike and fear of closure keep workers silent. In micro level i.e. in the plantation union may help workers to voice their demand outside of the secluded tea estate area but at macro level i.e. in government level where they have to put their demand and fight with planters it does not help much. Another factor is that union leaders themselves are not from the working class. In West-Bengal trade unions are controlled by *Bengali Bhadrak* who is not even worker of tea garden. In plantation level sub-staffs are the leaders who are also supervisors and from same ethnic group like workers. So, they can gain trust of workers and large numbers of workers follow them. If they can be incorporated in the organization it can be beneficial. In Assam there is a strong political hold of Congress (I) and ACMS works under the party. Leaders are from tea community itself; i.e. sub-staffs of plantation and local Assamese does not aspire leadership of tea plantation union. Beyond a level trade union cannot struggle for the betterment of the workers and there is same hierarchy like plantation and their mind set is of like master-servant. If trade union cannot break this set up and undergo changes in the organizational set up, they will not be able to address workers problems with responsibility. (Biswas retrieved from www.abhinavjournal.com on 16/08/2016 published date not available.).

Several studies in Assam North Bengal showed the working condition, health, education; living condition of workers of India in tea plantation have not changed much after independence. (Bhowmik 1996; Xaxa 1996; Biswas et al 2002; Rasaily 2003; Khaswas 2005; Medhi et al 2006; Duara and Mallick 2012; Borgohain 2013; Kumri 2014; Debnath and Nath 2014;

Chatterjee 2014; Kundu et al, 2013; Baro 2016) These studies will be elaborated in subsequent chapters.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have elaborated on the setting up of the tea industry in India by the British. The history of discovery of tea and subsequently the British hold over the tea industry was only possible because of cheap labour in the colonies. Thus, they gained economically by exploiting Indians. With the tea industry there came indentured labour system, migration of workers, formation of different characteristic of social system in a confined tea plantation area. During colonial era severe exploitation of workers led to resistance and agitation against planters. To address those issues there were different laws made by government. Expansion of tea industry happened different regions of India with almost same characteristic. After independence there were change in the tea industry. There were laws, trade unions to address labour issues. Role of trade unions to address the issues related to workers welfare and wages has been discussed here. The tea industry which saw huge profit during initial era faced crisis. The reason for the crisis was also discussed here. Several studies showed workers social, economic, political, health condition which will be discussed in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 2

Conceptualization and Methodology

Introduction

The condition of the workers has been studied in view of colonial and post-colonial history of the tea industry in India. Tea brings foreign money and plays an important role in the economy of India. As tea industry is a labour-intensive industry the tea trading scenario in markets have an impact on labour's wage condition and in the industry. Due to fall in exports in the tea industry, the owners abandoned many gardens and as a result labourer were left to starve. Another factor is the insurgency in North-East India which affected the tea industry. During the height of insurgency in the 1990s in Tripura, many owners abandoned gardens and workers were left behind. In my study area the owner had been abducted and murdered and the garden was closed for a considerable time, even new owner who has taken the garden at lease had been kidnapped, after that incident the factory was closed. So, this too affected workers life and their existence as a human being. What were the conditions under which these they worked in the tea plantations? What was their condition even after independence? What is their perception about life and wellness in present times? Workers who were brought by planters from different parts of the country to work in plantation and to make a continuous work force they were kept in a closed area called plantation; how do they view this from their respective ascribed position?

Some studies were reviewed to see the workers living and working condition, their health status in the tea plantations, their perception and experience of illness. What benefits do they get from management and government? Do those benefits meet their needs for survival with dignity? Now as living condition i.e. housing, sanitation, education, nutrition, drinking water availability etc are related to health of a person so if all these are not properly maintained how one can expect to have better health?

There are several studies in India and abroad that focus on specific areas like health status, living and working condition of plantation workers. There are very few studies that take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the health experiences of tea workers. Moreover, most studies are on tea estates in Bengal, Assam and the southern tea plantations but the researcher was unable to find studies on Tripura. Tripura has a unique history of the growth of tea gardens that occupies fifth position in terms of production in India. Some of these studies reviewed bring out the workers condition in the tea garden. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part consists of literature review and the second part discusses the methodology used in the research.

I. Living and working condition of tea garden workers: An overview

Mazumder and Roy's study (2012) in Sreemongal which is known as 'tea capital' of Bangladesh looked at the working and living standard of tea plantation workers along with major problems they were facing, Gender discrimination at work and role of Bangladesh Cha Shramik Union. According to 2008 report in Bangladesh out of 168 tea gardens, 90 were in Moulvibazar. Out of those 90 tea gardens 10 tea gardens were taken for study. These were Dinarpur, Mirzapore, Nurjahan, Zareen, Shafinagar, Junglebari, Clonal, Hossainabad, BTRI, Balisera from Sreemongal were randomly selected for the study. Tea garden workers were of five different ethnicities. They were Bangali, Bhojpuri/Deswali, Oriya, Saddri and Telegu. During the British period they were brought to work in plantation. The study collected qualitative as well as quantitative data. Data was collected by taking interview, focus group discussion, discussion with members of Cha Sramik Union, employers/owners, members of panchayat (Garden units of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union and Tea Plantation Workers). Total 150 respondents were selected randomly, out of these 34 male workers, 90 female workers, 15 panchayat members, 6 staff belonging to the management committee and 5 union council members were selected. To measure the economic condition of the workers, income of family and workers were taken. The workers get maximum wage of 32.50 Taka /day. Like India permanent workers gets housing facility, water, latrine/toilet, and schooling facility for children, health care facility, and cultivable land, ration from garden authority according to the Tea Plantation Labour Ordinance of 1962. Around 2/3 of the household had more than two earning members, 1/3 family had more than one earning member. Even children were employed in the garden. In the family of female workers earning workers were more. (Mazumder and Roy 2012).

Their study observes that though facilities should be provided by the authority, this was not the case. There was inadequate supply of pure drinking water; only 13.4% households had electricity supply from authority. More than five persons stayed in a room of 222 sq.ft. Cooking was done in the same room; even cows and goats were kept in the same room by giving a partition. These rooms were made of mud wall and straw roof with poor ventilation. As there was a shortage of water sources like tube well women had to travel far away to fetch water. Due to low wages it was very difficult for them to have a proper balanced diet as a result many suffered from malnutrition. Low birth weight was more in the study area compared to Bangladesh. The study found that child and infant mortality was higher in that area. Workers complained that they suffered mostly from backache and stomach related problems. Workers

complained that the authorities gave them dried (chira) free lunch in working area, which was not healthy and hygienic. The study showed that literacy rate was low, and in poor income and most of the time they were busy with work so could not meet their necessities and it was difficult for them to have a proper education. Around 59.68% workers were illiterate, 37.09% had primary education, 2.42% had secondary education and 0.81% had more than secondary education. The study showed that the 'Bangali's are more educated than other ethnic group. (Mazumder and Roy 2012).

Women workers were the most vulnerable section of workers. The authority often sexually exploited them. If they protested or denied they were put on hard job like plucking alone and into far dangerous zone. Authors put forth that since there was no recreational facility most of the workers, both men and women, consumed liquor after work. Due to Union intervention now it has decreased, but during festival or other social occasion they still drink. (Mazumder and Roy 2012).

In another study (Hassan 2014) at Lackatoorah tea estate of Sylhet district of Bangladesh highlights the female tea garden workers job environment, family condition, level of consciousness about their right, national incidence, law and family planning issues. The study showed that women do not have any voice in the family. Even they were not aware about their legal provisions. Their wages were taken away by the male member of the family. Though they want to have a small family but their decision-making power was almost zero and depended upon the male member of the family. Domestic violence was high among them. Franchise power also depended upon male member of the family. So how a woman can take any decision about their health and accessibility to health care system? The women cannot even take decision about their reproductive health. (Hassan 2014).

Another study (2016) in the Lackatoorah tea garden authors Pal and Hussain focused on health and hygiene practices of the older people of the tea garden. Through a qualitative study, they studied the health care and hygiene practices and the prevailing cultural pattern of the tea garden and its effect on the care of older people. The study was done during the month of June to July in 2015. People of more than 60 years and above people were selected for the study. Data was collected through interview and focus group discussion. Eight people were taken for each focus group. There were two focus groups. Eleven villages were taken for study. All these were in the tea garden area. Peoples were ethnically Bengali and religiously Hindu. Total 108 people were there in these eleven villages, among them 67 were females and 41 were males.

All these 20 people were purposely selected for the study. Interview was taken with semi-structured interview schedule. It was found that older people were living in small mud houses along with other family members. The study reveals that older people were suffering from multiple diseases. These were skin diseases, headache, fever, cough and cold, gastric ulcer, toothache, diarrhoea, dysentery, heart diseases, hypertension, cancer, asthma, depression, mental stress, jaundice, feeling of insecurity. Uses of alcohol and tobacco were high by these people. Study also reveals that sanitation and water facility were not adequate as they had to share toilet and water source with many families. Though residents were aware of the unhygienic condition and its consequences but due to financial constraint, old age and also incapacity to work, they were not able to overcome all these problems. Facilities like cooking gas, electricity supply, and health service were not adequate and inaccessible due to their distance location. They relied on local traditional or faith healers (Kabiraj, Imum), or local pharmacist for medicine as these were less costly. Most of these people lived with their son and daughter in law. Some lived with their son or daughter. Their children usually looked after them and cared for them according to their capacity. Sometimes in need of time neighbours too help them to avail medical services. But they feel free to go to local medical store as they get medicine at low cost and pharmacists too understood their situation and help them. Due to their old age they could not take bath but only when someone helped them. (Pal and Hussain 2016).

Chowdhury, Hasan and Karim (2011) studied the condition of two tea estates of Maulvi Bazar district in Bangladesh. The study included Bilashchara Tea Garden under Bangladesh Tea Research Institute (BTRI), and another namely Lakhaichara Tea Garden under Finley Tea. These gardens were situated in Sreemangal in Maulvi bazar district of Bangladesh. Water and Sanitation condition of the families of tea garden were examined by a questionnaire survey for different parameters like, drinking water sources, quality of water, availability of water, sanitary facility, availability of latrines, types of latrines, solid waste management practices, disposal of solid waste, facility of municipal dustbin etc. Interview with garden workers, staff and family members were taken with questionnaire. Samples of drinking water and surface water were collected to test the different parameter i.e. turbidity, iron, Arsenic, Ph-Eh, BOD5 (Biological Oxygen Demand5), TDS (Total Dissolved Solids), SS (Suspended Solids). These tests were performed in the laboratory of the university. In the study area there were 3 tube wells, 1 deep tube well in Bilashchara and 32 tube wells and 12 wells in Lakhaichara. From these water sources water sample was collected randomly and was tested. From 4 ponds and 1 lake/large pond in Bilashchara Tea Garden, and two ponds and a stream in Lakhaichara tea

garden water was taken in sealed bottles and tested for different parameters. To know the economic status of the family 20 families were selected from each tea garden. They were categorized into very low, moderately low, below average, average and above average income group taking 1000 as lowest income and 5000 BDT as highest income. They also showed most of the workers were illiterate i.e. 65-80% and very few 20-35% studied up to primary level. Their hygienic practices were very poor. Faeces of children were disposed to nearby water bodies or jungles; faeces were washed under the tube well or thrown in yards. The study also reveals that women had difficulty in defecation since they had to wait in queue as numbers of latrines were less. Most of the worker (45%) in Bilashpur tea garden used unhygienic latrine, 20% defecated in open, 35% used latrine. In Lakhaichara also almost same 30% defecated in open, 50% used unhygienic latrine and 20% used sanitary latrines. Authors also showed that use of different sources water was used for drinking, washing, cooking, bathing and for latrine use. It was seen that most of the people (100% in Lakhaichara and 60% Bilashpur) in both gardens used tube well water for drinking. For cooking most preferred (80% in Bilashpur, 60% in Lakhaichara) tube well water, for washing and bathing most of the people used open water source like pond and chara (Stream) water. The study shows that waste disposal system was poor as most of the wastes were disposed in open spaces either near home or *chara*. Though there were no faecal coliform and arsenic was found in sample water but Iron content was higher. As wastes were disposed near water source there were high chances of contamination of water. Authors have argued that as these were the basic needs, 'sustainability of water supply and sanitation', if not maintained properly it could lead to serious health consequences, to keep environment healthy 'good health' for those people those basic need of the people of tea garden should be looked after. (Chowdhury, Hasan and Karim 2011).

Tripura is surrounded by Bangladesh on three sides, and tea growing district of Bangladesh borders Tripura, some of the workers from Bangladesh too came to Tripura and Maharaja invited most of the Bengali entrepreneurs from East Bengal and Plain Tipperah (now in Bangladesh) to Tripura for tea plantation and due to geographical condition some of the features resembles to my study area so some above studies are reviewed from Bangladesh too.

Now if we see the living and working condition of the tea garden workers from different tea gardens of India, the situation is not much better than Bangladesh.

In a study of the condition of Tea Estate labourers of Assam, revealed their living condition. The study was done in 1991; Dibrugrah and Jorhat district were taken for study. These two

districts fall on same tea producing zone and have same wage structure. Total four gardens were selected from two districts, two from each, and total 200 household are selected for the study. Total 50 samples from each tea garden were taken. Total population in these four gardens was 14,838. Two estates have a population of 5306 which constitutes 35.75% of total population. In Dibrugarh population is 9532 which is 64.25% of total population; 56.26% are male and 43.73% are female of these total populations of 14,838. In these four gardens total labour employed were 4608. In two gardens Dibrugarh and Jorhat number of labourers were 500-700. In other two gardens range was 1300-2100. Total 2642 workers were permanent labour and 1966 were temporary labours. The author compared the facility given by the PLA 1951 to workers in these two districts. Housing facility, medical facility given by management, water and sanitation, educational status, household earnings and living standards were some of the factors looked into. The roads in labour line were kutcha, only one garden in Dibrugarh near factory there were street light. All gardens had playground but located far away, all gardens provided recreational facility like football, carom, badminton etc, except one in Dibrugarh, one in Jorhat provides TV for workers. For housing facilities in Jorhat 30.77% labour quarters were pucca and 69.22% were kutcha house, in Dibrugarh 85.92% are pucca rest were kutcha. In Jorhat sanitation facility was almost zero. There were no toilets in 89 households, 11 household had toilet but 10 were not in usable condition. In Dibrugarh all houses have toilet but 65 of these were at one time not in usable condition. Water facility in Dibrugarh was better as in an average 8-9 household used one tube well which was primary source of water in the area, whereas in Jorhat tap water was there but not adequate. There were no urinals in both the study areas. Medical facility provided by management was found satisfactory except in one garden in Jorhat where a part time doctor visited thrice a week and one nurse and one midwife were there. Education facility was better in Jorhat where government runs the schools and student teacher ratio was also better than management run schools in Dibrugarh where student teacher ratio was not satisfactory. Level of education was very low as 81.85% people did not have formal education, about 6% had primary education and 13% had secondary and higher secondary education. Even numbers of school going children were less in the gardens. Dibrugarh stands better in this regard. Author also showed that in the garden's laborers were of different ethnicity. The author showed that standard of living condition was poor in these gardens and workers were unaware of the right they have or they were entitled to get. (Xaxa 1996).

In a study (Bhowmik 1996) of Tea Plantation workers in West Bengal compared two districts of West Bengal. The study was done in 1995. Total eight tea gardens were selected from two districts i.e. Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, three gardens from Dooars and two from Terai and three from Darjeeling. Total 182 workers and their household were taken for the study. Out of 182 households 74 were in Dooars, 46 in Terai and 62 in Darjeeling. Total population was 1022, with an average of 5.6 per household. Household were generally large since three generation lived in the same household, after retirement as one person from family gets job in plantation and the older retired people resides with them. Due to the different type of ownership i.e. small and large companies, a comparative study was done in between these gardens. The author tried to show the living condition and class ownership. There are three regions, Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling. Information was collected on the individual and household income, household size and activity of each member in the house hold, household savings and indebtedness, source of loans and nature of savings. To see how the PLA was being implemented the housing, water supply, sanitation; health facilities, canteen, crèches and education from each garden were evaluated. There were two types of workers, Permanent and temporary. The Categories of workers were male, female, adolescent and children. Children below 14 years of age but above 12 years of age were employed as workers. When children below 14 years were banned and considered as child labour according to the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act of 1986 why plantation still employs them as workers when Plantation Labour Act of 1951 also amended? Adolescent workers were employed in hazardous jobs, mainly spraying pesticides and other chemicals. What will be consequences of those works in such condition? Who is going to see that? Author described facilities given by management in three regions. He argued that none of the tea gardens fulfilled the criteria of the PLA 1951. All plantations have kutcha houses. One plantation which had fewer resources than other big gardens has a greater number of pucca houses. So here author argued that it is not the resources but the willingness of the management of gardens that matters to provide better facility to the workers. But the trade union or even the labour department of the government has not taken these matters seriously. Even sanitation systems were not according to the prescribed norm. The author compared these facilities with that of south India. He argued that not only wages were more in Tamil Nadu but even the living condition was better than West Bengal. Regarding education facilities in Dooars schools were 'hardly functional', in Terai schools were non-existent, in Darjeeling condition was better but post primary facility were not provided by management. In Dooars transport facility was provided. The Health facilities also better in Dooars than Darjeeling. Dooars there had qualified doctor and other medical staff but in Darjeeling there were lacking of manpower.

Due to inadequate crèches facility women workers faced problems as for child care they have to divide their time between work and child care. This hampers their productivity. All gardens fail to fulfil this requirement except one in Darjeeling. Recreation facilities also were not adequate for the workers. Even in some plantation there were no club houses as management feel those are 'dens of evils', as they feel that union meetings were held in those places and workers conspire against management there. Literacy and education level were low among workers. Most of the household heads were illiterate (49%). From the sample households 74% in Terai, 43% in Darjeeling and 38% in Dooars were illiterate. Employment rate was quite good as on an average 2.4 per household holds a job either in plantation or outside plantation. But here author brings out that though they have a job but in plantation most of the worker works as temporary worker. Monthly average income of worker in three tea districts was 550 Rs. Those who work in other sector their income was more. The Higher household income had a higher for the reason that the male members of those family works outside the tea plantation or by other remittances like selling milk to co-operatives. Labourers had a poor savings. Though there were many means to save but most (48%) of them could not save. The Author argued that this indicates the living standard of workers. The author also argued that the structure of plantation was such that relation between workers and management was like feudal in nature and management does not recognize workers as assets of plantation and because of that workers were denied their basic needs. (Bhowmik 1996).

In a study (1996) of tea plantation labourers in Tamil Nadu, two districts of Coimbatore and the Nilgiris were taken. In 1995, 120 households were selected from Nilgiri and 110 households from Coimbatore. In Nilgiris 555 sample population was selected, male 284 and female 271 from four taluks, Kottagiri, Ootacamund, Coonoor, Gudalur. There was tea plantation at Annamalai hill of Coimbatore district. These were in Valparai taluk. (Kalam 1996).

In Coimbatore a total 505 persons, male 250 and female 255 were selected, 25 workers from small growers' tea garden were also selected. Among these 25 participants, 10 were male and 15 were female. Only one worker was permanent rest were temporary. Total 230 households comprising 1060 individuals were selected. Average house hold size was 4.61 in the study population. Average annual household income for the study population was Rs 5325.68. (Kalam 1996).

From Nilgiris ten plantations were selected, four from Coonoor, three from Kottagiri, from Godalur two and one from Ooty taluks. Out of ten plantations 109 households were selected and 11 households were selected from who were working in small tea gardens. (Kalam 1996).

In his study he elaborately described the housing condition, water supply, sanitation, crèches, education, health, recreation facilities available in the garden for the workers. In Nilgiris houses were brick walled with asbestos or tiled roof except one which have thatched roof. Most of the houses were well maintained. Permanent worker get house but the day after retirement the worker had to return the key to management otherwise their gratuity and provident fund were withheld. Water supply was good. They got tap water though it was time bound, occasionally water used to be chlorinated. In two plantations water scarcity was there and inhabitants of these plantations went to collect water from the nearby village. Though there was provision for toilet for every household but that could not be provided rather families share toilet. In every house there was electricity supply and management collected bills for that. Roads were there. Drainage system was there but not well maintained. In two plantations drains were well maintained. Recreation facility was provided by management. Crèche facilities were good in all plantations and were well maintained by the management. Education facility was available in all plantations and workers send their children to schools. Management recruited sufficient number of teachers. But for secondary and higher secondary school's management did not provide any financial support or other facility. Clinical facilities were available in all plantations but frequency of doctors' visit varied from daily to twice a week. Workers even got leave to go to their native place with second class train fare or actual fare and allowance too. They got earned leaves every 22 days work, sick leave and government holidays. Pregnant women got 45 to 60 days of leave. Each worker received one rough blanket in every year and one fine blanket in every two years. For second one management allots Rs. 80 and if it is more than extra amount is deducted from worker's wage. Workers get overcoat to wear during pesticide spray, synthetic sheets to cover lower part of body during plucking. In comparison to Assam and West Bengal it was seen that condition of workers in Tamil Nadu was better. But still they were not according to the plantation act. Management hardly maintains the Labour Act. (Kalam 1996).

In Nilgiris the district trade union was formed in 1929 when the Estates Staff Association of South India was formed, though it was not a union technically but a society. Later on, Nilgiris District Estate Workers Union was formed and then it was merged with Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC). Other main trade unions were Hindu Mazdoor Sabha (HMS),

Labour Progressive Front (LPF) trade union wing of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam(DMK), Anna Thotta Thozhilalar Sangam (ATTS), trade union wing of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, and other trade unions are also there, like CITU (Central Indian Trade Union) and AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress) which were trade union wing of CPI-M (Communist Party of India (Marxist),) and CPI (Communist Party of India) respectively. Though workers said that trade union provides security to workers yet a portion of them were not satisfied with the work of trade union. (Kalam 1996).

In Coimbatore district house of workers were permanent structure like Nilgiris but had cemented floor. However, TANTEA (Tamil Nadu Tea Plantation Corporation Limited) group was an exception where some houses had mud flooring. Usually the permanent workers get house and if houses were available, temporary workers could also get one. Water supply was through pipelines in labour line. Sanitation condition depended upon companies as some provide flush out latrine in every house but others common latrine was provided. Like Nilgiris electricity were provided in every house with meter except only few at TANTEA estate. Drainage facility was good and maintained by workers. Schools were there but as those schools were government operated workers were not happy with the quality of education provided. Medical facility and crèche facilities provided by management were good. Like Nilgiris for higher education management do not provide any facility. Trade unions had a major role in getting benefit from management. (Kalam 1996).

Compared to these two states wages were better in Tamil Nadu. Recruitment of workers from temporary to permanent was done more or less in the same manner. After working for a fixed period of time they are recruited as permanent worker.

All these three studies showed that labourer is confined in plantation area and their involvement in other areas like politics is less. Only in Darjeeling there are some involvements from tea labourers and due to this they could get some benefit from management. These three studies also bring out that in comparison to Assam and West Bengal Plantation Labour Act 1951 was better implemented in south. Why in spite of the same Act for plantation in three different states it was implemented differently? None could meet the criteria of the Act. From these studies it can clearly see that in south it is better though not meeting all criteria, how they can provide better facility to workers and why other state like Assam and West Bengal cannot?

Duara and Mallick's study (2012) also talks about the issues of migration and discrimination at work place. The "push factors" and "pull factors" worked to migrate the labourers from their

native place to Assam. The workers migrated from Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chota Nagpur, and Jharkhand. Chinese labourers were migrated from Kolkata. The “push factor” like exploitation by Zamindars, drought, flood, epidemic and “pull factors” like false promises about easy work, better pay, ideal condition of work, land for cultivation etc. made people to migrate to Assam. Reality was different and planters failed to provide what they had promised. Rather wages were also less. Basic amenities were not provided according to the guideline of the Plantation Labour Act 1951. They keep wages low so that profit is more, but the working condition sustains. Even if women workers fell ill or delivered baby they were forced to work. They were even forced to work just few days after delivery. Female workers were needed more in tea garden but they were underpaid. Their wages were also taken away by male member of the family and their participation in the trade union was less. Their workloads more as they had to take the burden of household work along with tea garden work. (Duara and Mallick 2012).

Pratap Chatterjee’s study (2014) about the Indian Tea Plantations workers abusive working condition owned by World Bank brought out the abusive working condition in the North-Eastern Indian state where Amalgamated Plantation Private Limited (APPL) was working. These 25 tea gardens were taken from TATA group of companies. Shares were distributed among International Finance Corporation (IFC) who has got 19.9%, TATA 41% and rest were offered to 31,000 workers of tea plantations. After complaints were made by workers, Columbia Law School team visited 17 tea plantations and found several families dwelling in one house; they were denied any form of health care and abused in hospital. Some of the workers even died on working site. (Chatterjee 2014).

Talking about the problem of education for the children of tea garden, (Kumri 2014) in a study in Derby Tea Estate of Assam, the author had tried to explore the household demand for children’s education. He took a sample of 59 house hold, 48 children who were 16 years and above for the study. Among them 20 were male and 27 were female. Participants Demographic, economic and social characteristic were taken to evaluate the problem. The study reveals that mother’s education had a positive impact on children’s education. Also, father’s age and household income had positive impact on children’s education. However, family size had a negative effect on child’s education i.e. increase in the family size, the education attainment of children decreases. (Kumri 2014).

Through the disaster pressure or crunch model, another study (Debnath and Nath 2014) tried to evaluate risk factors which were hindering education in tea garden labourers of Dewan tea garden in Silchar, Assam. Around 925 families were selected to assess the risk factors. Data was collected on teaching learning facilities, occupational dynamics, housing patterns, health and hygiene. Risk factors like poor socio-economic factors, insecure livelihood opportunities and lack of awareness and confidence, motivational vulnerability lack of knowledge about government policies/schemes acted as catalyst to threats along with educational status which was poor for a community. This study shows that most of the females (80%) were illiterate among the respondents. Most of the dropouts were due to poverty and responsibility of care for siblings. This may be the reason why more girl children were illiterate. (Debnath and Nath 2014). While mothers were away at work who will look after the younger siblings? This study shows the failure of management to provide crèche facility for younger children. So, when mother's status of education has impact on child's education how when a girl child is dropped out of school to look after siblings can get that education? How can she then look after education of future generation? Author did not raise this question and did not showed what benefit workers get from the management through PLA 1951.

Baruah and Dimari (2017) explored the causes of decreased rate of continuation of education by children of tea tribes after primary level of education. They had taken Shilikha tea garden of Udalgiri district of Assam for study. They had taken fifty respondents for their study. The sample was selected purposively. Structured questionnaire set was used for taking interview. Authors had collected data on gender, religion, age group, total income per week, total family size, educational status of the respondents' children, age of children (below 14 years), household infrastructure, ownership status of the house, rooms of the house, domestic water resources, electricity in the house, respondent's educational statuses. They argued that socio-economic conditions play an important role in continuing education beyond primary level. Gender is another factor which plays a role in continuation of education of girl child. Management too after primary education does not help in further education of tea workers children. They also argued that economic burden, social hindrance, low level of education among parents play role in decreased level of education among children at secondary level. They had proposed to set up night/evening school for workers by management in co-operation with government, to address the economic condition by improving wages, incentives for skilled worker, for obtaining higher education, scholarship for children of tea workers. Other than

these authors also proposed for adult literacy schools to educate adults so that they can value education. (Baruah and Daimari 2017).

Now question is how many workers will come to attend evening/ night school after working from dawn to dusk? Will not they become tired after working whole day? What about women workers? They had to look after children and household work. How will they attend school?

Another study (Basumatari and Goyari 2013) from Assam explored the educational status of women workers of tea plantation. The authors had taken four tea gardens i. e. Bhooteachang, Hattigor, Brotherhood and Jwnglari tea garden of Udalgiri district of Assam. Structured questionnaire was used for taking interview and 241 household were selected for the study. Among those 120 female workers were selected to know the factors of low literacy rate and high dropout rates in these tea gardens. Primary data were collected through descriptive survey method. The study found that 60.3% of total sample population (1075) were still illiterate, only 39.7% of the total sample population were literate. Women literate consists of only 33.4% in the total sample. Two big and older tea gardens i. e. Bhooteachang and Hattigor tea garden were run by McLeod Russel India Limited and Amalgamated Plantation Private Limited respectively. Literacy rate 44.2%, 42.4%, 39.5%, 30.7% at Bhooteachang, Hattigor, Brotherhood and Jwnglari tea estate respectively. Female literacy of all gardens was less. Brotherhood tea garden had highest female literacy rate (37.2%) and Jwnglari had lowest (21.8%) literacy rate. Bhooteachang and Hattigor had 36.8% and 35.5% female literacy rate respectively. The study had shown that 56% of literate women had only primary education (class IV), 13% female had secondary education and only 6% had education beyond matriculation and above. Authors had argued that economic backwardness, negligence of girls' education, non-availability of schools, early marriages are some of the factors which played roles in lower level of literacy rate among female workers. The study had also shown that educated mothers send their children to school more than illiterate mothers. They had argued that if some policy measures were taken the literacy rate among tea garden workers will improve. They had suggested to set up secondary level schools at garden areas, awareness programme about literacy and girls' education, night/evening schools for adults, scholarship for higher education, improve economic backwardness by improving wages. (Basumatari and Goyari 2013).

In Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu, 20 tea estates were studied to see the problem of tea plantation workers. Srinivasan (2016) explored domain of working experience, and timings, workers

contract information, social security cover, health information, wages and other financial benefits, legal status, caste, work relationship and their socio-economic condition. As author is from Law department, he brought out the violation of different rights by management.

He found out that most of the respondents belonged to the scheduled caste, and their socio-economic condition was poor, they had been isolated physically and mentally (90.2%) from management for their rough behaviour. There was human right violation (90.6%), fundamental right violation (91.8%), lack of social security benefit (77.1%), pension benefit (69.8%), unemployed insurance (89.8%) absence of medical assistance from company (53.9%), lack of transport facility for going to administrative work or for children going to school (94.3%). There was even a wage difference among male and female workers (69%). The workers informed that PLA 1951; Tamil Nadu Plantation rule 1955 and General Provident Fund Dues Act 1925 were not covered by the management. Management who belonged to the top level in work hierarchy were exploiting workers in spite of having different laws to look into the matter of social security of workers. (Srinivasan 2016). It was seen those workers were aware of this exploitation but why cannot they voice their demands which they were to get legally? What role do trade unions play for workers right?

During the crisis of tea industry labourers faced numerous problems. Study in Darjeeling (Khaswas 2005) tried to bring out status like education, housing and sanitation, health of tea garden labourers during the crisis of tea market. He selected three Tea Estates, with the help of trade union leaders, namely Ambik TE which was severely sick, Teesta valley TE which was better than previous one and Peshik TE which was abandoned by authority and labourers were trying to carry out the village economy. Fifty households were taken by random sampling method. (Khaswas 2005).

In the crisis period management had withdrawn many facilities, like medical which were provided to labourers. Due to the crisis in market many gardens had closed down and the labourers had to suffer. Their housing, sanitation and livelihood were in danger. They were starving and there were reports of starvation death (Reports on hunger in tea plantation in North Bengal, January 2004) but the author omitted this issue. Infrastructure in the selected villages was poor, roadways were in bad condition, electricity supply was only either in the offices or white-collar people's house. Even the health care facility was not adequate. Most of these tea gardens did not have their own health Centre or ambulance. Few health Centres which were there did not have basic medical facilities for workers. People (98%) go to some form of

medicinal practitioner along with ethno-spiritual faith healer. Though author did not mention particularly which type of medicinal practitioner they go to. Education level in tea garden workers were not good as 55% had studied elementary level, but less than 15% studied up to secondary level and less than attended in higher secondary level. (Khaswas 2005).

Economic condition of the workers also was not good. Due to the rising population and low wages many of the plantation workers sought another source of income. Across the tea estates of Darjeeling Hills management stopped providing social and economic benefits to the workers. It was argued that this was because tea industry was going through a crisis. Author also observed that in the name of “Darjeeling Tea” there are many varieties sold in international market which were not “Darjeeling Tea”. So, in international market this prestigious tea was losing its name and fame and its effects on the tea industry of Darjeeling. Even factors like aged tea bush; low level of nutrients etc., management’s reluctant behaviour to replant tea bushes, political movement and Gorkhaland movement also affected tea industry. All these factors affected tea industry in Darjeeling and in return workers were the sufferers, who solely depended on garden economy. To combat with the situation labourers also found out alternative means of survival. (Khaswas 2005). This was also shown in another study. (Rasaily 2003). Rasaily too showed that during crisis workers tried to cope up with the situation, some by investing money in chit fund or by taking loan from markets as kind or cash or by other social security benefit evolved by them so that in time of crisis, they can get benefit from those. (Rasaily 2003).

Rasaily’s (2003) study of Phuguri tea estate of Darjeeling tried to bring out how living and working condition affects the overall health of workers and how they cope with the crisis situation. Role of trade unions also came out from her study. From colonial era to post-colonial era what measures were taken as welfare of workers. The author also looked into morbidity and mortality at that period. Workers caste, hierarchy in work and perception of health was examined. Morbidity, mortality, type of health service access and the welfare services they get from government were also explored in her study. Workers perceive their health status and diseases with that of their works and they associate that as long working hours, untimely meal or no meal, harsh weather condition and excessive work load. They even relate their poor food intake to their diseases. Poor sanitation condition also led to many diseases like skin diseases, hookworm manifestation etc. She argued that from workers perception of taking ‘jaar’ or ‘Rakshi’, that they want to forget their pain and tiredness and they can get pleasure from it as they can sleep properly forgetting everything. That too they get energy if they take ‘jaar’.

Though it has a negative impact on their health but they take it to make themselves content and happy. To mask their hunger, they take black salted tea and 'jaar'. They don't take treatment until illness effect their capacity to work. Health seeking behaviour depends on the accessibility and availability of the service. Along with biomedicine they too prefer to take local faith healers' advice and treatment. She also showed that disease pattern and health seeking behaviour changes as one goes up in work hierarchy. Even housing, living condition, food intake, sanitation everything changes according to work hierarchy. These parameters also affect their health status. (Rasaily 2003).

Rasaily (2003) also showed that though there were government officers to look after the workers plea even that was inadequate. Due to lack of support from government and managements during crisis period workers took support from informal sector. As there was less absorption in government sector even after having education people from that area go outside in search of job. (Rasaily 2003).

Recent studies done by Debnath and Debnath (2017) at Meghlipara tea estate of west Tripura district brought out the socio-economic condition of tea garden workers of the tea estate. They have taken 75 household for the study. They also looked into the role of state and union Government, Authority of the tea estate, NGO's role in developing socio-economic condition of tea garden workers. They collected primary data through field survey and secondary data from different government offices, management and literature. Most of the workers are permanent (59%) worker, among workers female workers (77%) constitute the majority. Majority of the workers are married (76%). Marital age of the male female respondents is less than legal age of marriage, 86% and 73% respectively. Most of the workers are illiterate (75%). They also have taken electricity consumption, drinking water facilities, toilet facilities and monthly income of the workers. It is shown that 56% consumes electricity, 95% drinks water from tube well and most of the respondents uses (96%) unsanitary toilet. The monthly income is less than 2000 Rs. for most of the household (76%), but 49% are below poverty line. They tried to evaluate the causes of social constraints to uplift socio-economic condition of the tea garden workers. They have given some suggestion for improving socio-economic condition of the tea garden workers. They find that awareness about literacy, girls' education, employment generation, government, NGO's initiative to include social security schemes and subsidies will improve the socio-economic condition of the tea garden workers. (Debnath and Debnath 2017).

Another study (Debnath and Debnath 2017) talks about the small savings awareness, factors influencing small savings behaviours and pattern of savings done by the tea garden workers of Tripura. They have taken 150 respondents for the study. The study shows that most of the respondents (88%) are not aware of the small savings. The authors have taken age, gender, educational qualification, monthly family income, poverty status, savings and investment of the workers. They argued that due to illiteracy, low awareness (12%) about small savings the workers are unable to invest and do small savings. They also argued benefit of the small savings were grown among workers and if education level increases the workers will do small savings more. Though the authors were aware of low wages of tea garden workers but they did not mention how will it possible to do savings by workers where they are struggling for their sustenance with such a low wage? (Debnath and Debnath 2017). Most of the respondents (76%) have less than 2000 Rs. monthly income. So how is it possible for them to do small savings? What is their living condition? How is it possible for them to get education and be aware of savings?

II. Health status of tea garden workers

Kundu et al (2013) study of a tea estate of Dooars, West Bengal, showed that nutritional status has effect on productivity of female tea garden workers mainly tea leaves pluckers. Sample of 100 female tea leaves pluckers were taken for the study. Mean age of these pluckers was 27.96 years (22-32 years). Pregnant women were excluded from the study. Socio-demographic variables, like education, watching TV once in a week, Religion, caste was taken into consideration for the study. Health and dietary status were measured by measuring height, weight, (SLI-Standard Living Index), BSA-Body Surface Area, BMI- Body Mass Index, heart rate, blood pressure, waist circumference, Hb% concentration and MUAC-Mid Upper Arm Circumference. Result showed that 90% of the study population was anaemic i.e. Hb concentration is less than 12g/dl and 44% had low BMI less than 18.5, 36% of pluckers had low BMI in mild anaemic group, 56% had low BMI in moderate anaemic group. Those who had low BMI (<18.5) plucked 10.37% in moderate and 10.14% in mild anaemic group less than who had BMI more than 18.5. (Kundu et al 2013).

Productivity was estimated for each tea pluckers by Green leaf yield (kg)/day. From this study it is revealed that productivity was significantly and positively co-related with height, BMI, BSA, Hb, BP, and MUAC in both moderate and mild anaemic group of workers. (Kundu et al 2013).

Cross sectional study (Medhi et al 2006) about health and nutritional status of eight tea garden plantation of Dibrugarh district of Assam brought out the different morbidity and nutritional pattern. Study was done during 2002-2003. Multistage sampling method was taken. Out of 138 tea gardens eight were taken for study. Random selections of 880 house hold were taken for study. Total 4016 individuals (1863-male, 2153-female) were participated in the study from eight tea gardens. Among them 52.9% were manual workers, who were 15 or more than 15 years. Among the worker 59.9% consumes alcohol and 72.5% were non-smoked tobacco user and 7.7% were smokers. Around 63% had access to household toilet. In this study reveal a higher prevalence of underweight (59.9%) among preschool children, high prevalence of thinness (73.1% females and 65.7% males) among adults compared to rest part of India. Prevalence of anaemia among females was 72.2% and males were 71.8%, 65.4% suffers from intestinal helminths', 6.7% suffers from respiratory problems, various skin diseases, like scabies, abscess, pulmonary tuberculosis and higher prevalence of hypertension as age increases. Among alcohol users (49.1%) prevalence of hypertension was more than non-users (41%). Prevalence of hypertension observed more in tobacco users (49.1%) than non-users (33.4%). (Medhi et al 2006).

The authors (Medhi et al 2006) argued that most of the diseases are due to lack of poor personal and household hygiene, unsatisfactory sanitation, and housing along with illiteracy (65.1%) and ignorance. They also showed that education, even maternal education has positive impact on health and nutrition. (Medhi et al 2006).

Now here question arises these people goes out to work early in the morning and comes back evening, plantation workers' wages are also less, housing and sanitation, education facility, medical facility which should be provided by the plantation authority according to plantation Labour Act 1951, which they are not getting according to the Act, are they capable to take care of those facilities with their low wages?

Biswas et al (2002) conducted a study which looked into the nutritional status of Tea Garden workers of Assam by measuring BMI and central obesity. Tea garden workers from one of the tea gardens of Assam were selected for the study. Total 1014 tea garden workers who were aged thirty or more were taken randomly. Among them 511 were male and 503 were females. Here authors did not mention the name of the tea garden. Trained personnel measured height, body weight of labours with barefoot and light clothing. Height was measured by portable stadiometer and weight by digital electronic balance. Waist and hip girth were measured by

standing in erect position with feet together over light clothing; waist girth was measured at level of umbilicus and hip circumference at the iliac crest. BMI is taken as general obesity and waist hip ratio is taken as central obesity. BMI is calculated according to WHO criteria. It is observed that females are thinner (33.2% female, 31.31% male in Grade-I, 17.69% female, 16.05% male in Grade-II thinness) than male. Females too suffered from severe grade of malnutrition (female 24.06% compared to male 9.98%). Though overall, they have low BMI but in advancing age BMI again decreases. Waist hip ratio is far below the normal level in both sexes. In increasing age male shows increase in this ratio but for women it remains more or less same. This cross-sectional study is done to know the nutritional status of workers in tea garden. It is seen that they are more undernourished than general population. (Biswas et al 2002). Why? In spite of getting rations and other facilities by management through PLA 1951 the picture is gloomy comparing to other parts of India? Why females are the most sufferers where as they too earn?

Borgohain (2013) studied Hajua tea estate of Sibsagar district and Marangi tea estate of Golaghati district in Assam about occupational health hazards among tea garden workers. The participants were 72 workers from Hajua tea estate, both male and female, 140 workers from Marangi tea estate were selected by random sampling method. More than two third workers were permanent workers in Hajua tea estate and more than half workers were temporary workers at Marangi tea estate. They were engaged as leaf pluckers, pesticide sprayers, factory workers at Marangi tea estate, bungalow workers as servant, cook, chowkidar, labourers etc. all female workers of Marangi and 88.88% of Hajua tea estate were leaf pluckers.,11.12% of female pluckers of Hajua tea estate were engaged in other works. Pesticide workers were all male. Data about income pattern, drinking water source, housing, health care and safety measure to workers in the two-study area, workers health problem was studied to know occupational health hazards faced by tea garden workers in these two tea estates. Housing facility provided to permanent workers in both the estate were of Assam type quarters but the temporary workers lived in kutchha houses of their own. Marangi tea estate had medical facility inside the estate and a doctor, a nurse and two compounders were there but Hajua tea estate did not have garden hospital. Workers travelled to nearby hospital which is 6 km away from the estate at Khumtai Hajua tea estate. Senior medical officer, 3 pharmacists, 4 nurses, 5 dressers were there. All permanent workers get free medicine from both the estate where as temporary workers get free treatment and medicine if they became ill while working in the garden. There were 6 members “Mother’s Club” in the Hajua tea estate spreads awareness about health and

hygiene and cleanliness door to door visit. They also campaign about hazards of drinking liquor, drawbacks of remaining absent in work and benefit of living in clean surroundings. Most of the latrines in Hajua tea estate were sanitary whereas at Marangi there were pit latrines. Drainage system was not adequate and poor. Most of the respondents in both the tea estates wash their face and brush their teeth daily using brush or twigs. Soap cannot be used regularly due to financial constraint. Author too find out that to 'ward off water borne' diseases more than 90% in Hajua tea estate and more than 75% in Marangi tea estate drink boiled water. From this one can tell that workers were well aware of the fact that safe drinking water is necessary to be free of certain diseases and they were not ignorant about it. Is it than due to lack of affordability make them to become so called 'ignorant' about health? Workers of Hajua tea estate (90%) and Marangi (75%) uses mosquito net. Along with biomedical facility 23% of Marangi tea estate workers visit local faith healer ('bez') too. Most of the mechanical health hazards faced by workers in both the estates were sprains and cuts. This study also showed that pesticides are sprayed without protection, in the factory protective gears are not provided. Regarding job satisfaction Hajua tea estate is better (50%) than Marangi (24%) tea estate. Author here argued that may be due to better facility provided by management and workers were mostly permanent worker they have more job satisfaction in Hajua tea estate. The author brings out that poor availability of nutritional diet, fewer social benefit to temporary workers (i.e: medical care, housing, educational facilities) effects on their health. He also brought out different morbidity pattern in the two tea estates. It is found that most commonly reported morbidity was body ache both in male and female workers of both the tea gardens. (Borgohain 2013).

Different habits like chewing tobacco, smoking, drinking rice beer also effect on their physical health. More than 80% male workers in both the tea gardens consume rice beer whereas 29.63% and 40% female workers from Hajua and Marangi tea estate consume rice beer. Here again why Hajua tea estate female workers consume less rice beer than Marangi tea estate? But consuming tobacco was more in Hajua (33.33%) than in Marangi (16.67%) among the female workers. Is consuming rice beer less by female workers in Hajua anything to do with the job security, because in Hajua most of the workers were permanent? Another author (Rasaily 2003) in her Ph. D thesis from workers perspective brought out the reason behind taking rice beer. According to the author workers they find strength and they forget their pain and deprivation after taking this. So, it may be affecting their physical health but they get the psychological pleasure by consuming it. All these have effect on occupational and social life of tea garden

workers. Their absentee rate (33.33% male, 59.26% female in Hajua and 62.50% male 90% female in Marangi) also high in work place due to physical ailments and in turn they suffer from work frustration. These lead to stress, depression, anxiety and irritability and the author argued that all these may be cause of higher domestic violence in these two tea gardens. (Borgohain 2013).

Baro's (2016) study of Child labour in tea garden of Assam brings out the causes of engaging children in the tea garden. Mainly poverty, tradition of engaging children in tea garden work by British in the colonial era, policy inadequacies, lack of awareness, inadequate enforcement of labour law, shortcomings of education are some of the reasons cited by author. Author tried to find out child labour situation and its factors in the Assam tea gardens through field survey reports and secondary literature sources, ILO reports, UNICEF reports. Author argued that main reason for child labour in tea garden is poverty and hence to sustain family, illiteracy and ignorance of parents, children are put into hazardous jobs. (Baro 2016).

Though the study (Baro 2016) tried to bring out causes of child labour, its solution and issues of production of unskilled adult labour but it does not talk about the health of child labour, impact on mental as well as physical health. It talked about the economic security of children's family but not about how it could be gain as PLA 1951 and other act could not wholly are effective in tea industry due to oppose from planters. Without economic security how parents will think to educate their children? Where planters mostly are exploitative nature, when they get labour in low wage will they think about the up gradation of the status of labourers?

Children who worked in the plantation also get less payment. According to Plantation Labour Act 1951 less than 12 years age of children are prohibited to work in any plantation. But it is permitted for the age between 12-14 years and adolescent 15-17 years to work. The "Certificate of fitness" is required from a certified surgeon to work in tea plantation. The law even said that the working hour may not be 27 hours a week and not at night. After the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act of 1986 the minimum age raised from 12 years to 14 years of age. In the year 1990 there are approximately 96,535 children employed in the tea garden in Assam according to Government report. (Das 2016).

III. Cultural perception of illness and illness seeking behaviour

Chowdhuri and Verma (2002) tried to bring out the perception of health and medicine among tea plantation labourers through oral histories. The study was done among Duars of Jalpaiguri district. Five tea estates were taken, worker from different background, religion, places of

origin, ethnic background were taken for the study. Three generation of workers were taken. Mainly perception about health, pregnancy and child-birth was studied. Authors showed that modern and indigenous practices co-existed ambiguously. However, their perception of causation varies. That may be traditional perception or day to day experience. (Chowdhuri and Verma 2002).

They explain causation of diseases by malevolent wind, influence of angry gods, evil eyes, or by the shadow of ghost. For this when they find that diseases are caused by supernatural power or by curse of gods, they tend not to treat those diseases as that might anger the said god. From their working and living perception they find out causation of some diseases, like taking bad food or liquor they relates to stomach diseases. Though workers say that they have faith in biomedicine but their action during diseases and perception of causation of diseases actually show a mixture of biomedicine and culturally defined faith healing and medicine. Both exist side by side in a complex manner. Ritual performed for this and people engaged to do so are some of the aspect that has been observed. Workers perception about medicine, doctors working in the plantation, immunization perceptions etc. are some of the domain also explored by authors. (Chowdhuri and Verma 2002).

Author here too observed that perception of ‘dain’ is prevalent. In their writings they too showed that the female fertility is related to agriculture. Rituals were performed by the villagers to protect their village and its people from evil. (Chowdhuri and Verma 2002). The authors argued that though modern biomedicine is accessible for the workers of the tea garden for three generations and its effectiveness is accepted but still traditional faith healing goes side by side. They are sometimes reluctant to utilize provided facility of prevention in their houses or for their children, like vaccine administration. Authors also showed that workers are reluctant to use family planning method as they fear that some of their children might die. The author cited another reason i.e. more children mean more hand in agricultural set up. Authors also explored the medical facility available to them and found out that it varies garden to garden and most are not according to the Plantation Labour Act 1951 and The West Bengal Plantation Labour Rules, 1956. (Chowdhuri and Verma 2002).

There is targeting of women as witches and performing witchcraft that are seen as a cause of diseases and ill health. There is a perception that these women are responsible for ill health by the tea garden workers. Chowdhuri’s (2014) study in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal showed the factor labelling one witch or “*dain*” by her own community. She tried to find out perception

of other peoples, states, management's about witch hunting. She explained that workers who face oppression and anger by outside world and authority invoke them to do such things to their fellow mate. As if they just sought release from their uncertainty by labelling someone especially women as witches and torturing them even murdering them. For every death, illness or bad things in locality they search someone to blame for their miseries. Management and state also seem indifferent about this matter. They find it normal according to worker's "*jungle*" culture as workers are mostly tribes. Here again they are alienated from mainstream by labelling them "*jungle*". Here author argued that this was different from mainland tribe culture. State too overlooks the problems of workers of tea plantation. (Chowdhuri 2014).

Chowdhuri (2014) argued that, from agricultural background to industrial wage earners, the issue should be addressed within its historical, consciousness and ongoing conflict between workers and that of management within the plantation. The witch hunt was a periodic reaction by workers. This was against oppression by management of plantation. As workers could not oppose the oppression by management due to their lack of political and organizational resources, the workers tried to find out other means to release their underlying anger. In this situation "*dain*" was the source and witch hunting were the discourse. So according to author witch hunting was not a ritual which was normally seen but a "powerful protest" against oppression by the tea workers community. Here witchcraft and witch hunt were a product of alienation which was experienced by tea garden workers with in the capitalist mode of production. According to Karl Marx alienation was workers experience and was directly related to the wealth of capitalism. Capital or profit in the system was main concern which has to be increased. In this system workers become alienated from the production process and product and his relationship in the community and "species being". Employment and wages were controlled by management who were top in hierarchy. Union leaders too did not look after workers interest properly. So, from management, unions, outside world plantation workers were seen as outsider. Government who thinks tea plantation workers need would be met by management also ignores their need. In this process the tea workers became the victim of oppression. Even keeping long working hours for temporary workers and low wages are other forms of an oppression faced by workers. (Chowdhuri 2014).

In Meghlibund tea estate area which is my study area, where casting one "*dain*" is very common, is there this the cause other than the common belief that diseases are caused by "*dain*"?

Das's study (2014) examine the extent of continuity and change in tradition in Munda tribe, who are tea garden workers and who migrated from different parts of the country to Tripura to work in tea gardens. Durgabari tea garden and Laxmilunga tea garden were the study areas. Due to acculturation with the majority Bengali population their religious belief and practices changed and they mingled with broader area of Hinduism and they perform those festival and beliefs too. In view of changing scenario of modern society new generation is also experiencing changes; their language and festival all are mingling with one another those who are in vicinity with them. This study is mainly based on the acculturation of Munda community in tea garden of Tripura not about cultural perception of illness or behaviour. But these cultures too have impact on health. Here in some *puja*'s Mundas use rice beer as '*Prasad*'. So, what affect this rice beer having on health? The *puja* "*Ghardevta*" is performed to know the health status of the family, i.e if the family member is having any diseases or are of good health. The author did not elaborate about it anymore but from this it can be said that worshipping god to know the health status of family members they do rely on gods for cure and illness. (Das 2014). Observation by another author in immigrant tribes in Tripura (Adhikari 1988) too showed the same trend in Bhils, Oraons, Santals and Mundas. In time the new generation is mingling with the broader and dominant social system. Some of them even don't know their original festivals properly and their origination. They feel proud to be called them resident of Tripura. So, in this broader relation what do they think about disease causation and how they react to the illness and cure?

IV. Conceptualization, Research question and rationale of the study

Most of the time it is the grass root level people who are mainly affected by local as well as global scenario as their lively hood is directly related to the condition of the tea industry. Management and owner usually have other means of income. Is not it necessary to look into the situation and existing PLA 1951 again to make a better law for workers? Under PLA child labour less than 14 years are still there. The Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act of 1986 the minimum age rose from 12 years to 14 years of age. Still there are huge number of children are employed in the tea garden. In the year 1990 there are approximately 96,535 children employed in the tea garden in Assam according to Government report. (Das 2016). Why? Sometimes government also ignores plantations as they come under PLA and management is entitled to provide some social security to its workers. In Assam government citing reason that tea garden workers are better than some other local poor people and hence denying ST status to them. But actual scenario is different. So, these workers are deprived from

every aspect. This deprivation leads to their economic and social degradation situation. How than one can expect to have better level of literacy, health when they struggle to fed their stomach?

Literature reviewed in earlier sections brought out different dimensions of problems in the life of tea garden workers and tea industry. Some observed (Bhowmik 1996; Xaxa 1996; Kalam 1996; Chatterjee 2014) that living condition of workers was very poor in North Bengal, North – East and South India. Some showed that poor working conditions lead to different health hazards. Some other literature (Kundu et al 2013; Medhi et al 2006; Biswas et al 2002; Borgohain 2013) talked about the health status of tea garden worker by measuring different biomedical statistics like BMI, MUAC, Hb%, height, weight, and BP, hygiene or sanitation status and nutritional status. Reviewed Literature also brought out about the economic statuses of tea industry. Income, work, living condition i.e. housing, sanitation, water supply, education all these social factors are related to health of an individual and in return related to the perception of health of an individual in a given social structure. Reviewed literature (Bhowmik 1996; Xaxa 1996; Kalam 1996; Shrinivasan 2016; Khawas 2005; Pal & Hussain 2016; Chatterjee 2014) also showed workers poor accessibility and inadequate availability of health service in the plantation. Some studies (Pal & Hussain 2016; Chowdhuri and Verma 2002) also showed that due to poor economic condition workers prefer to avail or accept medicine or treatment from unskilled persons. They are also reluctant to accept preventive measures of biomedicine. Though the workers said they trust in biomedicine but in reality, they accept both biomedicine as well as traditional healing method. Gender and age (Hassan 2014; Pal and Hussain, 2016) are also factors for decision making to avail health services. Other factors like distance, lack of manpower to take to medical centre plays a role to access and avail health service. But all these factors were studied only as a single factor in the plantation structure. This study is trying to relate these social determinants of health and how these factors shape perception of health of an individual in a given social and cultural structure.

Health of a person not only related to the freedom from diseases or germs but also related to his/her living condition like housing, sanitation, education, accessibility and affordability to food, safe drinking water etc, the place and condition of works. Being healthy also related to the subjective perception of the individual about health. The subjective perception varies from individual to individual in a given social and cultural context. Therefore, health is a “socially produced phenomenon”. Social relation of production and economic relation of production have implication on health of an individual in a given society.

The organisation of work in a tea plantation can be described as a pyramidal by hierarchy of work. The top layers are occupied by the owner, managers, staffs and sub-staffs and at the bottom of the hierarchy there are workers who perform the labour-intensive tasks like plucking, weeding, cutting, pruning, watering plants, spraying insecticides. Majority of these are female, other than male and children.

Wage structure also differs across hierarchy according to the work they do. Owners have control over the means of production; manager, staffs and sub-staffs are salaried persons. The workers are the daily wage employees.

In every structure every individual has some kind of social relation with the component of the society. This social relationship bound the society as a functional structure.

Social relation of class caste gender race gets reflected in this given structure of tea plantation so as their economic relation too. Economic status is related to the affordability of basic amenities of an individual. Wages, caste, education, living conditions like housing, sanitation and water supply has implications for the health of workers across the hierarchy. Perception on health, illness, health seeking behaviour and accessibility to the health service of an individual differs according to the economic relation one has with the society.

In view of above discussion about emergence of the tea industry in India and its discourse from colonial era to date studies mostly focused on trading scenario in national and international market, labour recruitment, living condition, working condition of labourers, role of trade unions, struggle of workers. Most of the studies done in context of Assam and North Bengal. All these various aspects are not addressed in the case of Tripura since there are very few studies with limited scope. So, some questions that have been unanswered in Tripura are the following:

- What is the history of tea gardens and the deployment of labour in Tripura? How did these labourers come to work in Tripura?
- What was the process of recruitment, wages and facilities provided to them in different ownership tea estates?
- After migration from their original place of origin how did these people integrate with the broader local society? How they were accepted by local people socially and politically?
- How has insurgency affected the tea industry in Tripura and workers life?
- What is their position in the social and work hierarchy in the tea gardens?

- What is their living and working conditions and its effect on their health?
- How does the wage structure affect workers live and how workers cope with life?

Tripura was ruled by communist CPI (M) for a considerable time. They made a good reputation among tea garden workers. This was shown in writings of Dasharath Deb, late Chief Minister of Tripura. But INTUC was the first to form its union among workers of tea garden on 1st January 1948, (Chakraborty 2002) because that time CPI (M) was banned in Tripura by monarchy. Later on, workers were more inclined towards the communist ideology. So,

- What facility government implemented for welfare of worker? PLA 1951 and Tripura Plantation Rule of 1954 which is entitled to provide by tea estate, are those facilities properly implemented in the tea plantation? What role government plays in this matter?
- What is their cultural perception about their health in context of plantation and in area they are inhabitant now?
- How they perceive health and what service they avail, access and accept?

With above questions and as I could not find any literature in relation to health of tea garden labourers in Tripura which has a different history of setting up of tea garden and before Tripura join with Indian Union in 1949 AD the “Maharajas” were the sole authority of taking decision, my study from the perspective of social determinants of health in tea garden workers in Tripura in order to fill the gaps and highlight the diversity of the tea plantation economy in the North East that have different socio-historical contexts. For this purpose, the study was located in Tripura and I chose to study two tea estates representing different ownerships for my study. One is privately owned tea estate and another is workers co-operative tea garden in West Tripura District. I wished to explore if the management type has a bearing on working and living conditions and access to health services between co-operative and privately owned facilities. My primary focus was on the private owned tea estate and based on observations, in depth interviews and group discussions with workers I explored the co-operative tea estate to highlight the differences.

V. Methodology

The overall objective of the study is

To study social determinants of health among workers employed in a Tea Estate in West Tripura District

Specific objectives are:

1. To examine the historical, socio-economic and political factors that influenced the development of the tea estates in West Tripura District.
2. To study the working and living conditions and its implication for health across different categories of workers in the tea estates.
3. To understand the variation in the perceptions of health and health seeking behaviour across the different categories of workers in the tea estates.
4. To study the availability, accessibility and acceptability of public, for 'profit' and 'non-profit' health services.
5. To study the welfare measures provided in the tea estates across different categories of workers.

Taking of permission from authority of tea estate

Researcher personally met with the authority of tea estate to take permission to do her research work in the tea estate and with the workers. She first contacted with the manager of the tea estate over telephone as the owner is absentee owner. He firstly was reluctant to give permission rather he cited reason that it can be obtained from nearby PHC. Then researcher went and met with him personally and explained everything to him. He then sent her to the person who is now taken the estate on lease from its original owner, the fact which researcher was unaware of. By this time, they have personally inquired about researcher. When she met with the present owner, he inquired whether researcher will perform any medical test on workers or not, like taking blood for test. When she assured him that it's only interview with workers and observation, he directed the manager to give her permission but said as researcher is from the same locality where tea estate is situated and she was born and brought up there that's why the permission was given. They would not have given it to any outsider. On 25th of January 2016 researcher got the permission letter from the estate.

Before taking permission from Durgabari tea estate researcher visited several times to the tea garden. This is the most successful co-operative tea garden in Tripura. Researcher talked with the person who had taken initiative for establishing co-operative tea estate there. She talked with the secretary of the tea estate also. On 28th of February 2018 researcher got permission from the Durgabari Tea Estate workers co-operative Society Ltd.

Beyond rapport building: Developing a relationship with the workers

Researcher was born and brought up in that area but it was long she left the area for higher studies. Though she used to visit the area as her ancestral house is there but was not in touch with tea estate. So, she visited the hamlets of the workers. She started talking with the workers in the hamlet. From morning to evening she started to stay in the hamlets and started observing what they do. She started talking with workers, women, youngsters, and old people. Some of them could recognize her and sometimes mistook her as her youngest sister who used to visit those hamlets as Agriculture officer. There was a *Panchayat* member who helped researcher to introduce with worker. Even researcher's mother helped her in this matter as she is having good relation with some of the workers and old people there. Researcher talked with them. She visited some of the household. She talked with "ojha", "dai" there. She visited the crèche, talked with the worker there. She collected name of the workers from the office as office staffs were known to her since her childhood. One male worker took researcher in his home and introduced her with his daughters who are studying in college. So, by the time when she applied for permission from the authority researcher had built repo with the workers.

As field work going on people started recognizing researcher better. She used to go early in the morning to the hamlets to get them for interview. Whole day she roamed around in the hamlets. Sometimes workers or family members of workers used to ask to her "have you had your lunch? Or you are only talking with people and doing your work?" Some houses even offered her "tea" or some fruits to eat. On the day of Bengali New Year (Nababarsha) when she was going for field work women were surprised and asked "hey, today is festival day and you came for your work!" She worked half day that day. While coming back "ojha" of the hamlet called her to his house. He asked researcher whether she will take sweets or not. She said "yes, I shall take". So, he offered her sweets. She ate there. Then he said while researcher was going for work, he told his sister that he will offer sweets to researcher. His sister said that researcher will decline to have sweet in their house. So, he made a deal with his sister that researcher will not decline. While coming back he called researcher and offered sweet (jilibi). When she sat on their veranda and took sweets, he was telling his sister "look I told you. If we offer, she will come and have with us". All of them were so happy. They were joking and telling "give her that special drink". They were drinking "*Langi or Hadiya*" – "rice beer". The ojha said "she does not drink local one". Researcher laughed and replied, "I don't drink". They said "Today is the festive day, everyone should celebrate. But you are working. Next year we will remember you."

As researcher worked during summer it was very hot and sunny. Though she used to carry umbrella but hardly she used that. She always covered her head with “*churni*”. Women became conscious about her complexion. They were always asking “why are you not using umbrella? When you came here your complexion was good now you are becoming dark like us. We work whole day under sun. That is our work. But you people are not like that. Use umbrella”. She used to smile at them and said, “it’s okay”. One day they were going for plucking tea leaves and researcher met with them on her way to hamlet. That day she was using umbrella. They were laughing and telling her “at last you are using umbrella”. She smiled. Then one worker said, “she is using umbrella because of rain. During sunny day she does not use umbrella. Because it’s raining (drizzling) that’s why today she is using umbrella. She is like us”. While working in the hamlets if it gets dark people of hamlets used to get worried for researcher’s safety. On two occasions panchayat member came along with researcher till main road. Even whenever they saw her alone on road through tea garden, they used to come with her, if they were riding bicycle they used to get down and walk along with her. Many times, it happened that they were showing researcher path through tea garden.

When researcher attended “*Sitala*” puja in the hamlet there they had to write their name and “gotra” for puja. No one was there to write their name and “gotra”, so she wrote that in her copy and gave that to the priest. Whole day she was there and attended the puja. They offered her prasad after puja. Whole hamlet was there and they had lunch there. The “khichuri” was prepared by men. The person who was leader told women to tell researcher to have “khichuri” with them. So, she had lunch with them. They were very happy.

While roaming in the hamlets and talking with them researcher picked up their language—i. e. “*Chilomilo*”. She started trying talking with them in that language. They found it very interesting. They said that it sounds “sweet” when she speaks their language mixing with Bengali. In group discussion she took biscuits for the worker who attended the discussion. Women came from work and few of them had not have lunch but came for discussion. When researcher offered them packets of biscuits, they were happy. After discussion they said “you know we were hungry. Your biscuits helped us.” Researcher did not know that they came to attend discussion without having food. They were telling “you are like ‘*masi*’ (mother’s sister-aunty).” “*Ma janam dey kintu masiye pale*” --- “mother gives birth but aunty is the person who takes care”.

Some of the young stars started asking researcher about some job related or some course related matters. She helped them as much as she could. Whenever she went to hamlets, she used to enquire how they are doing. Even talking with children. In one hamlet she found her old classmate who is tea garden worker now. In another hamlet she found a woman who was researcher's youngest sister's classmate. Gradually she became "*pisi*" (father's sister) or "*masi*" (mother's sister) for young stars and from "madam" to "*didi*" (elder sister) for others. Old men and women started addressing researcher as "*meye*"— "daughter".

In Durgabari Tea Estate when researcher first visited, she went by auto till Durgabari bazar. From there she requested the auto driver to take her to the tea garden office. The office is almost one km away from Durgabari Market. The road is through tea garden. So, auto driver agreed to take researcher there but she has to pay him extra fare for that. She agreed. She went there. The secretary and Mr. Sudhamay Mazumdar (the person who set up co-operative) asked researcher how she went there. So, she told them about the auto driver and how she reached there. That time they said that auto driver cheated researcher. That day in the evening while coming back Mr. Mazumdar provided lift to researcher in his car till Durgabari Bazar. Next day when she went, she started to talk with workers. That day she got permission also for doing research in the tea estate. Several houses she visited, took interview from workers, retired workers, key informants who were there during establishing co-operative tea estate. Mr. Mazumdar instructed one-woman worker to accompany researcher to the labour line and introduce her to workers. They call these labour lines as east, west, south north labour line but those labour line has other name also like ...Bengali line, Munda line, Uria line etc. Many of the workers talked about the struggle they went through during initial period of establishing co-operative tea estate and before that too. Some of the workers have relative at Meghlibund Tea Estate. They asked researcher about their relatives when they came to know that researcher is working for her research work in that tea estate also. When she said she knows many of them they became so happy. They asked about them. Gradually they started to open up. After that when researcher visited again for group discussion and taking interview, they helped her a lot. The authority of the tea estate was a bit reluctant about the male workers group discussion. Repeatedly indirectly authority tried to discourage researcher to conduct group discussion with male workers. But she pursued to female workers for telling their male workers for group discussion. They said "you come; we shall tell them to be present." So, when she met with them next time it was not difficult for her to conduct the group discussion with them.

Preparation of tools

Before preparation of tools a brief pre-pilot study was done in the Meghlibund tea estate. (Findings of pre-pilot study is in Annexure I). Interview schedule was prepared keeping in mind the objectives. Interview schedule were prepared in English. Then those were translated in Bengali as respondents know Bengali. From Bengali version interview schedules were back translated in English by the translator and checked with the original version of interview schedule. During pilot study those interview schedules were tested in field by taking couple of interviews. Some of the questions were changed. After that final interview schedule was prepared. For household survey NSS format was adapted.

For facility survey of different health institution check list was prepared according to Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS).

Sample selection and research design

All the workers who work at Meghlibund tea garden has been taken as sample universe. All people who work in the tea plantation has been taken as sample.

Sampling –purposive sampling. All the workers, permanent and temporary workers taken as sample. All of them are interviewed with interview schedule. Reported morbidity profile was taken from all respondents of Meghlibund tea estate. Group discussion has been conducted among workers of two tea estates. Major morbidity history of workers was taken from pharmacist of the co-operative tea estate and from workers during group discussion. Among respondents of Meghlibund tea estate and Durgabari tea estate seven case profile were selected for study.

Method of the study was mixed method.

Quantitative data: —housing, education, sanitation, water supply, electricity, monthly family income, fuel for cooking, morbidity profile other than cast component of the workers, gender of the workers, marital status of the worker, nature of the employment, wages of the workers has been quantified.

Qualitative data:

Qualitative data was collected from household as well as individual level. Focus group discussion was done other than in depth interview from the workers who was suffering from chronic diseases. Morbidity profile was collected from the workers as 15 days recall and one-

year recall history. Chronic illness was referring that who were suffering for long period. Respondents were taken across category of workers who were suffering from chronic diseases. In depth interview were taken from them to know their preferred health services taken, access to health care services, individual level of suffering, coping with diseases in day to day life and in family. Seven of those respondents were listed as case profiles.

Table 2.1: Sample size:

Categories of worker	No.s	Interview taken	Interview not taken/ declined
Present caretaker/ owner	1	0	Suffering from cancer
Manager	1	0	Dead, died during my field work
Field supervisor	2	2	
Clerks	2	2	
<i>Purohit</i> /priest	1	1	
Pluckers and other field workers	249	248	1 declined

Total interview taken: 253 nos.

Source: Compiled by researcher

Table 2.2: Research design:

Sl. No	Objectives	Sources of data	Methods
1.	To examine the historical, socio-economic and political factors that influenced the development of the tea estates in West Tripura District.	Primary source: documents from management, archives. Oral history from workers, Secondary: literature review.	Oral history taking, (key informant), Review of secondary literature and analysis of literature
2	To study the working and living conditions and its implication for health across different categories of workers in the tea estates.	Survey	Interview by interview schedule with workers across hierarchy. Observation, Focus Group discussion
3	To understand the variation in the perceptions of health and health seeking behaviour across the different categories of workers in the tea estates.	Survey	Interview by interview schedule with workers across hierarchy. Observation, Focus Group discussion

4	To study the availability, accessibility and acceptability of public, for 'profit' and 'nonprofit' health services.	Survey	Interview by interview schedule with workers. Observation, Focus Group discussion
5	To study the welfare measures provided in the tea estates across different categories of workers.	Primary: survey Secondary: literature review	Interview by interview schedule with workers. Observation. Focus Group discussion. Analysis of literature.

Source: Compiled by researcher

Ethical clearance

For ethical clearance of synopsis along with ethics review form, interview schedule and Consent form (English and Bengali version) was submitted to Institutional Ethics Review Board of Jawaharlal Nehru University. Interview was conducted with ethics review board in the month of December 2017. Ethical clearance was taken from the board before going to field.

Consent was taken from the respondents before interview. Consent was also taken from the respondents for voice record of their interview. That who did not want to record their interview or did not want to give interview their wish was respected. During focus group discussion also those who wanted to leave the discussion their wish was also respected.

Data collection

Table 2.3: Time taken for field work

Sl no.	Phases of study	Time period
1	Pre-pilot	October 2015 to December 2015
2	Pilot	June 2016, December 2016 to February 2017
3	First phase field work	27 th February 2018 to 13 th July 2018
4	Second phase field work	10 th November 2018 to 30 th December 2018
5	Third phase field work	2 nd August 2019 to 2 nd September 2019
6	Fourth phase of field work	23 rd February 2020 to 21 st March, 2020

Source: Compiled by researcher, 10/04/2020

Pre-pilot and Pilot study were done during October 2015 to December 2015 and June 2016, December 2016 to February 2017 respectively.

Primary field work started from 27th February 2018 and it finishes on 13th July 2018.

Second phase of field work started from November 2018 and ended on December 2018.

Third phase of field work was done from 2nd August 2019 to 2nd September 2019.

Fourth phase of field work was done from 23rd February 2020 to 21st March,2020.

Other than the tea garden workers several key informants were also interviewed informally.

Researcher visited Anganwadi centres of the tea estates, schools, Subcentres, Primary Health Centres, Community Health Centres, District Hospital, Tea Board Office of Tripura, Agartala, INTUC office. Interview has been taken from health personnel, Anganwadi workers, authorities of schools, tea board, INTUC and other key informants for qualitative data and for triangulating the data.

Table 2.4: Profile of key informants

Sl no.	Key informants	Designation of key informants	Place of interview	Date of interview
1	Key informant1	President, INTUC	INTUC Office	28/02/2017

2	Key informant2	Founder of Durgabari workers co-operative tea estate society ltd.	Durgabari tea estate office, residence	10/12/2018, 30/08/2019
3	Key informant3	Husband of writer Jaya Goala, writer	Ajkaal Tripura Newspaper office	20/02/2017
4	Key informant4	Medical officer, PHC	PHC	11/06/2016
5	Key informant5 and 6	Homeopathic Medical Officer, PHC, Katlamara, subcentre Durgabari.	PHC, Subcentre	13/06/2016, 28/02/2018
	Key Informant7 and 8	Dental Surgeon, PHC, Katlamara. CHC, Mohanpur	PHC, CHC	28/06/2016, 29/06/2018
7	Key Informant9, 10, 11,12	MPW (Multi-purpose worker)	Subcentres	26/04/2018, 07/05/2018
8	Key informants 13, 14,15,16,17	Anganwadi workers	Anganwadi centres, Meghlibund tea estate and Durgabari tea estate areas	09/05/2018, 16/05/2018, 01/06/2018, 09/08/2019, 13/08/2019
9	Key informants18 and 19	Anganwadi helpers	Anganwadi centres, Meghlibund tea estate and Durgabari tea estate areas	16/05/2018, 09/08/2019
10	Key informants20 and 21	ASHA workers	Respective residence of workers	01/07/2018, 02/07/2018
11	Key informants 22 and 23	H/M of Primary and High School	Office of the Schools	16/08/2019, 20/08/2019

12	Key informant 24, 25	Retired worker	Residence of the workers, Durgabari	28/02/2018
13	Key informant 26,27	Retired worker	Residence of the workers, Meghlibund	12/04/2018
14	Key informant 28	Tea board Development Office	Tea Board Office	26/08/2019, 29/08/2019
15	Key informant 29	Medicine shop owner	Medicine shop	11/06/2016
16	Key informant 30	Faith Healer	Residence of informant	26/04/2018
17	Key informant 31	Ojha	Residence of informant	10/06/2016
18	Key informant 32	Dai	Residence of dai	27/06/2016
19	Key informant 33, 34	Herbalist	<i>Sitala puja</i> <i>mondop</i> , shop,	24/04/2018, 16/12/2018
20	Key informant 35	Sorcerer	Residence of the informant	09/05/2018
21	Key informant 36	President of a co-operative, 71years, retired Government employee, working at co-operative sector since 2007	Office of co-operative, Agartala	26/02/2020
22	Key informant 37	Present President of Co-operative tea estate and Tilla Sardar of worker, 37 years	Office of the co-operative tea estate, Durgabari	19/03/2020

Source: Compiled by researcher, 10/09/2019

Primary sources

Survey, documents available in the management of tea plantation, Tea Board Office, oral history from old persons related to tea plantation or locality.

Secondary sources

Literature review from different sources: like magazines, books, newspaper, internet, novels, poems, songs, drama, short stories etc.

VI. Methods

For literature review researcher accessed Nehru Library, New Delhi, Documentation room of CSM&CH, JNU central library, Tripura University Library, Library of Tribal Research & Cultural Institute, Agartala, Tripura. Researcher also collected books, magazines, newspaper, novels, songs, drama, poems, articles etc. from key informants, writers, editors of different magazine and newspaper in Agartala. Internet sources also has been accessed for literature review.

For taking history of the tea plantation oral history from old people and respondents, novels, short stories, songs, interview with key respondents has been taken. For collection of books which are written in Bengali and “*Chilomilo*” (local dialect speaks by tea workers) researcher has to search for informants who can provide her the sources. Most of the books which were written by two writers from tea workers community were out of market. In the Agartala book fair of 2016, researcher came across a renowned writer where she voiced her concern about those writers’ writings. There she got contact number of one writer’s husband. She contacted with him and he provided researcher information of publishers and where she can access the writings. Researcher collected some books from publishers. Some books only had one copy left so she had to xerox those. The book of songs which had been written by a tea garden worker was out of market. Researcher came to know that book is with a lady who teaches songs to tea workers children in a tea garden. So, she took her number from her brother (Husband of that writer whom researcher mentioned before).

Only one copy was there so researcher had to xerox it. Some publishers provided researcher some books which were published long ago but out of market now. But one or two copies left with publishers. They provided xerox or she bought from them.

One book about formation of trade unions in Tripura among tea garden workers is also out of market and she had no idea about that book. Editor of a renowned daily had it and when he came to know about her study, he gave researcher xerox copy of that book.

Researcher collected a drama about the struggle of workers to set up co-operative at Durgabari tea estate from the writer of the drama. He has given researcher one of the scripts of the drama.

Researcher visited Durgabari tea estate on 27th and 28th February 2018. She took permission from the tea estate. This is workers co-operative run tea estate. Researcher took history of the tea estate and how it was formed and a successful model of tea estate run by workers. Researcher also roam around the tea estate area and talked with workers there.

Observation was one of the methods which helped to understand nature of work living condition, interaction among workers, caste relation, gender relation etc. Observation in the plantation, field, crèches, hospital, Anganwadi centres to get idea of the working condition, working of these institution and effect on workers life.

There were some vendors who sell cloths, ice-cream and other things. Researcher talked with them and observed how they sell and how workers buy those items.

Researcher had to make time to take **interview** with the workers. Their working time starts at 7am in the morning in the tea estate. She used to go before that and take interview whoever was ready to give. Men used to come back from work after 12noon or 1pm. So, in second half researcher could interact with them.

For women worker they used to do household work or cook or feed their child and answer researcher's questions. They never had free time as they have to work two times a day. Researcher started in the month of March 2018 that time was off season for workers so they had only half day working schedule. That helped researcher to interact with them in the second half. After April there was tea leaves and women workers started working both half of day. Saturday was holiday for them and Friday was pay day so that day also they worked till 2pm. Researcher choose those periods for interaction. Though in Saturday also some of them work at other tea gardens or work as daily rated worker outside the hamlet or work in their field when she asked for their time they agreed. For some workers researcher had to go back repeatedly to get them.

Two hamlets were far away from researcher's place. Those two hamlets were near that area where previous owner was abducted by militants. Researcher had to walk ten km to and fro to

reach those hamlets through tea gardens. At one occasion researcher wanted to reduce distance to reach one of the hamlets. For that researcher had to cross the river by foot (A stream which become wild during monsoon).

There was **discussion** with the worker, *Panchayat member*, and local union leader to know the relation between the authority of the estate and social and government benefits for the workers. Discussion with the traditional healers, dais, and hospital staffs, local ASHA, *Anganwadi* workers, Crèche attendant, and local medicine shopkeeper from where workers get medicine, to know how workers get facility or how they access to health care was helpful.

Self-reported morbidity and mortality was taken into account. Other than this *Anganwadi* reports have been checked with for mother child reported cases and social security benefit they get from government. The government programmes Anganwadi and schools have for children that also were checked.

Focus Group Discussion

Criteria for focus group discussion:

1. Male/female, retired/ presently working permanent/temporary worker of the tea estates
2. Those who were available for focus group discussion and given consent.

For focus group discussion researcher informed workers few days before the discussion. Workers who were willing for focus group discussion were taken into consideration. Place for focus group discussion were selected either at any workers house or common place like field in front of Anganwadi centre or resting shed for workers at Durgabari Tea Estate. Those who wanted to leave in between the discussion their wish was respected.

Table 2. 5: Focus Group Discussion

Sl no.		Persons attended	Place	Date of focus group discussion
1	Male workers	7	Dhakaiya para, Meghlibund	05/07/2018
2	Female workers	9	Dhakaiya para, Meghlibund	06/07/2018
3	Male worker	10	Meghlibund labour line, Meghlibund	07/07/2018

4	Female worker	7	Meghlibund labour line, Meghlibund	07/07/2018
5	Female worker	11	Durgabari tea estate	13/12/2018
6	Male worker	11	Durgabari tea estate	21/12/2018

Source: Compiled by researcher

There was group discussion with the workers of the plantation to know the working condition, perception about health in the given context where they reside and work, and socially and culturally bound, about the history of migration of their or their forefathers, contraceptive measures taken by workers, women's health, relation with family and spouses.

Four groups were made for focus group discussion, two male groups and two female groups. As there was difficulty for getting workers at one place due to distance. Two big hamlets researcher took into consideration. From each hamlet one male group and one female group were formed.

At Durgabari tea estate two groups were formed for group discussion, one with male worker and another with female workers.

Case profiles: Among the respondents of both the tea estates seven respondents who were suffering from major diseases were taken as case profiles. Criteria for selecting case profiles:

1. Respondents suffering from long period of time
2. Avail any form of treatment
3. Available to give time to researcher. As most of the respondents were workers it was very difficult to get time for interview with them. Even on off days they used to go for work outside of the tea estates. Usually they leave early in the morning and come back in the evening so it was difficult to get their time. 'Time' was a great factor for getting interview with workers.

Table 2.6: Case Profile of the respondents who were suffering diseases for long time

Sl no.		Sex of the respondents	Designation of the respondents	Name of the tea estate	Diseases suffering from
1	Case profile respondent1(BB)	M	Acting manager/tilla babu	Meghlibund Tea Estate	Diabetes, Hypertension
2	Case profile respondent2(SD)	M	Clerk	Durgabari Tea Estate	Diabetes, Hypertension
3	Case profile respondent3(KT)	M	Worker	Meghlibund Tea Estate	Tuberculosis
4	Case profile respondent4(PP)	M	Worker	Meghlibund Tea Estate	Tuberculosis
5	Case profile respondent5(SB)	M	Worker	Durgabari Tea Estate	Tuberculosis with diabetes
6	Case profile respondent6(BU)	F	Worker	Meghlibund Tea Estate	Hypertension
7	Case profile respondent7(AP)	F	Worker	Meghlibund Tea Estate	Leucorrhoea

Source: Compiled by researcher, 13/09/2019

VII. Study Area

The study area is West Tripura District of Tripura. From the West Tripura District two tea estates has been chosen i. e Meghlibund Tea Estate as researcher is from that tea estate area, another is Durgabari workers co-operative society limited tea estate. There are three types of ownership of tea plantation in Tripura. The private ownership, the workers co-operative and tea plantations run by TTDC (Tripura Tea Development Corporation). Among these two types of ownership tea estate has been taken for the study, one is private (Meghlibund) owned tea estate and another is workers co-operative tea estate (Durgabari tea estate and workers co-operative society ltd).

Why does researcher select Meghlibund Tea Estate?

Table 2.7: List of tea gardens in West Tripura District (revenue district)

Sl no.	Name of the tea estate	Total area of tea estate as reported by T.E	Area under tea on 2010 as reported by T.E	Nature of ownership	Ethnicity of owners	Name of revenue subdivision
1.	Adarini	131.5	72.28	Partnership firm	Bengali (chhaya choudhuri)	Mohonpur
2.	Binodini	141.7	16	Partnership firm	Not available	
3.	Brahmmakunda	140	71	Public ltd.co	TTDC Ltd.	
4.	Durgabari tea estate	74.124	58.51	Public ltd.co	Durgabari Tea Workers Co-operative society ltd.	
5.	Fatikcherra tea estate	350	221	Proprietorship	Non- Bengali (Sandhir Agarwal)	
6.	Gopalnagar tea estate	107.34	94.26	Partnership firm	Bengali (suresh kr choudhuri)	
7.	Harendranagar tea estate	269.99	251.13	Proprietorship	Non-bengali (rajiv pincha)	
8.	Haridaspur tea estate	32.37	26.23	Partnership firm	Bengali (suresh kr choudhuri)	
9.	Kalacharra T.E	400.20	119.20	Public ltd.co	Kalacharra cha Bagan SSS ltd.	

10.	Kalkalia T.E	38.68	20.36	Proprietorship	Bengali (Rita Chakraborty)	
11.	Krishnapur T.E	266.8	88.40	Proprietorship	Bengali (Abhijit Nandi)	
12.	Luxmilunga T.E	231	172	Public ltd. Co	Tippeerah tea corporation ltd.	
13.	Meghlibund T.E	349.82	184.78	Proprietorship	Bengali (m chakraborty)	
14.	Mohanpur T.E	144.00	72.98	Public ltd. Co	Mohanpur chabagan SSS Ltd.	
15.	Narendrapur	334.25	233.90	Proprietorship	Non-bengali (R L Sirohia)	
16.	Simnacherra T.E	169.92	113.65	Proprietorship	Durgabari Tea Workers Co-operative society ltd.	
17.	Tufanialunga T.E	172.40	90.80	Public ltd. Co	Tufanialunga Tea co. ltd.	
18.	Basundhara T.E.	20	15	Public ltd. Co	Basundhara Agro environment Development ltd.	Kayadepa
19.	Madhurilata T.E	10	10	Proprietorship	Bengali(Kollol Dey)	Shrinagar
20.	Malabati T.E	69.62	28.95	Not available		Bikramnagar
21.	Mekhlipara T.E	362.89	184.24	Public ltd. Co	Mekhlipara tea co. ltd.	Jirania

Source: Compiled by researcher from [www.teaboard.gov.in/pdf/notice/Tea Directory-Tripura.pdf](http://www.teaboard.gov.in/pdf/notice/Tea%20Directory-Tripura.pdf)

Criteria for selection of Meghlibund tea estate:

1. According to the nature of ownership

-- Proprietorship (sole) (only four are there. Kalkalia T.E., Krishnapur T.E, and Meghlibund T.E, Madhurilata T.E, Bengali owner) others owned by non-Bengali (three T.Es.)

2. According to the area of cultivation

184.7 acre. as reported by tea estate (2010)

Under sole proprietorship owner tea estate run by Bengali ownership only this garden has maximum area of tea cultivation.

3. According to the ethnicity of owner

--Bengali (because when tea industry started in Tripura in 1916 ruler of Tripura (kings) invited Bengali entrepreneur from East Bengal and Plain Tipperah (later on East Pakistan now Bangladesh) to set up tea industry. Later on, when tea industry was facing crisis many Bengali entrepreneurs left tea industry or sold them to non-Bengali businessmen. Some of these tea gardens were taken by government and is run by the co-operative or government.

There are six workers co-operative run tea estate at West Tripura District, among that Durgabari tea estate was selected as this is the most successful workers co-operative tea estate in Tripura.

There is one tea estate run by TTDC in West Tripura District.

Profile of Meghlibund Tea Estate

Meghliband Tea Estate, subdivision: Mohanpur District: West Tripura District

Part of the plantation falls under TTAADC, (Village Council: Saratchoudhuri, Hezamara Block) and Panchayat: Vidyasagar (Mohanpur Block)

Total area: 349.82-hectare, plantation area: 200 hectares. (according to manager, field work, 2018)

Study area: Durgabari tea estate workers co-operative society ltd., Subdivision: Mohanpur, District: West Tripura District

Total area of Durgabari tea estate:74.124-hectare, plantation area: 58.54 hectare

Table 2.8: Administrative profile of West Tripura District

Name of Subdivision	Name of Rural Development Blocks		Urban Areas	
	ADC	Non-ADC	MC Area	Nagar Panchayat
Sadar		Dukli	Agartala	
Mohanpur	Hezamara	Mohanpur	Mohanpur	
	Lefunga	Bamutia		
Jirania	Mandai/Mandwi	Jirania		Jirania
		Old Agartala		Ranirbazar
		Belbari		

Source: Researcher's M.phil dissertation, 2015

Table 2.9: Demographic Profile of the West Tripura District

Geographical area	950Sqkm
Population	Male -4,66,152
	Female -4,52,048
	Total -9,18,200
Sex Ratio	970 female/thousand males
Density of Population	974
Rural Population	5, 77,453(53%)
Urban Population	4, 10,753 (42%)

BPL	Rural –62%
	Urban -30%
SC	23%
ST	22%
OBC	25%
General	26%
Religious Minority	4%
Literacy Rate	Male –94.04%(3,93,423)
	Female - 88.01%(3,57,973)
	Total -91.07%(7,51,396)

Source: Census 2011

VIII. Constraints faced by the researcher

Problem faced in the field:

Initial difficulty faced in the field

First question researcher faced from the respondents: -

“What benefit we will get from this?”

Other questions follow:

“Why are you interviewing us? Are you journalist?” (mistrust?). (Holden et al. 2015)

“Will you publish this in the newspaper?”

It was difficult for researcher to make them understand that she was doing research and for that she needs to know about them.

Gradually these problems were overcome as researcher go on building relation with workers.

When researcher visited crèche, the woman who was taking care of the workers children, she thought that researcher is someone from the NGO which runs the crèche. She was telling all problems about crèche and about herself, about the salary she gets. She was requesting researcher to convey her problem to the authority of NGO.

Researcher was in a weird situation about this.

How to say her that researcher is not in a position to do that without hurting her? (Discomfort about the situation). (Baille and Steenfeildt 2013)

Hiding facts from researcher

Respondent hides facts. (Holden et al. 2015)

How to dig out the fact? (When asked about education, income and housing he hides the fact)

Researcher had to probe again and again to get the truth.

Though on later part of field visit these problems was not there.

Unwelcome incident

One boy from the hamlet researcher was visiting was arrested as a suspect of gang rape. That boy's mother was calling everybody to have a meeting. All people of the hamlet were tensed. Researcher was in an awkward situation. Silently she moved out from the house she was in by telling the woman and moved from the hamlet.

Do not know how to handle such situation where researcher is an outsider?

As time passes and researcher became familiar with them, they started telling their personal problems to researcher.

Problems faced by researcher

Time:

The "Time" was greatest factor for interacting with workers. Early in the morning they go for work and evening they come back. Initially it was difficult to get them. Later on, this problem has been overcome by adjusting time with workers. But most of the time female worker used to interact with researcher while doing other works (cooking, taking care of children, doing household work).

Question of gender and power:

Being researcher a woman, women are freer to talk with her than men. But most of the time respondent's male counterpart was there who was interfering and answering on behalf of her.

At one point the male member instructed her to prepare food.

So, it was "He" who was answering. Secretly that lady told researcher to come some other day when he will not be present at home.

This may not be possible every time.

What should researcher do?

While taking interview in a household where both husband and wife works, husband tends to response more. Now researcher has to take interview first their husband. From them she takes household survey, facilities getting from management and their morbidity profile. After that researcher took interview of wife and start from children morbidity profile. By that time husband become busy with other work or leave. After that researcher took other information from women. Husbands feel that he should be interviewed first, that researcher felt after couple of interviews. Even at one household husband instructed wife in their '*chilomilo*' language that whatever she says she should say after thinking. Researcher could understand that language, so she understood. They were not aware of that.

Safety of researcher:

Researcher being a woman was unable to conduct interviews after sunset. Respondents became anxious if she stayed after sunset at the hamlets. They became worried about her safety as researcher had to walk back through tea garden almost one km to her house. So, before sunset she had to come back. In two occasions she became late than *panchayat* member came along with her till she reached main road.

Political inclination of the respondents:

Due to political changes in the state after March 2018 there was dilemma in peoples' mind. When researcher set venue of group discussion at one of workers home some workers were reluctant to come. Though later on many of them came but those who were actively inclined to different political ideology they did not attend.

After declaration of result of assembly election on 3rd March 2018 there was violence everywhere. This also put restriction on researcher's movement for few days.

Insurgency, fear and researcher:

Two hamlets were far away from the main labour line. Those hamlets were at ADC (Autonomous District Council) area. When previous owner of the tea estate went to visit those areas, he was abducted by militants from that area. When researcher wanted to visit those areas, her well-wishers warned her of her safety. Initially researcher thought of informing Police Station and pay visit to those hamlets. Later on, she declined that idea. If she goes informing police and if they entitled someone with researcher for security purpose workers may not feel free to interact with her. So suddenly one day researcher paid a visit at one of the farthest hamlets taking a chance. She did not even inform her family members. She had idea in her mind whoever will be present on that day at that hamlet she will request those to sit for an interview. So, researcher choose Friday. Because that day they work for one shift. So, researcher might get more worker. That was fruitful. She walked through tea garden to that hamlet. One worker showed researcher the way. He for some time walked with her. After that visit several times researcher visited those two hamlets to finish her work and every time, she used this method. Researcher went there at different time, different day of the week and taken interval of several day from one visit to another visit.

Analysis of data

The interviews were taken in Bengali which workers understand and speaks also other than their own mother tongue and common “*chilomilo*” language. Answers were written in the interview schedule during interview and also were recorded who has given consent to record. Later on, those interviews were translated in English and again back translated in Bengali. Recorded version was translated in English. Some data was quantitative. Household survey data were feed in excel sheet and percentage was taken for analysis.

Morbidity mapping was done to see the reported morbidity among workers.

Qualitative data were analysed with thematic method.

CHAPTER 3

Development of tea industry in Tripura: socio-economic and political factors

Introduction:

This chapter is divided into three sections. First part tries to evaluate how tea industry was set up in Tripura by maharaja of Tripura during monarchy for boosting up of Tripura's economy. That time how labourers were brought or came from other places to Tripura to work tea industry and what measure was taken for them to work in Tripura. This section also addresses the issue of problems faced by tea industry on the backdrop of global economic recession and second world war and after independence of India before merger agreement.

Second section deals with the development of tea industry after merger agreement with India after 1949 A.D. After merger agreement political scenario changed in Tripura. It became a part of Indian union. There was demographic change due to partition of Tripura. Most of the revenue earning part of Tripura fell on East Pakistan side. There were ethnic clash and tension. Political scenario started changing. These factors started affecting tea industry. There were unions and change in ownership also in tea industry.

Last section tries to see how after residing since setting up of tea industry in 1916 to till date the new generation workers constructed their identity in the state of Tripura along with other inhabitants of Tripura.

Evolution of tea industry in Tripura

I. Tea industry: Maharaja: before Merger Agreement

In Tripura history of setting up of tea industry is different from other states. (Das 2020). In the year 1916 the then Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya Bahadur (1909-1923) started tea gardens. In other states it was the British who started tea industry. (Das 2020). The Maharaja invited Bengali entrepreneurs from East Bengal and Plain Tipperah (undivided Bengal and Tripura, later on East Pakistan, now Bangladesh) and lease out land to start Tea Plantation. (Tea Board, Tea Association of India *accessed on 14.11.2015*; Das 2020).

Chakraborty (2012) traces how tea estates were set up in Tripura during the reign of Maharaja in 1916, subsequently how this helped in bringing revenue and problem of labour shortage, Maharaja's philanthropic initiative to bring those stranded labourers from Assam to Tripura and provided them free choice to settle or go back to native place, provided necessary conditions for the gradual evolution of tea industry in Tripura. The chief Dewan of Maharaja Prasanna Kumar Dasgupta announced terms and conditions of the "*bandobast*". There was even three years rent free period, 33 applications were submitted for tea settlement among those

23 got sanction and 18 remained pending. Among those sanctioned applications 15 were from Sadar subdivision, 7 from Kailashahar subdivision, 1 Dharrmanagar subdivision and one application got cancelled as they could not pay “nazarana” in proper time, so there were 22 tea estates in first year i.e. 1916. Approximate land allotted to tea estates were 3,737 Drones (24,800 acres). (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020). Author here also showed problem faced by planters in the initial period were clearing the dense forest, labour scarcity in the tea garden of Tripura for weeding, hoeing, pruning etc. Due to the peculiar working condition and low wages local tribal and non-tribes were reluctant to work in the plantation. So, labours were brought from Bihar, Orissa, Madras and Madhya Pradesh in initial period. (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020).

Why and How were Bengali Entrepreneurs from East Bengal and Plain Tipperah (undivided Bengal and Tripura) brought to Tripura for setting up of Tea estates?

It has been said that poet Rabindranath Tagore advised maharaja of Tripura to set up tea gardens for boost up revenue of the state. Nobel laureate poet was a close friend of “*Manikya*” family and many times his opinions were taken by Kings. Rabindranath’s Grandfather Dwarakanath Thakur had tea gardens at Assam and was a successful businessman. (Chakraborty 2002, p.1).

During 1563 AD to 1793 AD Tripura’s boundary which was till Sylhet, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Noakhali and Chittagong was reduced due to Mughal invasion. So, revenue of Tripura was lost. Only *Chakla-Roshenabad* was left to Tripura Kingdom. To boost the revenue rulers of Tripura encouraged Muslim Bengali cultivators to settle in Hill Tripura by providing them land to cultivate. (Ali 2011; Das 2020).

Tenancy Act in 1885-86 provided Bengali people tenancy right to boost revenue. The land was donated by kings to Brahmins, Muslims and higher government officials. (Ghosh 2003; Das 2020)).

Similarly, the Maharaja invited Bengali entrepreneurs for setting up the tea industry in Tripura. In Plain Tipperah i.e. *Chakla-Roshenabad* the kings of Tripura were the only *Zamindars* of British. Because kings had to pay huge ‘*nazrana*’ i.e tax to British for plain Tipperah and revenue from hill Tipperah was almost nil. (Das 2020).

Maharaja showed interest to engage young and energetic Bengali entrepreneurs from East Bengal and *Chakla-Roshenabad* area in the tea estate. During that time non-co-operation movement was going on by Mahatma Gandhi. Some young students formed “The House of

Labourers Ltd” at Comilla and started independent business. Those young groups were interested by the offer of Maharaja of Tripura. They came forward to establish tea gardens in Tripura. They established tea garden at *Fatikchhera* and *Kalkalia* tea estates at West Tripura District. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, pp. 23-24; Das 2020).

Just after First World War there was enthusiasm among businessmen and industrialists of Bengal to start industries and new business farms. That time it had been found that tea cultivation was profitable in Assam and Bengal. There was scarcity of land in Bengal and Assam to set up new tea gardens so those industrialists of Bengal got interested to set up tea industry in Tripura. First tea garden established in Tripura was *Hirachhera* tea garden at Kailashahar (Then North Tripura District now Unokoti District). (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 26; Das 2020).

There were rules by the kings about the settlement in the state and for the Tea Plantation.

“Besides tea plantation in the Taluk settlements of the state was not permitted without the special permission of the Durbar nor was the tenant of landlord right authorized to make such settlement even within his estate.” (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 25; Das 2020).

There were also specific rules for Tea Plantations in Tripura. This rule was known as “Rules for Tea Plantation in Tripura”. In this rule it was said that “tea plantation in this state has been prohibited without the permission of Royal Court”. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 24-25; Das 2020). So, European planters were not given permission by the Maharaja. But maharaja sometimes was indifferent about the tea planters. When in initial period some of the tea planters were suffering from economic crisis and appealed to royal court for exempt of payment of land revenue Maharaja did not grant it. Instead he granted one-year extension to pay revenue. In a notification from Royal Court (notification No. 1756 of 14th Ashar,1333TE) (June,1923) it was found that some of the tea gardens were allowed one-year extension for payment of revenue³. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 24- 25; Das 2020).

³ Those tea gardens were

1. Mantala Tea Co.
2. Krishnapur Tea Co.
3. Mekhlipara Tea Co.

Even the privately owned tea estate chosen by the researcher for the study, the garden owner was a Bengali Brahmin (Chakraborty). His father bought this tea estate from a Chatterjee in the year 1953. Their original place was Kaligachha of Brahmanbariya of Bangladesh. *Tilla babu* of the tea estate said that the owner was Zamindar of Kaligachha. Before Chatterjee who was the owner that nobody could tell. Since 1953 A.D Chakraborty's are operating the tea estates. Now the present owner is the wife of the previous owner. Though they revealed that there is no single owner but the property has many shareholders in the family. Mrs. Chakraborty's immediate family is having the authority to run the tea estate. They were residing in the tea estate area. But after abduction and murder of the owner in the year 1996 by insurgents they left the tea estate. Now they are in Kolkata and children are in USA (Tilla Babu,09/02/2015, Meghlibund Tea Estate).

Presently the tea estate has been given to lease to the previous accountant of the tea estate.

Why are local tribes not willing to work in the tea gardens as workers?

Bhattacharjee and Singh (1995) tried to bring out the causes of not willing to work in the tea estate by local tribes. They have given several reasons for that.

According to them local tribes were not encouraged by the tea planters as well as local chiefs of that community to work in the tea estate. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, pp. 24-25). Maharaja and his representatives in the local community were indifferent about the activities of the tea estates so tea planters were also did not interfered the social life of tribes by engaging them as tea garden workers. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, pp. 63-66).

Due to the commercial nature of the tea industry they needed skilled labours that can yield more production with less investment. But local tribes were not skilled in tea garden works. So, they might not have been considered to work in the garden. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 61).

4. Satsangam-Ranibari Tea Garden

5. Golakpur Tea Co.

6. Jagannathpur Tea Co. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, pp. 24, 25; Das 2020).

Another reason they cited was that the immigrant community will be compelled to reside in the confined area of the garden which is essential for the plantation but for local community they cannot be compelled to reside. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 62).

The local tribes were dependent upon *Jhum* cultivation for their needs. There were abundant lands which fulfilled their needs so they were not economically dependent. For *jhum* cultivation they used to shift from one place to another and they were independent in nature. But in plantation life is restricted and confined. That may be one of the causes they did not like to work in the tea garden. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 63-64).

Same has been observed by LaFavre (2013) in Assam that rice can be produced with less labour and because of that local Bengali and Assamese people were reluctant to work in tea plantation. (LaFavre 2013).

Another fact is that the tribes of Tripura recognize themselves as '*Khshastriya*' and that may be another reason why they were not allowed to work in the plantation as a labourer.

Another social practice was there that there was practice of co-operation in work. A *jhumia* contributes their labour in each other's field. The practice is known as "*Yakul*" meaning "*exchange of labour*". There was no question of wages that time. But in tea garden work is mainly connected with wage earning. In that period wage earning by labour was considered as degrading and low status job. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 65). Leader of the community that time considered tea garden job as a degraded job so other people of the community also were not keen to break community solidarity or go against the chief of the community.

So, there were needs for workers to work in the tea garden.

Now how workers were brought in the tea gardens of Tripura?

Workers of tea garden: origin and employment

The non-co-operation movement of 1921-22 has an effect on tea industry of Tripura. During that period due to the inhuman condition of labourers of tea garden of Assam and inhuman behaviour on garden labourers (Coolies) in 1921 about 8,888 workers left the tea gardens of Assam. During that period in almost all tea gardens of Assam, strike broke out but in *Chargola* more than 50% labourers left the tea garden forever. Thousands of labourers travelled on foot to the nearest railway station *Chandpur*. That time many labourers died on the way due to diseases or starvation. They were forcibly stopped at *Karimganja* or *Chandpur* station by the British Indian Authorities. They were unable to restrict labourers from leaving the tea garden

when police and the administration open fired on them, where women and children were also present. The labourers were totally unprepared for that. Nationwide protest that followed after this incident. Workers of Bengal Railway and Inland Streamer Navigation protested against this brutality by organizing strikes. (Bose 1985). That time the Minister, Tripura State, wrote a letter to Political agent of Tripura on June 6, 1921. That letter describes how Maharaja took measures to rescue those labourers and brought them to Tripura but gave them freedom to take decision to settle in Tripura or go to their native place or work independently. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.41; Chakraborty 2012, p. 437; Das 2020). Wishes made by the Royal court of Tripura were...

“1. I am directed by the Durbar to address you in a matter of great importance in connection with the trouble due to exodus of coolies from Assam Tea Gardens, the alleged incidents at Chandpur and the unfortunate strikes and hartals all over the country which have affected this territory along with the bordering British Districts. You have already been informed by me, and His Highness’s Chief Secretary and Private Secretary of the recent troubles into which the Durbar have been dragged by the agitators. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.41; Chakraborty 2012, p.437).

“2. This situation has given rise to a thought in His Highness’s mind as to how he could render some services to the Imperial Government in the midst of this general turmoil. A solution presents itself to H.H in offering a decent livelihood to the disaffected coolies in this territory. They are ready to receive all coolies (with the exception of these who are lying ill) stranded at Chandpur, pay for railway fare to Akhaura if the A.B. Railway demands the same and to give them food and shelter on the following understanding among other things which may be settled in conference with the coolies, their advisers, popular leaders and the Government of Bengal. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.41,42; Chakraborty 2012, p. 437, 438).

“(i) if the coolies agree to settle in this territory the Durbar will grant some lands on each family for cultivation and building their houses on. No rent shall be payable for such lands for the first year of settlement -a reasonable rent shall be assessed on the expiry of the year and this rent will be regulated from time to time by laws of the land governing the relationship of landlord and tenants”. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.42; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

“(ii) The Durbar will supply temporary cottages for the immediate shelter of the coolies and feed them for 3 days of their arrival. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.42; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

(iii) The Durbar will be ready to receive batches of 508 souls daily, 3 days after their intention to come here is intimated to the Durbar. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 42; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

(iv) The A.B.Railway should undertake to carry the coolies at Chandpur free of fare or at reduced fare, or even at full fare to be paid by the Durbar in the event of their refusal to grant concessions. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 42; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

(v) The Durbar will not receive the persons who are lying ill at Chandpur and their families until they are alright and declare fit to travel. State doctors will examine and pass them before they are taken charge of at Chandpur. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.42, 43; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

(vi) The coolies will be free to serve anybody they like. If it is desired, the Durbar will fix the rate of their wages from time to time. The Durbar will themselves employ them if they want. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.43; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

(vii) No one will be forced to live of a labour if he wants to turn a cultivator. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.43; Chakraborty 2012, p. 438).

(viii) A Census of the coolies will be taken by the State Agents before they depart from Chandpur. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.43; Chakraborty 2012, p. 438).

(ix) The Durbar shall provide Civil Protection, Medical aid and the education for the coolies at their settlement. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 43; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

(x) The coolies shall be free to leave their territory at any time they like should they desire to go back to their ancestral homes or change their residence. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.43; Chakraborty 2012, p.438).

3. The Durbar will feel thankful by your kind intervention in obtaining the approval of the Government of Bengal to these proposals by immediate Telegraphic communication as there is no time to loose and request you to be so good as to place in communication with the local Government officers and popular leaders". (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.43; Chakraborty 2012, p. 438).

Similar letter was also sent to Karimganj regarding stranded coolies on June 28, 1921. In this way shortage of labour was met. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p.43; Chakraborty 2012, p. 438).

Tripura Tea Control Act 1345 T.E (1935AD) and the Tea Control Act of India 1938 put numbers of restrictions. So, most of the initiative taken by Government of Tripura remain in paper only. (Chakraborty 2012, p. 439).

Adhikari's (1988) writings where he was exploring four immigrants' tribe's i. e Bhil, Munda, Santal, Oraons life and culture in ten tea gardens of Tripura could not find out how these tribes came to work in tea gardens of Tripura. In his survey he found out that most of the fifty household he surveyed came from Bihar and small numbers from Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

Chib (1984) mentioned about Oraon, Munda and Santhal tribes of Tripura. He mentioned that they entered in Tripura from Sylhet district of Bangladesh where they came to work as tea garden workers. He was talking about tribes and their culture in Tripura. So, in his writings it is not mentioned why they came to Tripura from Sylhet, though author (Chib 1984, p. 249) mentioned that they came to Sylhet as tea garden workers from poverty impoverished area of Chhota Nagpur in Bihar. (Chib 1984, p. 249).

Goala (2010) in her novel, “*Murgajhutir Lal Dhul*” showed through a character of novel, ‘*Sambari*’, an old lady how their forefathers migrated to Tripura long ago from “*Kaladehi*” and the revolt of Santal’s against British. (Das 2020). There were no works than and unrest in whole India. There was revolt against British. Death of earning member of family forced her parents to leave their homeland through “*Arkathi*”, who promised them, work in Assam. But they did not land up in Assam, through rail they landed up at *Teliapara* of Bangladesh. From there they again migrated to *Simna* of Tripura just after Independence and started working at ‘*Simna* tea garden.’ She even remembers that her fellow workers who came from Chhattisgarh. Many others like them came from Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, *Bhagnadihi*. The song in the novel which she sings also showed the workers came from Rajasthan, Ranchi, Bihar, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Burdwan, Telangana. They are Munda, Santal, Tanti, Sabar, Urang (Oraon). This also shows that some middlemen or ‘*Arkathi*’ were involved in bringing them to tea estates or in coal mines by false promise of giving them better livelihood. (Goala 2010, pp. 5,52-54,71-73, 112; 2001, pp. 23-24). Even in her another novel (2003) “*Tabuoo Madal Bajey*” in the book, “*Anyo Manush Bhinna Rang*” through another character ‘*Shaoni*’ showed same origin of workers (Goala 2003, p.95) in her short story “*Swadhinotar Showad*” in the short story collection of “*Sania*” another character *Sankumari* too remembers the changes occurring during British Period and migration from her origin to Tripura. (Das 2020).

“*Kotha sei Chhattisgarh. Nijeder desh-ga, ‘Panika’ ghorer meyeti ‘shwashural’ –a ghor korte geche*” (Goala 1998, p. 3 in Chilomilo and Bengali language)

“Chhattisgarh-- so far away, own village-hamlet, girl of ‘Panika’s came to in-laws place to set up her family.....”

Her husband migrated to Tripura along with her....

“..... *pari dey bhin rajyer uddyeshye, Arkathir amontrone Tripuray*” (Goala 1998, pp. 3-4 in Chilomilo and Bengali)

“..... With the help of Arkathi, migrated to other state...to Tripura....”

So, from this one can say that there were ‘*Arkathi*’ involvements for bringing these workers from other places to Tripura. Though there are no official documents available.

In Budhudas Panika’s song “*Promotion*” (1989), poem ‘*Labour Jati*’ (1990) also showed that different races came to Tripura from different places of India. (Das 2020).

“..... *Urang, Jharra, Panika,*

Munda, Santal, Uria, Ladka.

Kanda, Lodha, Shabar, Baori, Khanre,

Ghatowal, Keot, Goala aar Panre,

Mushar arr Bhakta, Nayek, Gour

Khayra, Kamar, Deshoali, Bhar.

.....

Moder Purbapurusher Durbhagye *due to our forefather’s bad luck*

Peter daye eseche a rajye *hunger compelled them to come in*

MadhyaPradesh, Ranchi Burdwan *this state*

Odisha, aar Bihar Rajasthan..... *from MadhyaPradesh, Ranchi, Burdwan*

..... *Odisha and Bihar Rajasthan...*

Tader chilo sima chara dukkho *they were suffering from infinite problems*

Saral tara aaro chilo boka *they were simple and innocent*

Dalalra tai anlo diye dhonka, *that’s why middlemen brought them by fraudulence*

.....

Gach narle pore naki taka *shaking tree make money to fall from*

Mader naki ache nadi nala..... *There flows river and stream of wine... (Panika 1998, pp. 20-21)*
(*Labour jati*)

In this poem poet is telling the reason of migration of workers forefathers to Tripura. They were being trapped by middlemen. Those middlemen promised them of better life. They were simple and innocent. So those people in search of better life came to tea gardens and coal mines.

Workers of Durgabari also narrated same story of ‘Arkathis’

“*charagach loraile taka gire*”—“money falls by shaking tea bush” ... (Female worker—phulu Munda., Durgabari,13/12/2018). (Das 2020, p. 32).

Same stories were shared by tea garden workers of Meghlibund tea estate. (Das 2020).

.....	<i>“athay zamider er chape</i>	<i>“...there due to pressure of Zamindar,</i>
	<i>Peter jwalay jwalto</i>	<i>suffered of burning hunger</i>
	<i>Sei sujoge dalal era</i>	<i>middlemen taken that scope</i>
	<i>Mitha mitha balto</i>	<i>telling sweet words</i>
	<i>Aanlo tader fanki diye</i>	<i>brought them by fraudulences</i>

Koylakhoni aar cha bagan” (Panika 1998, p.30) *at coalmine and tea gardens*” (Panika 1998, p.30).

In the song “Promotion” also describes that due to torture of Zamindars and hunger people migrated to tea gardens and coal mines.

Jaya Goala herself was daughter of a tea garden worker. Their forefathers came from Madhya Pradesh. Budhudas Panika who himself was worker of tea garden; his forefathers also came from Bilashpur of Madhya Pradesh.

Respondents of the tea estate which researcher visited also echoed the same story.

“Our forefathers came from Bihar. My grandfather had two wives. His first wife died. He came to Bangladesh by rail along with his second wife and a son from his first wife. During British period Bangladesh and India was same country. From Bangladesh he came to Teliapara and then to Balugang. From there they came to this plantation. We are his generations. They came here long ago.” (Sunil Urang, Meghlibund, 07/04/2018). (Das 2020, p. 32).

This is also is written in Goala’s novel that one of the characters *Sambari* remembers. (Goala 2010, pp. 5, 52-54,71-73, 112).

Another respondent Kumari Munda said they came from Ranchi. Their Great-great grandfather came here. (07/04/2018, Meghlibund)

That time another worker was present who told an interesting story of his forefathers coming to the tea estate...

“My grandfather had love marriage. My grandmother was from this tea garden. He fell in love with her. He married her and came here from Chittagong of Bangladesh. My grandfather was worker of Rangapania tea garden, near Sitakunda of Bangladesh. We had communication with them but after border fencing, we lost communication” (Budhu Urang, Meghlibund, 07/04/2018). (Das 2020, p.31).

So, marriage is another reason for migration of male and female workers from one tea garden to another tea garden. Many of the female workers also migrated from Bangladesh through their marriage. (Das 2020).

An old lady recalls how she came to this tea estate...

“When I came here, I was baby. My parents came here from Purulia/ Burdwan during British period. Initially we came to Agartala. We were staying at Pratapgarh. From there we came to Mohanpur, Kalachara and then to Rangamura (Katlamara). I got married here. I worked in this garden. Now you see I have great granddaughter also. (Bipula Pande, 70-75 years, Meghlibund Bagan, 12/04/2018) (Das 2020, p.32).

She is retired worker of the tea estate and grandmother of a female temporary worker.

There are some “Urangs” are known as “*Dhakaiya Urang*” for others. (Das 2020). Why they are being called so when researcher enquired, she came to know another interesting history. One of the female workers recalled that they came from Dhaka of Bangladesh. She said her village name was “Tangra” which is near Dhaka. They are known as such because they came from Dhaka, but she and her daughter-in-law who is also permanent worker of the tea estate said that they are “Oraon”. (Das 2020, p.32).

Same matter when researcher asked to a male worker who is *tilla sardar*, said that those people came here from “Tangi” which is near Dhaka of Bangladesh.

“There was conflict among Hindu and Muslims. Whenever conflict broke out there used to police case. (researcher assumed as FIR) That time people were scared of police so whenever there was any police case they used to fled away from that place and go to other places. Those people also came here like that way. As they came here from Dhaka they are known as ‘Dhakaiya Urang’” (a male permanent worker, Tilla sardar, Meghlibund, 21/04/2018) (Shib Thakur). (Das 2020, p.32).

He again narrates how he became *tilla sardar* in this tea estate. His story is somehow different from others.

“My grandfather came from Jagannath Deb’s Place, i.e. Odisha. He came to West Bengal initially. From there again he came to Tripura. He settled at ‘Barkanthal’ (near Mandai). He set up a school there. People used to give him in kind (rice, vegetables etc.) for education. But those were not adequate. So, he migrated to ‘Mantala tea garden’. My grandmother eloped with a man who used to work in our house as a servant. My father was ten years old then. After coming to Mantala tea garden my grandfather also died. My father came to Meghlibund tea estate as there were some known people. He wanted to go back to Kolkata with them. But somehow, they did not go so my father also stayed back here. My mother was from Teliapara of Bangladesh. Since then we are here. We were two, I and my sister. She died when she was nine years old. I was 5-6 years old then. There was no hospital, no doctors, she died of fever. My father was ‘sardar’ at factory. He studied till class IV.” (A male permanent worker, Tilla sardar, Meghlibund, 22/04/2018) (Shib Thakur)

This narration shows that some of them may be came to Tripura in search of better earning by their own will without any intervention by third party.

This narrative also reveals how an educated person’s family became workers of tea garden. The way he narrated the story of their migration and family history also reveals anguish of a brother who lost his sister at young age without treatment because there were no treatment facilities in that place at that time.

The “*Panurias or Pantanti*” respondents told that their original place was Odisha. Their forefathers were weavers there but now they are tea garden workers.

The “*Tanti*” workers from Durgabari tea estate also said that their forefathers came to Tripura from Odisha. (Das 2020, p.32).

Other workers said their forefathers came from Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Assam. (Das 2020, p.32).

New generation workers of Durgabari migrated to this tea estate from other subdivision or districts of Tripura in search of better livelihood. Most of them came from Khowai, North Tripura district, Unakoti district.

Late president of INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress) also said that most of the workers came from Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, and Uttar Pradesh. (Das 2020).

“Munda, Oraon came from Ranchi, Tanti Adhikari from Orissa, Gour from Madhya Pradesh, from Bilashpur Oraon, Munda and Santal, from Santal Pargana Baori and Santal. Very few came from Sylhet of Bangladesh. Management used to appoint “Girmit” (middleman) to bring workers from other places. (Interview with Late Nirod Baran Das, 28/02/2017, Agartala) (Das 2020, p.33).

Tony Pande husband of Jaya Goala said that due to poverty and torture by Zamindars those people came here. (Das 2020, p.33).

“Workers were brought from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Purulia area of West Bengal, Tami Nadu, even from Bangladesh. They came here due to food shortage, poverty and torture by Zamindars. Middlemen (Dalal) lured them with better life and brought them here. They said if you shake tree money will fall from tree. These simple people believed them and came here”. (Tony Pande, 25/02/2017, Agartala) (Das 2020, p.33).

Same version is seen in Jaya Goala (Goala 2010, pp. 5,52-54,71-73, 112; 2001, pp.23-24).and Budhudas Panika’s (Panika 1998, pp. 20-21) Writing and narration of tea estates workers.

In Laxmilunga tea garden where Amarendra Chakraborty, first General secretary of “Tripura Cha Mazdur Union” worked as office staff during 1947-’49 also wrote that there were “Uria, Gour,Santal, Shabar, Urang, Goala” among female workers of that tea estate. (Chakraborty 2002, pp. 21-22).

When researcher interviewed office staffs of the tea estate, they narrated their history of migration to the tea estate.

“Our house was at Singerbil, Akhaura Andabaj hamlet of Comilla district of Bangladesh. Just After independence of India, in the year 1947 my father came here due to riot there. When my father came here, we even were not born. This land was here long ago. At Ichakona, Sylhet my maternal uncle’s house was there. This is also my maternal uncle’s house. When my grandmother died my maternal uncle was only 7 years old. So, my father stayed here to look after him. My father started working in the tea estate. That time his wage was 15Rs. When he retired in 1980 his salary was 300Rs. He used to work in the tea estate as ‘hazirababu’ (taking attendance of workers). I worked in this tea estate for 40 years. Previously I was temporary

worker. Before my father's retirement I became permanent worker. (office staff, 62yrs Brahmakunda, 28/04/2018).

The priest of the tea estate narrated their family's history of migration. His brother is also office staff (tilla babu) of tea estate. He said

"We came when Ayub Khan was prime minister of Pakistan. We came here from Sajahanpur, Sylhet of Bangladesh (now). My mother came along with my brothers. They were studying here. We sold some land there and bought some land property here. Some land we could not sell. If we sold land, money had been taken by Muslims. So, we left those land there." (priest, 67 years, Brahmakunda, 28/04/2018)

The cashier of the tea estate said that his grandfather came here.

"Before 1950 my grandfather came here. My father was working in the Surma tea estate of Bangladesh. He was tilla babu there. There was riot at Faridpur, Bangladesh. So, my father also came here. In the year 1971 my father was head tilla babu of Meghlibund tea estate. He retired in the year 1982. (cashier, 52years, Brahmakunda, 03/07/2018).

So, from their narratives it can be seen that political situation and socio-religious factor played a role for migration of these workers from their ancestors' place.

Interestingly some of the young workers said they like to visit their ancestral state/place. They do not want to stay there but just curious to visit. They said though their forefathers lost connection with their relatives and they do not know anyone from there but still feel to visit the place.

Problems in tea industry during monarchy

During the Great Depression in 1930's the tea industry of Tripura also suffered as production came down. This table shows how the international scenario affected the tea industry of Tripura too. (Das 2020, p. 33).

Table 3.1: production of tea year wise in Tripura

1923 AD	2,25,533 Pounds
1924AD	3,38,272 Pounds
1925AD	5,68,568 Pounds

1926AD	8,28,615 Pounds
1927AD	9,48,862 Pounds
1928AD	10,57,488 Pounds
1929AD	14,82,725 Pounds
1930AD	12,49,374 Pounds

Source: (Chakraborty M, 2012:439 Retrieved from www.dspace.nehu.ac.in accessed on 29.11.2015; Das 2020, p.33).

In 1948 there were conflicts between Tripura Tea Association and Maharaja. The association sent representative to Central Government where they claimed that there were 20,000 workers in the tea gardens of Tripura and land taken was 54,413 acres and for that tax payable to state was Rs 75,000 approximately, road tax was 12,000 approximately, tea production was 48,000 mds. (Das 2020, p.33). According to the representative of Tea Association the revenue collected by state was eight lakh per annum; they even said that they have to pay tax to the Central Government, and as Tripura tea gardens were burdened with heavy tax it was impossible for them to improve the condition of the gardens. (Das 2020, p.33). They claimed that in spite of paying road tax the condition of roads is not good and there was no new road to nearest rail station or river. The Durbar naturally denied all these charges and pointed that the labour population in plantation were not 20,000 but 2000 only. (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020, p.33).

Until 1948 there were no labour organizations in Tripura. On 1st January 1948 “Tripura Cha Mazdur Union” was formed in Tripura. This union was the first trade union in Tripura. Jayram Kanda, who was a tea garden worker, was the first President and Amarendra Chakraborty was the General Secretary of the union. (Chakraborty 2002, p.30; Das 2020, p.34).

During that period the political scenario of India also changed. India got independence on 15th August 1947 and partition of Indian subcontinent occurred. This had great influence on Tripura. Hill Tripura became isolated from other parts of India. Plain Tripura i.e *Chakla Roshenabad* fell on East Pakistan. (Das 2020, p.33) Communication problem became acute.

Before partition rail road of East Bengal served the purpose of transportation but after partition Tripura became isolated from rest of country. As a result, after 1947, tea industry of Tripura suffered a lot. (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020, p. 33).

In the meantime, political scenario of Tripura was taking a new turn. Tripura on 15th October in the year 1949 merged with the Indian union through the Tripura Merger Agreement of 9th September 1949. As the last independent king *Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur* died suddenly on 17th May 1947, then the prince king was minor prince *Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur* who was 13 years old, on behalf of him Regent *Maharani Kanchan Prava Devi* signed the agreement. *Maharani* wanted to include Chittagong hill tracts, Noakhali, Sylhet district to its boundary but Red Cliff Boundary Commission ignored it. (Ghosh 2003; Das 2020, p. 33). The author (Ali 2011) here argued that the revenue of Tripura would not have been suffered and economic, transportation system would have been far better having a positive impact on Tripura and its people, if *Maharani's* proposals had been accepted.

II. Tea industry in state of Tripura

After Tripura merged with India it was termed as 'c' category state. Changing from monarchy to democratic setting many changes occurred. There were no fixed times for work in the tea garden. There were no binding laws. The working period in tea garden was known as 'unregulated period'. Before the first general election in Tripura in 1952 hundreds of tea workers agitated and gheraoed the Kunjaban palace. They demanded for opening up a Labour Office in Tripura from Chief Commissioner Nanjappa. (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020, p.33).

For opening up labour office in Tripura the then Secretary of Tripura Government Sri Nani Debbarman (Nani Karta) took initiative when he was facing problem addressing the issues of tea workers especially dispute with Amarendra Chakraborty and Laxmilunga tea estate. The first labour officer in Tripura was Mr. B.C. Haldar. (Chakraborty 2002, pp. 25-26; Das 2020, p. 33).

There are struggles for increase of wages in tea garden labourers. They earned equal wages for themselves for factory and field workers, for male and female workers. There were also struggle for revision of Tripura Plantation Labour Rules. But they are not organized even now. (Chakraborty 2012).

When "Tripura Cha Mazdur Union" was formed that time, communist party was banned in Tripura. In the year 1955 CITU formed "Tripura Cha Shramik Union" under the leadership of

Shri Birendra Datta. That time “Tripura Cha Mazdur Union” was active in the tea estates of Tripura. Chakraborty took first initiative to unite workers of tea estate throughout the state. He started it from Laxmilunga Tea Garden of West Tripura, Sadar. He united the workers there and set up a school for children of workers. In the leadership of Amarendra Chakraborty first school was formed inside the Laxmilunga tea estate in the year 1949. He was given the post of teacher along with his work in the tea estate. The name of that school was “*Adarsha Pathshala*”. He started educating the workers about hygiene, their rights, about bad effect of drinking habit, cleanliness. (Das 2020, p. 34). He also started to teach them patriotic songs, “*Manimela*”,⁴ “*Bratachari*”⁵ and handicrafts. He came from Kolkata in the year 1947 to work in the Laxmilunga Tea estate. He was worker of INTUC in Kolkata. He gradually started involving other tea garden workers in the movement from other gardens. He also requested to change the rule of taking leave in case of illness and maternity leave for women worker of the tea garden to the Secretary of Tripura government, Sri Nani Karta. That plantation rule had been changed in favour of workers. Gradually every tea garden of Tripura came under the banner of “Tripura Cha Mazdur Union” and workers became member of this union. Though in 1955 there formed “Tripura Cha Shramik”, their members were less than 5%. (Chakraborty 2002; Das 2020, p.34).

According to the Bulletins of the Statistical Department, Government of Tripura even during the 1961s the wages of tea garden labour was 1.25Rs/day for male workers may be the lowest in North East. During 1974 the total number of plantations came down 46 and labour 6,771 whereas previously it was 50 and 10,000 respectively (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020, p.35).

Nirod Baran Das said when he started working as a “Tripura Cha Mazdur Union” worker that time “wages of workers were 4 anna for child workers, 5 anna for female workers and 6 anna for male workers other than facilities given by management in kind (Rice and atta)” (*Interview*

⁴ Manimela movement: in the year 1940 late Bimal Ghosh (Moumachi(pen-name), founder of Manimela invited young friends through the weekly children’s page of the Bengali daily Ananda Bazar Patrika. The main idea was to help the youngsters become useful, effective and competent citizens of the country imbibing whatever is good for themselves, for the society and for the country at large and they must be free from any caste, creed or class bias, without also having anything to with politics.

⁵ Bratachari movement by Gurusaday Datta: a spiritual and social movement initiated in 1932. The movement aimed to raise the self-esteem and national awareness of people of undivided India regardless of their religion, caste, sex, or age. It is comprehensive programme of physical, mental and intellectual culture, based on folk traditions of physical exercise art, drama, music, singing and social service. The bratacharis undertake to perform good deeds, strengthen fellowship and develop the mind and body through dance.

with Late Nirod Baran Das, 28/02/2017, Agartala). That was the period of '50's (Das 2020, p.35).

In 1975 Labour Department, Government of Tripura showed that gardens reduced to 39 numbers. This left a mark on labour force of gardens. In many tea estates their payments of dues, basic amenities, rations were irregular and even the provident fund of the workers also affected. (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020, p. 34). But labours were not yet organized properly though there are labour organizations in the state.

In 1986 in the sixth conference held in Agartala, by Centre of Indian Trade Union, it was seen that among 4000 female tea garden workers only 400 are organized. (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020, p. 34).

Problems Tripura Tea Industry faced were inadequate machinery, lack of technical supervision, less supply of fertilizers, total average rainfall is less and deforestation aggravated the situation, inexperience planters, soil quality was not tested, and small tea gardens than other region, lack of technical knowledge. Even the layout shade trees, numbers of tea bushes were unscientific. As a result, production was lowest in North-East India. (Chakraborty 2012; Das 2020, p.34).

Insurgency and tea industry

Ethnicity: Insurgency: Immigrant tea workers

Tripura is a mixed populated state. Here live not only the Tripuri tribes but has officially recognized nineteen tribes, Bengali, Manipuri and small numbers of others, like Marwari etc. Among the nineteen tribes some were immigrant and they were given ST status by the state government just as in their home state from where they migrated long back.

In Tripura the workers of tea garden were given status of Schedule Tribes (Santal, Bhil, Munda, Urang as spelled in Tripura) or Scheduled Caste (Sabar, Tanti, Kanla etc), the category they would have got in their forefathers' home state. But most of the workers are not aware of this status. In Tripura ST tea garden workers are categorized as Scheduled Tribe under immigrant tribe of Tripura. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 49).

Below is a list of nineteen tribes of Tripura:

Table 3.2: Tribes of Tripura

Sl. No.	Aboriginal	Immigrants
1.	Tripuri	Bhill
2.	Reang	Munda
3.	Jamatia	Oraon
4.	Noatia	Santal
5.	Lusai	Lepcha
6.	Uchai	Khasia
7.	Chaimal	Bhutia
8.	Halam	
9.	Kukis	
10.	Garos	
11.	Mog	
12.	Chakma	

Source: Compiled from “Tripurar Upojati Nritya-Akti Samiksha”, Padmini Chakraborty.

The aboriginal tribes migrated from Tibbet, uphill of Burma like Arakan Hill tracts and Burma and Shan states and regions adjacent to China. Immigrant tribes Munda, Oraon, Santal, and Bhil mainly came from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, and West Bengal. As mentioned, before they migrated as tea garden labourers to Assam and East Bengal (now Bangladesh), some of them from there again migrated to Tripura. Second category mainly migrated to Tripura for economic reason. Munda, Bhil, Santal, Oraon works in tea gardens.

Khasia's mainly own betel leaf garden and produces 'pan' or betel leaf. Their betel leaf is commonly known as 'Khasia Pan'. Ethnically they are not related to any tribes of Tripura. Their origin is Austro-Asiatic and they speak Mon-Khar group of language.

Again, linguistically these tribes' groups are divided into three groups. These are:

1. Bodo groups

2. Kuki-Chin groups

3. Arakan groups

Tripuri tribes constitutes the majority among all the tribes in Tripura. They speak Bodo group of language. This is known as '*kokborok*' meaning (dialect of people). Bengali, English and '*kokborok*' are the official language of the state.

As mentioned before the state has mixed diverse ethnic groups, plains are inhabited by the Austro-Asian race and the hills are inhabited by Mongoloid groups. In plains there are also Aryan, non-Aryan and Dravidian. Aborigine tribes were migrated to Tripura from Yanftzekiang and Hoangho River of China. These people migrated to Brahmaputra valley during 2000 BC. They migrated to Tripura during 7th & 8th centuries from Arakan Yoma hill tracts. Their entry occurred from North East, East and South East of the hill tract. They speak Tibeto-Burmese group of language which originated from Indo-Chinese group of language. (www.tripurainfo.com/login/Archives/sail.pdf).

Historically the name "Tripura" is fusion of two '*kokborok*' words '*tui*' (Water) and '*pra*' (near) meaning 'near water' or 'beside water'. This actually reveals the geographical boundary of Tripura in ancient time, reveals its boundary near Bay of Bengal. The geographical boundary during the reign of Maharaja Dharma Manikya was entire 'Luchai' (Kuki) province, hilly area of west and south Manipur, middle and south Cachar, south of Srihatta (Sylhet), south-east of Mymensingh, east of Dhaka, entire Noakhali and Chittagong. (Singh 2013, p. 113-114). This geographical boundary and demography of the state later on reflects on its political decision and social and cultural domain. Tripura being the princely state where "maharaja" was the sole authority to take decision, policy adopted by the monarchy later on aggravated the ethnic clash and insurgency in Tripura. Now Sylhet, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Noakhali and Chittagong are in Bangladesh. The Hill *Tipperah/Tippearah* was free from British invasion and now in Indian Territory. Plain *Tipperah* or Tripura district was directly ruled by British Government. Chakla-Roshenabad, now is in Bangladesh.

This plain land is inhabited by Bengali population and hill by the tribes. There are huge differences between these two groups, socially, culturally. A Salim Ali who was DGP (Director General of Police) in Tripura brought out causes of cyclical ethnic clash by analysing its history and bringing different theoretical explanation of this conflict. He divided this in different phases. The Golden phase of Manikya Dynasty was from 1400 to 1563 AD, also known as 'era of expansion', from 1563 to 1793 was known as 'era of decline', and from 1793 to 1948 as 'era

of change'. Due to frequent active conflict with kings of Cachar, Arakan, Kamrup, Rangamati, Gaur the kingdom expanded. The rulers settled many Hindu –Bengali families in early 15th century. Even 'maharajas' embraced Vaishnavism in 1470. The tribal animism and Bengali Hindu ritualism synthesized gradually. (Ali 2011).

In the 'era of decline' Mughals captured Chittagong and Comilla and only *Chakla – Roshenabad* was from plain left to Tripura kingdom. Due to loss of considerable part of kingdom to Moguls the revenue was lost. So, to boost revenue rulers started taxing tribes and encouraged Muslim Bengali cultivators to settle in Tripura by providing them land to cultivate. At the end of the 17th century tax on tribes was increased and Bengali was declared as the court language. This time Mog's migration from Chittagong to Tripura further increased pressure on land. (Ali 2011).

During 18th century *Chakla-Roshenabad* was captured by Nawab of Bengal and after agreement of payment of 5000 Rupees as revenue per year the *Zamindari* of said area was given to Tripura kingdom. In 1755 due to Burmese invasion in Manipur refugees migrated to Tripura and they were accepted by king and given settlement. (Ali 2011). Even due to internal clash in the monarchy of Manipur, defeated prince of Manipur and his follower fled to Dhaka of Bengal, later on they again migrated to Tripura and given settlement near Agartala by king. (Das M.Phil dissertation 2015).

During the period 1761 to 1765 the East India Company increased revenue from Rs 66,695 to Rs 1, 05,000, and due to this huge amount of tax was imposed on tribal, failing to this their land was captured. This resulted in revolt by tribes, Kuki revolt in 1826-60. In the meantime, East India Company too started interfering in state matter. They brought rules and laws which were "alien" to tribes. This time king appointed his "Guru" a Bengali Brahmin, Bipin Bihari Goswami to look after state affairs and to collect revenue a Bengali 'dewan' Balaram Hazari was appointed. The rude procedure of revenue collection leads to Reang revolt in 1939-45. This is the period when they were facing chronic food shortage. Jamatias revolted against "coolie labour" in 1863 which was supported by Kukis. All these were suppressed by king very brutally. (Ali 2011; Ghosh 2003).

Again, Tenancy Act in 1885-86 provided Bengali people the tenancy right to boost revenue. The land was donated by kings to Brahmins, Muslims and higher government officials. Shifting cultivation (jhood) in forest area which was prime for tribes were banned by maharaja in forest area in 1887. Jhoodia rehabilitation scheme of 1889 was also a failure as it could not serve the

purpose because it benefitted more non-tribal than tribal. In 1903 forest rule declared 3861 sq. miles as reserve forest thus tribes who were dependent on forest were put their livelihood in risk. Though in 1913 tribes were allowed to use forest but that did not help much. In 1939 AD 28,490 hectares and 5,05,053 hectares in 1941 reserved for six tribes, again initiating a platform of conflict among tribes, as other tribes were left with less land. Due to communal riot in 1941 in Dhaka and 1946 in Noakhali large number of refugees entered in Tripura and they were given settlement by king. During 1943 to 1949 there were three tribal revolts. First revolt by Reang tribes under leadership of Ratanmani Reang against the king's order to provide manpower for Second World War and pay higher tax, second was in Golaghati by Tripuri and Jamatia tribes which was due to inability to pay tax due to drought for two years. The third was in Padmabil, Khowai during the transition period in 1949 when tribes were protesting against the oppression by king's army and lack of education among tribe. These revolts were suppressed by king very brutally. In Padmabil three young Tripuri girls Kumari, Madhuti, Rupashri were killed by king's army. This led to hatred for the king and his bureaucracy. (Ghosh 2003; Ali 2011; Deb 1987).

In the meantime, demography was changing due to Massive influx of refugees from then East Pakistan in 1950's and in 1971 till Bangladesh war continued. Gradually demography of Tripura changed. Tribes who were in majority in Hill Tripura became minority now. Subir Bhowmik in his work argued that in course of normal migration also tribes would have been become minority but partition made it earlier. Following table shows the decadal variation and demographic change in Tripura.

Table 3.3: Decadal variation of population in Tripura and percentage of tribe population

Year	Total population	% of variation	Total Tribal Population	% of Tribal Population
1874-75	74,523	---	47, 523	63.77
1881	95,637	28.33	49,915	52.19
1891	137,575	43.85	70,292	51.09
1901	173,325	25.99	91,697	52.89
1911	229,613	32.48	111,303	48.47
1921	304,347	32.59	171,610	56.37
1931	328,450	25.63	203,321	52.00
1941	513,010	34.14	256,991	53.16
1951	639,028	24.56	237,953	37.23
1961	11,42,005	28.71	360,070	31.50
1971	15,56,342	36.28	450,554	28.95
1981	20,53,058	31.92	583,920	28.44
1991*	23,35,484	34.30	853,345	36.54
2001	3,19,92,03	16.03	99,34,26	31.1
2011	36,71,032	14.75	1,16,68,13	31.8

Source: "Tripura: Ethnic conflict, Militancy and Counterinsurgency", S Bhaumik, 2012(up to 1981), * From 1991-2011 data is compiled by researcher from census reports, 2015.

During 1930-1940's there were formations of different socio-political organizations which were fighting for education of tribes, 'full responsible government' under monarchy and 'tribal cause' like poverty, shifting cultivation, and superstition etc. *Jana Mangal Samiti* was formed in 1936 by some Agartala based Bengali professionals to have a 'full responsible government' under monarchy. *Jana Shiskya Samiti* (JSS) was formed in 1945 (1355, 11th Poush, *Tripurabdo*) by some educated young affluent tribal mainly from Tripuri tribes. Communist party and mass population of tribes too supported the movement. When *Tripura Praja Mangal* (TPM) was formed in 1946 the platform for communist leaders and JSS was already there. Their aim was same as to have a 'full responsible government'. But this was opposed by royals and Bengali bureaucrats who were working under monarchy. They were not against general Bengali population. But monarchy tried to divide them in communal front which failed. In 1948, in the month of May *Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad* (TRGMP) was formed and TPM went for armed rebellion under banner of TRGMP. Tribal chiefs, peasants, large number of tribal youths supported their movement against military and police oppression. Their demand was:

"a) A government by popular vote, b) end of "*Dewani*" rule, c) abolition of "*taitung*" (system by which villagers were compelled to carry luggage, etc., of the officials), d) abolition of all kinds of taxes, e) land reform, including giving lands to tribal "*Jhumias*", f) end of police atrocities and end to detention without trial and g) release of political prisoners".(Ghosh 2003).

Leaders were worried of the two major opinions which were trending among tribes.

"Tremendous discontent with "*Dewani*" rule and police atrocities and second was surge of anti-Bengali sentiments". (Ghosh 2003).

Durjoy Kishore Debbarman, a royal person himself opposed merger of Tripura to Indian Union, along with an affluent Muslim Gedu Mian and formed '*Sengkrak*' (Clenched fist), in 1949 and their agenda was '*Bangal Khedao*'. (Ghosh 2003).

But the leaders of TRGMP maintained harmony and solidarity among the general mass, in spite of efforts to divide them in communal line. For them "tribal question" was mainly social political development of the natives and economic development of the tribes who were exploited by rulers for centuries. One of the main leaders, the late ex chief minister of Tripura Dasharath Deb (Dasharath Debbarma, was popularly known among tribes as '*Raja Dasharath*') took initiative to bring different ethnicity common people under his organization. He knew that without the help of common people it was not possible for them to struggle against monarchy. He even took initiative to incorporate tea garden workers and '*Hindustani*'

(as is known in Tripura) people who were migrated (Bhil, Munda, Oraon Santal) and non-tea garden worker in the movement indirectly.

Dasharath Deb elaborated in his writings how he had taken measures to gain tea garden workers trust jeopardizing his own safety. He motivated these people to help the TRGMP in their action against monarchy military, police and Bengali moneylenders and rich people who were exploiting the common people. They remained in contact with the 'sardars' of tea garden workers and motivated them. The Khowai military and police with the help of tea garden workers looted tribal villages and engage these people to carry luggage. They mostly used workers of Kalyanpur tea garden. The Khowai and Padmabil tea garden workers did not help police and military. The 'Hindustani' people were mostly daily wage workers and poor peasant and agricultural workers who used to work in the tribal farmers' fields. So, they did not go against tribes. The leaders of TRGMP motivated them to help the organization. They also motivated them by telling that if they don't keep good relation with the tribes they will not be benefitted and they would not be able to voice their demand to the owners of the gardens. They were motivated to the communist ideology. With the help of the workers of TRGMP tea garden workers of Khowai, Kalyanpur, Katlamara, Brahmakunda tea estates became solid ground for the movement. Though tea garden workers did not actively participate in the movement but they did not oppose also. The unity was so strong that once the author was invited in Durga puja and drama (during Durga Puja workers of the tea garden used to arrange drama and played on stage) to attend and observe. But he was in dilemma whether to attend the puja and drama as his organization was banned by monarchy and he was in wanted list. Workers of the Katlamara tea garden (here researcher would like to mention that at Katlamara only tea garden is Meghlibund tea garden, and she assume that author have mentioned about that tea garden) said that they will provide security to him and if he doesn't attend, they will think that he does not consider them as their own and don't trust them. So, to get their trust author attended the festival in disguise and no one, not even owner of the garden and Bengali office staffs was aware of that except workers. Later on, this helped to form trade unions in the tea garden areas. (Deb 1987).

It has been seen that though insurgents targeted Bengali owners they never harmed garden workers. But indirectly this effected tea garden workers. Due to insurgency either the owners of the tea gardens abandoned tea gardens or if they were abducted, they closed the gardens or reduced activity of gardens. So, workers lost their job or work opportunity was reduced. This affected their livelihood.

The communist leaders tried to build a “nationalism” which were “secular, democratic, and development oriented”. (Ghosh 2013).

During this period after merge with Indian Union Tripura got status of “C” category state. Ranjit Ray, ICS was the chief commissioner that time. November 1956 it got union territory status but did not have any legislative assembly. In 1963 May Territorial Act was enacted in Tripura under the provision of the constitution of India (Art. No.239). on 1st July, 1963 Tripura Territorial Council became Tripura Legislative Assembly. On 21st January 1972 Tripura got statehood status.

Meanwhile a new form of extremism and ethnicity developed and in 1967 *Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti (TUJS)* was formed with new ideology. The leaders of this organization were young educated mostly Christian, new generation tribal. Increased tribal literacy formed a new middle-class generation of educated tribes, who were exposed to other states of North-Eastern region, Shillong, Imphal, Guwahati through colleges and universities. They shared views of other tribes in those areas and came across story of movements and insurgency in Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Assam. This encouraged and influenced them to start movements in Tripura too. They got moral and technical support from those outfits also. Dinesh Singh Committee, which investigated the 1980, June Mandwi/Mandai massacre and communal riot found out a connection of Tripura insurgents to Mizo National Front or United liberation Army of Mizoram. Their main agenda was to convert tribes from Hindu to Christianity, use of Roman script instead of Bengali script for “*Kokborok*”, girls should wear only traditional Tripuri Dress, not using service of Hindu priest along with tribal priest, but only tribal priest, worshipping only tribal god and goddesses instead of both. They criticized communist role for communal unity. On the other hand, Congress was labelled as “party of the uprooted refugees” who came to Tripura after partition and CPI (M) was mainly inclined to tribes. As a result, in election of 1967 CPI (M) lost its position to Congress. But policies taken by Congress government were against the tribal benefit and that lead to tribal militancy. During 1960-1970s policies taken by Congress Government were:

“Bengali refugees were allowed to settle down in tribal reserve land, not filling reserved job vacancies, not spending money meant for tribal development”. (Ghosh 2003).

TUJS started anti Bengali activities in the state, they demanded:

“a) The creation of an autonomous district council for the tribes under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, b) the restoration of tribal lands from the non-tribal which were illegally transferred c) the recognition of *Kokborok* language d) the adoption of Roman Script”. (Ghosh 2003).

TUJS movement became strong when the decisions of Congress Government went against tribal benefit. Like in 1968 tribal reserve forest was reduced by 300sq mile; declaration of Bengali as official language; here it can be mentioned that Bengali was declared court language by Kings in the 18th century, and displacement of tribes due to Dambur Hydel Project. (Ghosh 2003).

But TUJS could not gain popularity among the tribes. In the year 1970s *Tripur Sena* party was formed by Bijoy Kumar Hrankawl. In between 1973-1975 this party performed several militant activities in mixed populated areas and reserved areas. Bengali formed a party “*Amara Bangali*” (we are Bengalis) to counter the party or their activities. (Ghosh 2003).

In the year 1978, February when Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) was formed Tripuri extremism took a new turn. This was formed by the *Tripur sena*. They started “reign of terror” and ethnic violence during 1970-1980s. (Ghosh 2003).

In the meantime, Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) was formed on 23rd March in 1979 in the Tripura Legislative Assembly, under the provision of 7th Schedule, 18th January 1982 it came into force. But it was seen that the 7th Schedule could not address the demands of tribal people. On 23rd August 1984 by 49th Amendment of Indian Constitution the TTAADC was upgraded under provision of 6th Schedule with effect from the 1st April 1985. Tribal leaders were misusing the ethnicity issue in course of giving up their struggle for “tribal cause” and returning to the main stream for government facility and benefit. Congress which was known as pro-Bengali party in Tripura, leaders of the insurgent groups were helping this party and even aligned with them for political benefit. During 1977-1987 Left government took several measures to upgrade tribes.

“formation of the Autonomous District Council, recognition of Kokborok, filling of vacant reserved posts, opening of schools and medical centres in the hills, restoration of tribal land, initiation of community development programmes and cooperatives in rural and interior areas for landless tribes and artisans, decentralizing power to local people through panchayats, etc....” . (Ghosh 2003).

Everyone thought that two parties TUJS and TNV will support and welcome all these measures but in contrary they opposed Left government and aligned with Congress. All other outfits were also fighting among themselves for leadership issue. These outfits were formed by breaking down of other terrorist outfits. These outfits were Army of Tripura Peoples’ Liberation Organization, Tripura Resurrection Army, Tripura peoples’ Liberation Organization and many more other small groups. All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) itself had three splinter units. They started fighting among themselves over territory issues, their common issue of ethnicity was

not addressed rather it become an industry of abduction and ransom collection, economic and political gain during 1980-2000s. Marking of territory became a major issue due to the economic factor related to it. Outfits like National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT), started converting tribal forcefully to Christianity which became an issue among the different tribe groups. They opposed and these eventually lead to inter-tribe clashes. Not only Bengalis were abducted and killed for ransom but they abducted tribal people and killed them too. Tribal girls were molested and raped by rebel groups of militants. All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) and NLFT were gaining political, economic benefits whenever their “friendly” parties were coming into power and they became political enemies. Common tribal peoples were also not accepting terrorism or their agenda anymore. (Ghosh 2003).

Other factors played important role like link with outsider agent, foreign involvement and role of Christian missionaries. Even this had been mentioned by some journalists (Debnath, Bhoumik). It was too observed that terrorism did not affect church or missionary activities in remote places rather that flourished Christian dominated areas. Whereas, government operated organizations collapsed in terrorist prone areas. Only Bengali Liberation Front, Jamatias and Reangs who revolted out from NLFT attacked church. Those militant outfits were getting foreign support. Their base camp was in Chittagong Hill Tracts, and Islamic Fundamental Groups or foreign governments helped them. Even Change of power in Bangladesh did not bring change in the situation much that time. (Ghosh 2003).

It can be said that ethnicity and insurgency issue in Tripura was not only an outcome of socio-economic, like poverty, deprivation, land alienation and eviction, under-employment, unemployment, cultural, demographic or ideological issue but there are other factors too. “Emergence of elite leadership, political competition and manipulation, a strong sense of perceived discrimination, easy accessibility to foreign support, and geographical location” too has its own role. (Ghosh 2003, pp.238-239).

During 1980’s there were ethnic tension in the state. In 1980’s ethnic clash broke down between Tribes and Bengalis. After 1980 June tea industry of Tripura took a new turn. Many owners abandoned tea gardens of Tripura.

The tea industry suffered due to insurgency in the decades of eighty’s and nineties. Many of the office staff and two owners were killed by militants during this period. Insurgent organizations like The National Liberation Front of Tripura and All Tripura Tiger Force targeted tea gardens of Tripura. They kidnapped or killed tea garden officials.

(<https://m.economictimes.com.>articleshow> accessed on 08/08/2018 at 10.20pm) (Insurgency-hit Tripura tea industry back on feet-The Economic Times; Das 2020, p.34).

Though insurgents targeted Bengali owners but they never hampered tea garden workers. The owners and officials of the tea gardens abandoned tea gardens. They were abducted by militants. So, they closed the gardens or reduced activity of gardens. Even after paying the ransom also many of them were killed in captivity. From 1994 to 2000 AD eleven tea estate employees were kidnapped in Tripura. Two Owners were killed by them. (the eye witness) So workers lost their job or were opportunity was reduced. This affected their livelihood. (Das 2020, p. 34).

Even in writings of Goala (2003; 2001) her characters of novels and stories described their agony and insecurity they had to face due to insurgency (Goala 2001, pp. 44-51; 2003, pp. 74-137; Das 2020, p. 34).

During researcher's field visit many workers also echoed the same problems they faced during insurgency period. There were no works as owners abandoned the garden. As a result, many workers left gardens in search of other work. Many of them were starving.

Change in ownership

Interview with Nirod Baran Das reveals that since 1970's ownership pattern started to change. Marwaris started coming in the tea industry in Tripura. Ramdurlavpur Tea estate in Kamalpur had taken by Marwari. They were financing the tea garden and gradually took over the garden. Many Marwari and Punjabi businessmen are investing in the tea industry in Tripura by buying tea gardens. So, when tea industry started it was given to Bengali entrepreneurs now ownership is changing. Most of the new owners are from Kolkata. They have other tea estates also in other states like Assam, West Bengal. Many of them blend Tripura tea with other states tea and market it. One of these teas is Goodwyn Tea under Sirohia Group. (Das 2020, p.34).

Government also took initiative to take over the sick tea gardens. So, now in Tripura ownership of tea estates are of three categories; (Das 2020, p. 34).

1. proprietorship (private ownership),
 - a. Big tea estates
 - b. Small tea growers
2. the workers co-operative.
3. TTDC ((Tripura Tea Development Corporation Ltd)

Governments' initiative for tea industry

In the year 1980 Tripura Tea Development Corporation were established. In 1980 Tripura Tea Development Corporation along with Government of Tripura took initiative to run the gardens as co-operative basis. In the year 1986 five 'sick' tea garden i.e. Mohanpur, Kalacherra, Brahmakunda, Tufanialunga and Laxmilunga under West Tripura District were given to the management of Tripura Tea Development Corporation (TTDC) as owner of these gardens abandoned the plantations and workers were left under miserable condition. State Government too made TTDC nodal agency for small farmers who have tea plantations in the state. In Durgabari there is a tea processing unit under TTDC. Some of the tea gardens in Tripura are now run by co-operatives. First such tea garden is Tachai Tea Garden under Kailasahar subdivision of then North Tripura now Unokoti district and second one is the Durgabari Tea Estate in West Tripura District. The tea produced in Tripura is of CTC (Cut Tear and Curl) variety. Now there are 58 tea estates (now 52 are operating) and 4,346 small tea growers. Tripura Tea Development Corporation runs three gardens and the workers co-operative runs 13 gardens; about 20,000 people are employed in these gardens. Yearly 7.7 million kg of tea is produced from an area of 6430 hectors land. (tripura.nic.in<ttdc Tripura *accessed on 14/11/2015 Das 2020, p. 34*).

Table 3.4: List of ownership of tea gardens

Sl no.	Type of ownership		Number of tea gardens
1	Private ownership	Big tea estates	42
		Small growers	4,346
2	The workers co-operative		13
3	Tripura Tea Development Corporation		3

Source: Compiled by researcher from literature

Regarding varieties of tea Tripura falls in the category of traditional tea growing state. There is scope to increase the tea growing area in Tripura. The tea Tripura produces is known for its good blending qualities. (Kumar Promod et al 2008).

In the year 2013 Tripura tea, orthodox variety, was exported from Golakpur Tea Estate to Iran. Manu valley Tea Estate of Unakoti district exported tea to Britain, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Ludhua Tea Estate of South Tripura also exported tea to Italy and Germany. (www.theshillongtimes.com>2013/09/02 accessed on 16/08/2016; Das 2020, p. 35) Manu valley tea estate exports their own brand 'Jewel Tip' tea to Iran. They got orders from Russia also. Due to less demand of CTC tea in international market and increase demand of orthodox tea, in Tripura leading tea estate also focusing on producing orthodox tea. (<https://m.economictimes.com>.>articleshow accessed on 08/08/2018 at 10.20pm; Das 2020, p. 35)

Regarding wage hike Tripura followed the path of West Bengal. In 2015, May there was meeting on pay hike of workers. By citing that tea industry is facing problem the Tea Association of India proposed to hike pay Rs. 12 for first year, Rs. 7 for second and third year. TTDC, Tripura Cha-Mazdur Union, Tripura Tea Workers Union were also participated in the meeting. The wage hike was agreed that Rs 12 on first year, 11 on second year and Rs. 12 on third year with effect from 1st May 2015 and valid up to May 2018. (tripuramirror.com>business accessed on 16/08/2016; Das 2020, p. 35)

A tea processing unit was set up in the Brahamakunda by TTDC under state government in 2016, May (www.business-standard.com>news-ani accessed on 16/08/2016; Das,2020:35) Now West Tripura District produces 117.45 lakh kgs of green tea leaf /day and 33.87% are produced by small tea growers. (tripura.nic.in<ttdc Tripura accessed on 16/08/2016; Das 2020, p. 35)

Recently before assembly election the then Government increased pay of workers from 105Rs/day to 175Rs/day. But it was not implemented till assembly election. During pre-election agenda BJP led party promised to give wages 370Rs/day but it still has not been implemented (Das 2020, p. 35).

Above two sections we have seen historical background, economic, political and social scenario of tea industry of Tripura. In the next section it will be discussed how tea garden workers or those people who migrated to Tripura from other parts of India to work in tea

gardens or work outside of tea gardens but have same origin of place, they built their new identity in Tripura along with other inhabitants of Tripura.

III. Location of tea garden workers in the social system of Tripura: A new Identity

Tea garden workers: building 'home' away from place of origin: a new 'identity'

Tea garden workers, we have seen were brought from other states of India or later on some of them migrated from other states of India or Bangladesh due to political or social reason to Tripura. Now question is that how they see themselves or how other inhabitants of Tripura take them in society or in political aspect?

When tea garden workers were brought for working in tea gardens they were termed as 'coolii' or 'kuli' in Tripura. Tea garden work were looked down by local inhabitants i.e. Tripuri tribes or other indigenous tribes of Tripura. The king, who was also from tribes of Tripura, though they themselves say as descendent of Lunar Dynasty of Mahabharata, was the highest authority of Tripura. The owner or office staffs were of Bengali origin. Tea estate maintain a strict hierarchy of position. Those are owner, manager, office staffs, sub staffs and workers. In Tripura owners were/are Bengali higher caste or Brahmins, or now Marwaris or Punjabis. The office staffs are Bengali higher castes or Brahmins. Sub staffs most of the time also are Bengali, very few from workers. The ground staffs i.e. field staffs and factory workers are from those migrated workers (ST, SC, OBC, few are general). Tripuri tribes recognize them as '*khashtriya*' *jati*. So, there are clear social distinction between ST of tea garden workers and ST of indigenous tribes of Tripura. Bengali themselves are categorized as Brahmin, higher castes etc. This social division from the very beginning made tea garden workers in a lower social status.

Tea garden workers are daily wage-earning workers. This was looked down by Tripuri tribes or other indigenous tribes of Tripura. (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 65). They were land owner and free by nature whereas tea workers were bounded by the owner of the tea estate. For their sustenance they had to depend on tea garden work. Bengalis were termed as '*babu*' as they were/are the workers who used to do official works. Due to their nature of job and education the Bengalis were getting higher salary. So economically also the tea garden workers were in a lower class.

As tea garden workers were working in tea gardens or those who were not working in the tea estate, for financial assistant of family they used to work in another people's land or house. Sometimes they used to work as maid or reared cattle in a Bengali house or in a tribe's house. People of Tripura term them as 'kuli' or 'labour'.

In writing of Panika (Panika 1998, p.19-20) showed in the poem "Labour jati" how the tea workers became "labour jati" in Tripura. He was telling that there are three 'jatis' in Tripura, one is Bengali, another is 'Tipra' or tribes and rest are 'labour jati'. He asked one so called 'bhaddarlok' who are 'labour jati' in Tripura? In the poem 'Labour jati' that so-called gentleman describes to writer...

"Urang, Jhara, Panika,

Munda, Saontal, Oria, Larka.

Kanda, Lodha, Shabar, Baori, Khanre,

Ghatowal, Keot, Goala aar Pande

Mushar aar Bhakta, Nayek, Gour

Khayra, Kamar, Deshowali Bhar.

.....

Aisob jati mile hoyeche labour". (Panika 1998, p. 20)

("all these constitute labour jati")

So, from the above poem it is clear that those who came to Tripura mainly to work in tea gardens of Tripura their individual or social caste identity has been lost in society. Rather all of them come under one category in the society of Tripura. Same has been echoed in the poem "Promotion". (Panika 1998, p. 30).

This has become an agony for them. Where ever they go, in school, (Urang 2018, p. 10) in other field of work by their 'surname' they become identified as 'labour jati' to the broader society. Though tea garden workers have migrated to this state long ago, even newer generation is not that aware of their forefathers' origins and they embraced this state as their own land still in society they are not accepted as individual identity holder. In the novel "Deyal" in the book "Anyo Manush Bhinna Rang" (Goala 2003) brought out that agony through the character 'Ranjit Munda'. He is a son of tea garden worker and first generation educated person and how

he struggles to prove himself in the broader society. He struggles to co-ordinate his tea garden workers identity and new identity as educated government servant. Even his Bengali wife feel shy to introduce him to the broader society. She tries to change his surname legally from “Munda” to “Mandal”- a Bengali surname and tries to give him new identity in the society. She tries to do that so that their child and they are not looked down by the so-called educated society.

During field work researcher has seen that new generation is following Bengali culture. Their social rituals are becoming like Bengalis. They perform Durga puja, Kali puja, Sankranti, Bengali New Year etc. along with Gram puja of their culture. Their other social ritual like marriage, ritual after death, child birth, functions related to child birth all became like Bengali culture. Researcher attended rice eating ceremony- ‘*mukhjhuta*’, (in Bengali- Annaprasan) of a worker’s baby boy. All the ritual starting from puja by a Bengali Brahmin to rice eating of the baby followed Bengali cultural ritual. Even the baby’s maternal uncle could not come due to some reason so his mother made a male person from worker her brother and that person become maternal uncle for the baby. He performed the rituals for the baby. They invited local Bengali neighbours. Food served to invitees including workers and Bengali people are of prepared in Bengali style.

Their children go to government Bengali medium school. Though they speak their own language or ‘*chilomilo*’ at home but most of the new generation knows Bengali language. When researcher went to visit hamlets, she tried to talk with children in ‘*chilomilo*’ language that time one elderly person told her....

“Speak in Bengali with them. They can understand and speak Bengali. They go to school”. (an elderly man, Meghlibund, 2018)

During group discussion with workers they said that though they heard about their forefathers’ original place but they do not want to go there.

Even in Durgabari tea estate when researcher asked workers whether they want to go to their ancestor’s original place or not. They said they heard but do not know where and how to go. One worker said

“I would like to go and visit forefathers place though I do not know anyone from there or I do not know whether our relatives are there or not. We do not have any communication if there

are relatives also. I just want to visit; I shall not stay there. I shall come back here. Tripura is now our place". (male worker, 19years, Durgabari, 13/12/2018)

Same things were said in Das's (Das 2014) and Adhikari's (Adhikari 1988) studies. Das studied Munda tribe of Durgabari and Laxmilunga tea estate. Adhikari studied Bhil, Oraon, Santal and Munda as immigrant tribes of Tripura. Both the studies showed that new generation are mingling with dominant culture and acculturation of the society is happening. They feel proud to tell that they are resident of Tripura.

In the political front during Left Government era the chief minister of Tripura late Nripen Chakraborty incorporated tea garden workers in decision making procedure. He incorporated them in Panchayat. Now tea garden workers are there in various Panchayat. Even at Meghlibund tea estate there are two members who are Panchayat members. The state government has given them SC, ST status which they would have been enjoyed in their original home state. (Das 2020, p. 35).

Politically though they are given equal status like other inhabitants of Tripura but socially still they are looked down by broader dominant society. Though the workers culturally trying to mingle with the dominant culture of Tripura but still there are less acceptance by the dominant society.

Conclusion

The history of tea industry starting from royal era till date in Tripura has come a long way. The economic and political reason to set up tea industry in Tripura and later on during democratic era the tea industry has gone through many phases. The labour force who were brought by middlemen or who migrated to this state in search of livelihood also gone through changes. The ownership of tea estate also seen change due to political reason. The workers live also changed a lot since they came to this state, be it social, economic or political. From migrated people from other states of India to recognized as resident of Tripura now and enjoying equal resident citizenship status and other socio-political statuses are a great change in tea garden workers life. This status they do not enjoy in neighbouring state of Assam. In the next chapter two different ownership tea estate of West Tripura District will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

**Born under the tea bush, will die under the tea bush: Two
Tea Estates: Compare and Contrast**

Introduction

In the previous chapter history of establishment of tea estate in Tripura has been discussed. The tea industry was established during the monarchy and went through different phases till date. The political and social scenario over the years changes the ownership pattern of the tea estates. The reasons behind these changes also discussed in the previous chapter. There are three types of ownership of tea estates in the state of Tripura. Among the several patterns of ownership, two types of ownership have been taken for the study. Here in this chapter we are looking into two different category of tea estate. One is private ownership and another is workers co-operative. The chapter tries to compare and bring out the contrast from both the tea estate starting from their history to workers social, economic status, different social security provided by tea estate management as well as by government through PLA-1951 and The Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954 and its Amendments at different time. This chapter also trying to locate what are the different social security Acts and schemes provided by the government other than PLA 1951 or The Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954.

I. History of two tea estates

Meghlibund Tea Estate



Pic 4.1: Meghlibund Tea Estate

Source: Clicked by manager of the tea estate, 2020



Pic 4.2: Office building of the Meghlibund tea estate (left), Abandoned factory (right) after abduction and murder of owner of the Meghlibund tea estate

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018

The tea estate was bought by present owner from a Bengali Brahmin in the year 1953 AD. Before that Chatterjee & Co. was owner.⁶ In the year 1953 Mr. (Prafulla?) Prabodh Chandra Chakraborty, who is also Bengali Brahmin bought the tea estate. His family was Zamindar of *Kaligachha* (Brahmanbaria district of Bangladesh now). Later on, they shifted to Kolkata. He had two wives. Present owners are descendants of them. After that they bought *Harendranagar* tea estate and *Sinnacherra* tea estate.⁷ The present owner of Meghlibund tea estate is not a single owner but the estate is the property of inheritance and therefore has several owners. Only one of them used to run the estate but for selling it needs approval of other shareholders too. In 1995 the owner who mainly used to run the estate was abducted along with a *Tilla babu* by the militants (ATTF- All Tripura Tiger Force)) of Tripura and even after paying a huge ransom he was murdered. *Tilla babu* was released. Even his body was not found. After that incident the garden was closed for several years. With the initiative of the than Government of Tripura the garden was reopened. But owner of the garden was not staying there anymore. Before the owner used to stay most of the time in the garden bungalow.

⁶During interview with Key informants in the field, none could tell the date or year of establishment of the tea estate and name of the owner. Also, the antecedents before Chatterjee &co. could not be traced.

⁷ Meghlibund tea estate has several owners. Prabodh Chandra Chakraborty had two wives. Latika Devi and Ila Devi. Bedabrata Chakraborty, Gyanobrata Chakraborty, Yogobrata Chakraborty, Satyabrata Chakraborty, Tapobrata Chakraborty, Santibrata Chakraborty, Subrata Chakraborty are the heirs of the tea estate other than wives of Prabodh Chandra Chakraborty (collected from Tehsil office, Sundartilla, Simna, 2018). Among them Bedabrata Chakraborty and Yogabrata Chakraborty used to look after the tea estate. Their wives name is Anjushree and Manjushree Chakraborty respectively. Harendranagar tea estate's owner was Anjushree Chakraborty. Sinnacherra tea estate's owner was Manjushree Chakraborty. But both the tea estate has been sold out. Harendranagar tea estate was bought by a Marwari (Mr.Rajiv Pincha) businessman and sinnacherra tea estate was sold to Durgabari tea estate workers co-operative society ltd. The co-operative bought it with 25lakhs.

In 1999 the garden had been given on lease for 99 years to a Bengali higher caste person who has other business interests and resides in Agartala. He used to visit the garden once week, mostly on Sunday. He too was abducted by militants but later on released. After his abduction the factory which was functional before was closed since 2000 AD. Now the garden runs by selling green tea leaves to other estate—Ramdurlavpur tea estate which is in another district. They sell green tea leaves 13.50Rs/ kg. Estate is running in loss but still workers are trying hard for upliftment of the tea estate.

Later on,⁸ when researcher went to visit again, they stopped selling green tea leaves to Ramdurlavpur tea estate. Now they were selling tea leaves to Narendrapur tea estates. Narendrapur tea estate pays 14.50Rs/ kg green tea leaves. Another factor was that this tea estate is nearer to Meghlibund tea estate. Selling of green tea leaves depends upon the rate other tea estates provides.⁹

Durgabari tea estate



Pic 4.3: Durgabari Tea Estate Workers Co-operative Society Ltd

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018

⁸ 26/06/2017

⁹ Here two different tea estates are giving two different rates for green tea leaves. Ramdurlavpur is paying 13.50Rs/kg whereas Narendrapur tea estate is paying 14.50Rs/kg. so Meghlibund tea estate now selling green tea leaves to Narendrapur tea estate.



Pic 4.4: Durgabari Tea Estate Workers Co-operative Society Ltd, office building (Left), recreation/tuition facility building (Right)

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018

In 1935 this tea garden was established. The owner was late Mr. Badal Ghosh. He was owner of a bank in Comilla (now Bangladesh). In 1952 both husband and wife died.¹⁰ They did not have any children. They did not have any heir also. After their death the tea estate was run by manager Mr. Sudha Datta and Mr. Ganguli¹¹. That time there was 300-400 workers. The two managers were not able to run the tea estate properly. They could not pay tax to government. Due to this reason the then Congress Government of the state declared this tea garden land as “khas land”¹² in the year 1970. The living condition of workers was very poor and hence they started to leave the tea estate.

One of the boards of director of the tea estate said

“In the year 1975 emergency was declared by Government. During emergency Bajuban Reang, Nripen Chakraborty, Abhiram Debbarma and myself were in Vellore jail. There were 30 to 35 inmates in jail. After that we were in Noagaon jail of Assam for 7-8 months. After calling off of emergency we were released from jail. In the year 1978 there was election. We told to do auction of this tea estate. We had even given advertisement in newspapers.” (Mr. Sudhamay Mazumdar, 10/12/2018, Durgabari tea estate, Tripura)

There were two opinions and two groups for establishing co-operative and against of it. One group wanted to give it to some private owner or government and another was for setting co-

¹⁰ They became aged and died.

¹¹ Key informants could not remember his first name

¹² Government occupied land

operative. Biren Dutta¹³ wanted the first option but Nripen Chakraborty wanted to establish co-operative. So, he called Mr. Sudhamay Mazumdar to his residence and requested him to take over the garden. That time the garden had only 15 workers. They started with them. The tea bushes were not systematically planted. The tea bushes were scattered in the plantation. The then left front chief minister Nripen Chakraborty gave him 20 lakh rupees for establishing a co-operative. He used only 10 lakhs for establishing tea estates the rest he returned back to chief minister and told to use it for other development purpose. Though Nripen Chakraborty wanted him to keep the money for co-operative he declined and said he can now manage rest. In the year 1978 Durgabari tea estates workers co-operative society ltd. started its journey.

Later on, researcher came to know from the workers that few of them had contributed their own land for tea estate to make the tea estate larger. Other people who were opposing for co-operative system joined later on. Present secretary who was opposing co-operative system bought share later on in 1979.

When researcher talked with workers who were present at that time, they also narrated their story of struggles for establishing this co-operative.

“The tea estate closed down. There was no food. We used to keep pumpkin (misti kumra) inside the pitcher and boil it. Rice grain was coarse. We used to cook that rice in earthen chullah by firewood. That used to take whole morning. By keeping rice on chullah we used to go for work. Sometimes we only had boiled rice water, boiled potato.

There were scattered tea bushes and tall tea bushes. Male worker used to bring down the branches and then only we could pluck. We used to bring water from 3-4 km distance for watering tea plantation. “Babu” (referring Sudhamay Mazumdar) started digging bore well. Officers came from city. That time “babu” was digging wells. They asked for him because they could not recognize him as he was covered with mud. After washing his face, they recognized him. We struggled a lot.” (retired female worker, Durgabari 28/02/2018)

¹³ Birendra Chandra Dutta (1910-18/12/1992) was born in Agartala in 1910 AD. He founded communist party in Tripura. He was member of Lok Sabha (1952-1957;1962-1967;1971-1977). He was minister in the Tripura state government 1978 to 1985. He served as state secretary of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions from 1970-1990. He was linked with ‘Janashiksha Samiti’, (People’s Educational Association) ‘Mukti Parishad’ (Liberation Council) movement in Tripura. He founded ‘Janamangal Samiti’(People’s Welfare Association) in 1938. He was editor/publisher of ‘Projar katha’. He was editor of ‘Tripura Rajaer katha’, ‘Tripurar katha’, ‘Deshar Dak’, ‘Deshar Katha’.

Same has been said by the founder, that higher official said that it will be difficult to do irrigation on tea plantation by borewell because of geographical terrain. But he challenged them and showed that it is possible.

Another worker also narrated her struggle

“There were 15 workers. Whenever whatever time if ‘babu’ called us for work we used to go and work, even leaving our household work. whenever ‘babu’ told us to finish the work we would do that. We used to wear ‘janata saree’. (she started weeping) If ‘babu’ called us for meeting we could not go. Only one saree was there. We used to wear one end and wash another end and keep that side for drying and did the same with other end. If we had to go somewhere, we used to wear old cloth inside and another cloth covering that. We did not have petticoat, blouse. We slept on rags. ‘Babu’ also ate with us, slept with workers on rags, stayed with us.” (sobbing...) (female worker, Durgabari, 28/02/2018)

When researcher interviewed factory supervisor, he also said

“With boiled potato and green tea leaves workers used to make a ‘varta’-smashed mixture. This food could lower down hunger. When there were no food workers ate that so that they would not feel hungry.” (factory supervisor, Durgabari, 13/12/2018)

Workers of Meghlibund tea estate also eat this ‘varta’ in their work place in the plantation. When they take break in between work they eat this. Researcher has observed this while she went with them during plucking of leaves.

Many of the workers said that they did not even think about salary or wages. They worked together. Whenever they realized that plantation need more care, they called other workers and worked together to make it success.

In their word---- **“This is our garden”**.

Though Techai was the first co-operative tea estate to set up in Kailashahar subdivision of North Tripura district (now Unokoti) but Durgabari is the most successful co-operative. In the year 2002 this co-operative got award for being best co-operative tea estate (Award for co-operative Excellence) in India by the National Co-Operative Development Corporation. The monetary award of 50000 Rs spend for development of the tea estate.

In the previous chapter we had discussed how the Maharaja of Tripura invited entrepreneurs from East Bengal for establishing tea estate in Tripura. History of these two tea estates also shows that zamindar (Meghlibund) or businessman (Durgabari) from East Bengal (mainly plain land of Tripura where Maharaja of Tripura was Zamindar of British. The plain land of Tripura is now in Bangladesh) came to establish business here in hill Tripura. Even several authors also brought out that (Bhattacharjee and Singh 1995, p. 23-24; Chakraborty 2012).

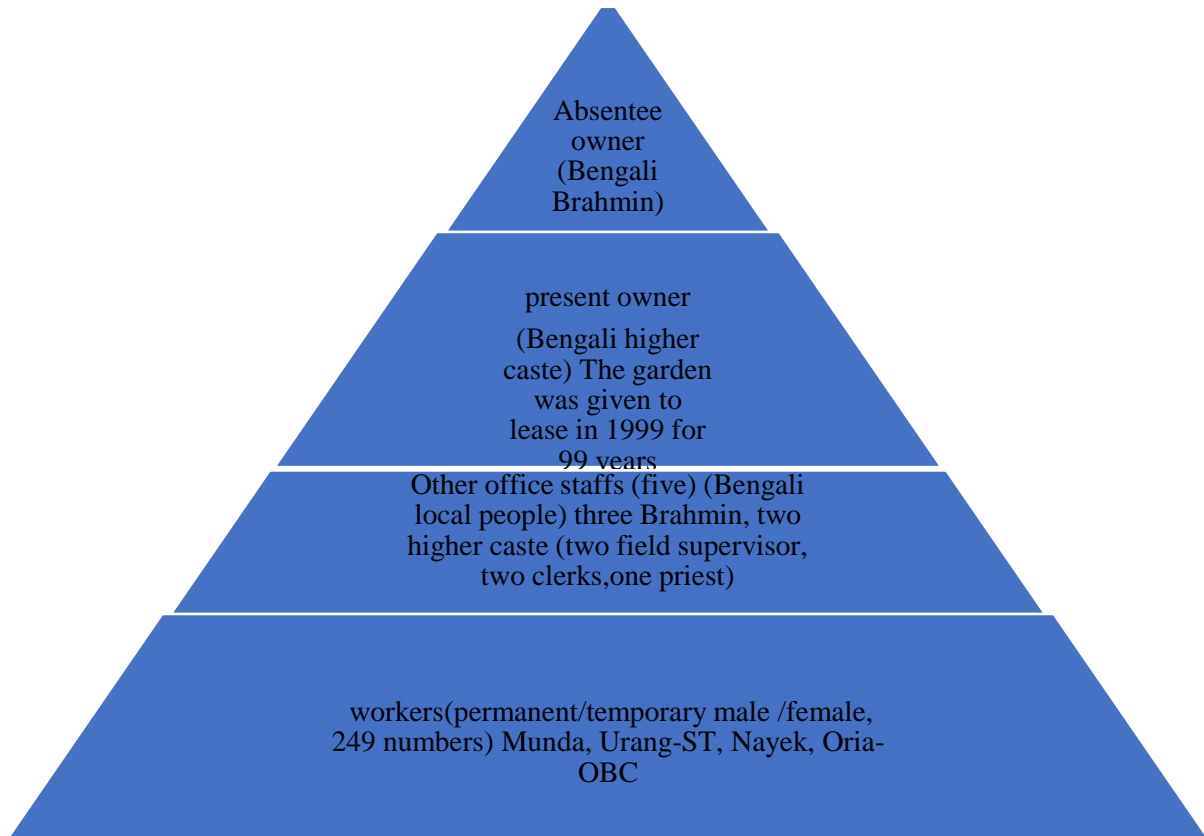
Though Meghlibund is still owned by private ownership but Durgabari could not maintained that and ownership changed from private to co-operative. The ownership pattern started changing since 1970's in Tripura. This has been mentioned in the previous chapter.

II. Structure and social composition of the tea estates

The structure of these two-tea estate also varies according to its hierarchy and caste composition.

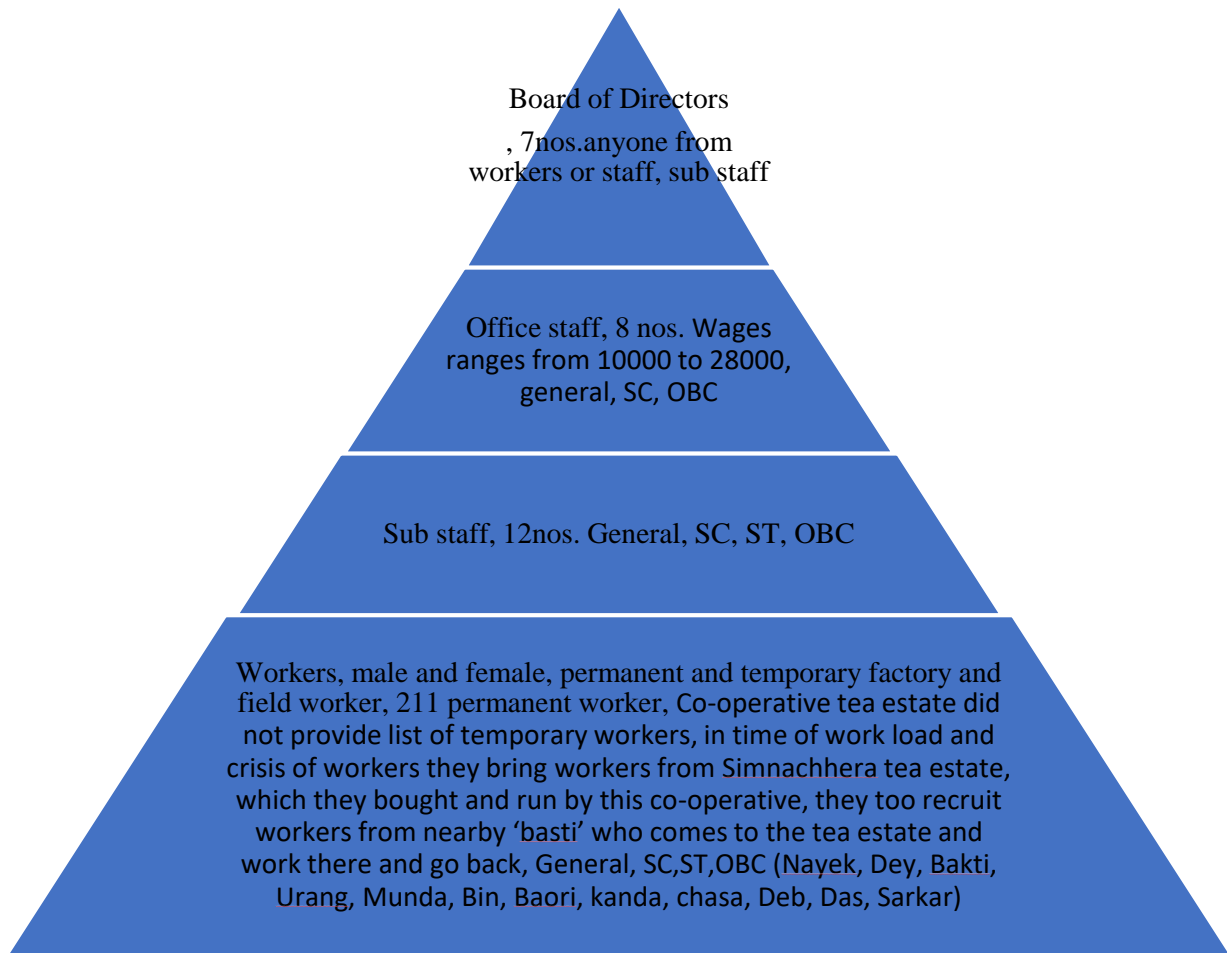
The privately owned tea estate has a strict hierarchy of owner, manager, office staff and permanent, temporary male female workers whereas workers co-operative tea estate is having board members, office staffs, sub staffs, permanent, temporary, male female field and factory workers.

The owner of the private tea estate is a Bengali Brahmin, office staffs are Bengali Brahmin or higher caste people. The present caretaker is Bengali higher caste. Workers are from migrated workers family. Maximum of those workers are 2nd, 3rd or fourth generation of migrated workers from Odisha, Burdwan, Purulia, Bihar, Ranchi, Chhattisgarh, Dhaka (e.g. Tangi/Tangra village), Sylhet, Chittagong (e.g. Sitakunda, Rangapania), Jharkhand (e.g. Lahardaga/Lohardaga village), Uttar Pradesh (e.g. Harahara village), Madhya Pradesh.

Diagram 1: Structure of the Meghlibund tea estate

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

(There are 2 Tilla babu or field supervisor- Brahmin (one is working from 1973, from 2011 on extension, wage 7500 Rs/month. Another from 1984, now on extension from 2014, wage, 7000 Rs/month) 2 clerks, Bengali higher caste (one working from 1997, wage 5500 Rs/month, second one from 2009, wage 3000 Rs/month, one Priest (Brahmin) wage-300 Rs/month.)

Diagram 2: Structure of Durgabari Tea Estate

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

In Durgabari there are Board of Directors. They are selected from the workers. In every hierarchy there are mixed composition of workers. There are Bengali workers at field as well as sub staff and office staff. There are workers from general caste, ST, SC or OBC. They are Bengali as well as Munda, Uria, Santal. Interestingly there are no Brahmin workers or office staffs in Durgabari tea estate. Among Bengali also there are few higher caste persons, most of them are either OBC or SCs. The workers of Durgabari migrated from Bihar, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Sylhet, Brahmanbaria, Comilla district of Bangladesh, Purulia, West Bengal, Assam and different district of Tripura.

Caste of Workers

The caste component of the workers of the two tea estates can be seen from the table below.

Table: 4. 1 Caste components of the workers:

Sl no.	Category of caste/NA/Confused	Number of workers (253nos.) (Meghlibund)	% (Meghlibund)	Number of workers (231nos.) (Durgabari)	% (Durgabari)
1	General	23	9.09	35	15.15
2	Scheduled Caste (SC)	4	1.58	74	32.03
3	Scheduled Tribe (ST)	140	55.34	73	31.60
4	Other Backward Caste (OBC)	74	29.25	48	20.78
5	Not Available	6	2.37	1	0.43
6	Confused	6	2.37	0	

Source: compiled by researcher from field work, 08/02/2019

Most of the workers are Scheduled tribe (55.34%) at Meghlibund tea estate. They are Urang (Oraon, but in Tripura this is written as 'Urang') and Munda. Next is OBC (29.25%). Office staffs are all general caste and they are either Brahmin or higher caste. There are five office staffs including priest. Some of the workers were confused about their caste, whether they are 'general' or 'OBC' category (2.37%). Some of the worker does not aware about their caste status (2.37%). Tripura government has given tea garden worker caste status which they enjoy at their original home state. These tribes come under migrated tribe category in Tripura. According to the Indian constitution they are entitled to get the benefits. But now question arises if they are not aware of their caste status how will they claim those social benefits from Government? Though quantitatively these are small but in reality, in field researcher have come across people asking other people about their caste status. Sometimes when researcher asked about caste, they asked researcher

'What that family has given information to you? We are extended family. We belong to same caste. Whatever is their caste you write that my caste also'.

So, researcher had to cross check with that family about the relation and caste. Though new generation scheduled tribe students are aware about their caste but Schedule caste people are

not aware. Those people claimed they are SCs but it seems they do not have Schedule caste certificate.

At Durgabari tea estate there are more scheduled caste (32.03%) workers than scheduled tribe workers (31.60%). Schedule caste workers are more at Durgabari (32.03%) tea estate comparing to Meghlibund (1.58%) and General caste workers (15.15) are more than Meghlibund tea estate. They are not only office staffs but sub staffs and ground level worker also. There is no Brahmin in the workforce of tea estate. There is no priest also. Most of the workers are Bengali. Those Bengali workers are mostly Schedule caste people. Scheduled Tribes are Santal/Sawtal, Bhil, Munda, Urang. There are no indigenous tribes of Tripura works as worker in both the tea estate. The tea estate workers are Bengali dominated workers at Durgabari tea estate. Most of the Schedule Caste and General category people are Bengali whereas at Meghlibund office staffs and few workers families are Bengali.

III. Spatial organization of the two-tea estate: some contrasts

This part discusses about the workers dwellings. These dwellings are called labour line. The land is provided by the owner of the plantation. Systematically designed houses/quarters are built for workers and their family to reside.

Hamlets: Labour line: Meghlibund: beyond that:

Table 4.2: Location of hamlets

Sl no.	Name of the hamlet	Name of the gram panchayat/ ADC village council	Name of the block
1.	Meghlibund	Bidyasagar gram panchayat	Mohonpur
2.	Meghlibund basti	Daldali ADC village council	Hezamara
3.	Dhakaiya para	Bidyasagar Gram Panchayat	Mohonpur

4.	Bhajatilla/ Natuntilla	Saratchowdhuri para ADC village council	Hezamara
5.	Bagantilla	Bidyasagar Gram Panchayat	Mohonpur
6.	Bilpar including Katlamara Bazar	Bidyasagar Gram Panchayat	Mohonpur
7.	Brahmakunda	Brahmakunda Gram Panchayat	Mohonpur

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

At Meghlibund tea estate there are main labour line which is demarcated as middle line, pucca line, etc. This is Meghlibund hamlet. Other hamlets are Dhakaiya para, Bhajatilla/ Natuntilla, Laxmicherra, Bilpar, Bagantilla etc. Some of the workers family reside nearby Meghlibund basti. Workers are scattered in different areas of hamlets. New hamlets are coming up due to increasing population in the hamlets. These workers are residing here for generations. Even if they leave the job of tea estate also, they do not leave the residential area. This rule applied to the retired workers and their families also. This is an unwritten rule by the previous owner of the tea estate. The labour lines are also not systematically planned. Different families of one clan try to stay together at one place making a cluster of families. So, when researcher started interviewing them it came out that within a definite area, she was interviewing members of same family or extended family members who set up separate household after family size increases. In this way different hamlets were established in the land of tea estate. Gradually they got different names which are enlisted in Panchayat. E.g. Bhajatilla¹⁴. House premises are also not like labour line. If they need, they construct one or two rooms according to their convenience. The hamlets are not in closed confined areas.

Office staffs used to stay inside the garden premises but due to insurgency problem they left those quarters and started living nearby villages where they had their own land. All of them

¹⁴ Bhajatilla name of the hamlet got from one of the workers' name. He was the first person who first built houses on that land. His name was Bhaja Munda. After that some of his family members came and settled down there. Gradually the family size increased and most of the residents there are of the extended family members of that person. House premises are also not like labour line.

resides at Brahmakunda village. While they were staying inside the garden premises, they used to get all the facilities including servant, maid, water bearer, gardener etc. Above table also showing diverse nature of the hamlets of Meghlibundh tea estate.

Table 4.3: Durgabari Tea estate: location of hamlets/ labour line

Sl no.	Name of hamlet/labour line	Name of Gram Panchayat	Name of block
1.	Durgabari Tea garden	Laxmilunga Gram Panchayat	Bamutia
2.	Durgabari Village	Laxmilunga Gram Panchayat	Bamutia

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

But in Durgabari except few houses rest of the houses are clearly demarcated. New line has clear demarcation of area having one big room, one attached kitchen, one sanitary latrine and a small courtyard in front.

Those workers who were residing for long they sometimes built one or two rooms within their demarcated land. Those labour lines do not have separate names. Workers call them East, West, North or Bengali, Munda Uria line etc. South side is tea garden area. The area is surrounded by tea garden. The distance from residential area to main road and market is around one kilometre. Office staff of the Durgabari tea estate come from outside and they reside at their own house. Because of that they do not get housing, electricity, gas, sanitation facilities.

Many workers come from outside of tea estate area. Some of them come from nearby “basti” also.

The labour lines are in a closed confined area where as labour habitats of Meghlibund is not a close confined area.

IV. Age of workers

There are total of 254 workers including five office staff at Meghlibund tea estate. Office staffs could tell their age properly. One worker declined for interview so the number of interviews

taken are 253 numbers. Researcher collected name of the workers from the tea estate's office of Durgabari tea estate. There is no children worker in the tea estate. They keep record of joining and retirement. But age was not provided by them.

The youngest worker of Meghlibund tea estate is nineteen years (19) female and oldest worker is an eighty-five years (85) old man, whereas the oldest person at the Durgabari tea estate is founder of the co-operative tea estate. He is eighty-five (85 years) old. While researcher talked with workers, they said they are all above 18 years of age.

Most of the worker at both the tea estate could not tell their original age. At Durgabari especially 'Munda' and 'Urang' workers were fumbling with their age. Most of the workers at both the tea estates guessed their age and told. Some of them said they do not know their age. While giving to answer about age they were relating to some events, like someone's marriage, kidnap of the owner, somebody's death or birth like that. They even do not know their children age. Some of them showed AADHAR card or voter Id card or ration card but everywhere different age is written. Many of them were asking to others about their own age. Some of the workers at Meghlibund tea estate told researcher to collect their age from management office as they are keeping record of provident fund and retirement age. This method was not fruitful for researcher as management declined. The workers even told researcher "write whatever you feel like my age should be." I had to say them "how will I know? I was not there when you were born." They laughed at it and most of them agreed with researcher's answer with laugh and joke. So, most of worker has given their age from their guess, or asking someone present there. Only office staffs have given their age properly. So, researcher could not prepare the age group list. There is no children worker at both the tea estate. Some of the workers of Meghlibund tea estate even could not say how long they have been working in the tea garden. If they cannot say how long they are working how will they get benefit of provident fund, pension benefit etc?

Though retirement age is 58 years but reemployed staffs or sub staffs age are more than that in both the tea estate. One office staff at Meghlibund tea estate is employed as temporary worker in the tea estate after his retirement as a teacher from government service. He was known to previous owner, he employed him when he approached the owner for work. He looks after the workers attendance matter. Those who are reemployed after retirement from tea estate their age is more in both the tea estates.

V. Sex of workers

Table 4.4 Sex of Workers

Sl no.	Sex of workers	Number of workers (253nos.) (Meghlibund)	%	Number of workers (231nos.) (Durgabari)	%
1	Male	88	34.78%	89	38.53%
2	Female	165	65.22%	142	61.47%

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 04/02/2019

There are more female workers than male workers as used to be in tea estates (65.21%, 61.47%). Among male workers there are five office staffs including priest at Meghlibund tea estate. There is no female office staff or sub staff in the tea estate. Even tilla sardars are also male. Females are only field workers. One female worker looks after the bungalow of the owner at Meghlibund tea estate. She does not go to pluck tea leaves or do another field work. So, in power relation there are male domination though female workers are more in number.

Compared to Meghlibund (34.78%) male workers are more (38.52%) at Durgabari tea estate. It may be Durgabari has its own factory which Meghlibund does not have now. There are three female sub staffs at Durgabari. All eight office staffs are male. There are twelve sub staffs. There are six members who are attached with the co-operative and takes honorarium for that. Researcher has not put those persons in the table. All of them are male. Board members are among the workers or those who are taking honorarium. There were seven board members, among them two were female, but one female member expired on 26/02/2018. Though in both the tea estates there are dominance of female workers but they are not the decision maker. Though Durgabari has one female board member but the question is does she has any power to make any decision about the tea estate, or as there is a rule that one board member has to be female in any co-operative that is the reason to have a female member in the executive

committee of co-operative? At Meghlibund all the female is ground level workers, they are not even office staffs or tilla sardar.

VI. Marital status of workers

Table 4.5: Marital status (Meghlibund)

Sl no.	Marital status		Number of workers	%
1	Married		204	80.63
2	Unmarried	Male	6	2.37
		Female	2	0.79
3	Widow		39	15.42
4	Widower		2	0.79

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 13/02/2019

Most of the workers are married (80.63% at Meghlibund) in both the tea estates. There are very less percentage of worker who are unmarried or widower but widows are more in number. The marital age is very low. Some cases they even marry below the legal age of marriage.¹⁵ There are two widowers¹⁶. Many widows are aged and living alone separately. They may be staying

¹⁵ Researcher came across one couple who just got married recently. Both of them are nineteen years old. For girl it is legal age for marriage but for the boy it is not the legal age (21years for boys). He is only nineteen years old. Even in group discussion it came out they marry at an early age. Within twenty-two years of age two women workers who took part in group discussion said they both have two children. In recent NFHS-4 it showed that regarding child marriage rate Tripura is second highest in India.

¹⁶ One is permanent and another is 85 years reemployed worker at Meghlibund tea estate. Permanent worker married twice but both of them died. One wife died during child birth. That baby is now teenager and brought up by her uncle and aunty. Another workers wife died twenty years back and he never married again.

in the same premises along with their children or relatives but prefer to have their own separate kitchen. Others are staying with their family members¹⁷.

VII. Family

Table 4.6: Types of Family (Meghlibund)

Sl no.	Types of household	Total number of households	%of household
1	Nuclear	126	72.41
2	Joint	48	27.59

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

Most of the families (72.41%) are nuclear family. Husband wife and two, three or four children. Durgabari tea estate also follows the same pattern of family. There are cases where single women or single parents are there at Meghlibund tea estate. Most of the cases widow women stays alone. Sometimes children of relatives are also constituting family member.¹⁸ Durgabari

¹⁷ There are two young widows at Meghlibund tea estate. Both of them are in their twenties. They have two children. One is living with her father-in-law and another is living with in-law's family. I asked them whether they have any plan to marry again but both of them declined saying that they do not have any plan to marry again. Husband of one woman died of jaundice.

¹⁸ Two women and one male worker stays alone. Both two female workers are widow. One is aged. Another is middle aged. Both does not have any children. The male worker stays along with his teenage son. He is widower. He married twice but his wives died. His younger step brother is *panchayat* member. Researcher came to know from his step mother that his father married thrice. First wife died and from that marriage there was no child. He married again and from that wife this male child is. While he was child, his mother died and his father remarried. Now they are three brothers. Two step brothers and himself. He also married twice. First wife died leaving one son. This son is staying with him. Second wife died during child birth. She delivered a weak girl child. They said that she was very weak and she did not have skin. They don't know what to do with that baby. The old lady (panchayat member's mother and worker's stepmother) said,

"when she was born, she was so weak and did not have skin. Her mother died. Who will take care of her? All of us go for work. We put her on banana leaves. We could not put her on cloths. Her skin was raw. I wanted to throw her in the river. But my daughter in law (her own elder son's wife) prevented me from doing so. She said she will take the baby and take care of her. So, I gave it to her. She took care of her day and night. Gradually the baby recovered. Now she is twelve years old." (grandmother of Dukhani, Meghlibund, June 2018)

Her name is "Dukhani"—name itself represents she suffered a lot. Now her parents are her uncle and aunty, in papers and in society also her uncle and aunty are known as her parents. Her own father has given up his custody.

tea estate also the workers like Meghlibund take care of relative's children whenever there is need.¹⁹

Most of the families at Meghlibund tea estate are divided and formed into a cluster. All of them are related to one another in the same cluster. They are like extended families. In this way different hamlets came up. Those hamlets are not like typical "labour line". Rather they are forming villages. Only meghlibund hamlet is somehow like labour line, which still considered as "labour line". At Durgabari tea estate those children who get married they if works in the tea estate they form separate household and get benefit from the management. But they prefer to stay in same premises along with their parents or relatives.

Joint families are like husband wife, parent-in-laws/parents, children, grandchildren, daughter in laws/ sister in law/ brother/ brother in law etc. There are cases of polygamy among workers.²⁰

Even her uncle and aunty introduce her as their eldest daughter. She is now a healthy child. She did not study much though she was put in school. She said she could not memorize her study. So, she dropped out in class III. Both of her uncle and aunty also tea garden worker. They have their own children also. Now one family divided into three household. *Panchayat* member's parents stays with him.

Another household is having two grandchildren, one daughter and husband and wife. One grandchild is from daughters' side and another grand child is from son's side. Granddaughter's mother and father both died due to some illness which the female worker could not say. So, their daughter stays with them now. Grandson's father is the son of the female worker. His mother died and his father remarried and shifted to another place. He left his son here. Researcher has observed that in many household relatives' children stay. They are being brought up by maternal grandparents or uncles.

¹⁹At Durgabari tea estate the factory worker said to researcher that he is having three children. One day researcher went to his house. One girl child seems to be mentally retarded. When researcher enquired about her, he said they have consulted with private allopathic doctor. He prescribed some medicine but after some day they were unable to pursue the treatment. His youngest child is also a girl. When researcher asked about family history of the child, they could not say anything. Later on, when the child went to take bath, they said she is not their biological child. She has been adopted by them. Her mother who was maternal uncle's daughter of his wife died during child birth. There were no one to take this child. Even her own father declined to take her. So, they adopted her. The child does not know all this. Even researcher observed the way child was interacting with her adopted parents shows that they love her like their own child.

²⁰ In one family the male worker is having two wives. When his wife delivered a baby, her younger sister came to look after her. He and his sister- in- law fell in love and he married her. He is *tilla sardar*. His first wife is permanent worker and second wife is temporary worker. They have in total six children.

In another case the female worker's husband who also was worker of tea estate started live-in relationship with a widow woman. Initially his wife and children and their spouses were against of this relationship but after few years they accepted. Now he has divided his time with both, his wife and live-in partner (whom he calls his second wife). He stays in both houses.

From most of the houses two persons works in the Meghlibund tea estate. Both may be permanent, or one permanent, one temporary or both temporary. There are also families from which one member works in the tea estate. Only in three families three persons from each family works in the tea estate.

Some members of some families—mostly retired female, temporary female worker, adolescent girls who are not working at Meghlibund tea estate goes to other tea estates for work. Temporary workers go on Saturday as that day is weekly holiday in this tea estate for them. The workers of Durgabari tea estate get work throughout year.

VIII. Nature of workers employment

Table 4.7: Nature of workers employment (Meghlibund)

Sl no.	Nature of employment	Number of workers	%
1	Permanent	175	69.17
2	Temporary	74	29.25
3	Reemployed	4	1.58

Source: Compiled by researcher, 04/02/2019

There are 175 permanent workers in the tea estate. That comprises of 69.17% of total workforce. Temporary workers are 74. They consist of 29.25% of total workforce. Reemployed workers are four. Among them two worked as tilla babu before. One is acting as local manager of tea estate, another is tilla babu as well as clerk. Priest is also reemployed after his retirement.

Another worker whose documents has been misplaced by office staff and because of that he is not getting any retirement benefit also reemployed in the tea estate.

At Durgabari tea estate they provided total 231 workers list including office staff and sub-staff. There are seven executive board members. They are from workers or those who are getting some Honorarium from tea estate. Six persons are getting honorarium. The workers list they provided were of permanent workers list. When researcher asked about temporary workers list, they said they do not have temporary worker. If there are some temporary workers also, they

make them permanent within one year. But when researcher inquired at the labour line, she found out that there are temporary workers who are working there for four years or more. They are not employed as permanent worker. So, office staffs or secretary's version is not real about the nature of employment. The exact number of workers cannot be said as they hire worker from nearby "basti" or bring worker from another tea estate (Simnacherra tea estate, which the co-operative bought) when they need them especially in time of work load.

There is reemployed worker also. After retirement they were again taken to the co-operative. They get fixed monthly salary. Though this fact was not told by authority but when researcher talked with employees and workers, she came to know that some of the workers are reemployed. researcher does not have the correct data for that.

IX. Wages of worker

Workers' wages are fixed by the tripartite meeting between workers union, government and owners union. Wages of workers are 105 Rs/day. This wage is same for male and female workers, temporary and permanent workers.

The workers get 36 Rs extra wages if they can work six days a week and they get Rs4/day extra wages if they can work twenty days a month. They also get extra wages if they work overtime.

Women worker if they can pluck extra tea leaves after plucking 20 kg of tea leaves, they get extra wages of 5 Rs/kg of tea leaves.

Permanent workers have to contribute money to provident fund. They contribute 12% from their wage. The owner contributes 12%. The owner (caretaker, who has taken the tea estate on lease) of the Meghlibund tea estate is not contributing anything to the worker's provident fund. Now after retirement the permanent workers are suffering because they are not getting provident fund money, gratuity since 2013. Whereas the provident fund and gratuity are properly maintained and cleared by management of Durgabari tea estate. They all get their wages on Saturday.

Table 4.8: Salary of office staff and sub-staff of Meghlibund and Durgabari tea estates

Sl. no	Designation of office staff	Nature of employment (Meghlibund)	Salary/wages in Rs. /month (Meghlibund)	Nature of employment (Durgabari)	Salary/wages in Rs/month (Durgabari)
1	Acting local manager/ supervisor	Reemployed	7500	Permanent (supervisor)	18000
2	Field supervisor cum clerk	Reemployed	7000		
3	Clerk	Permanent	6300	Permanent	28000
4	Clerk	Temporary	3000	Permanent	7000
5	Factory supervisor	Does not have factory		Permanent	15000
6	Pharmacist	Does not have		Permanent	10000
7	Priest	Reemployed	300	Does not have	
8	Driver	Does not have		Permanent	8000

Sources: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

During field work researcher have observed that several times workers are not getting their wages on time at Meghlibund tea estate. Usually they get salary on Friday. They were getting

wages sometimes on Saturday or Sunday even on next week's Tuesday. One male reemployed worker gets 70 Rs/day as wage.

There are eighteen office staffs and sub staffs at Durgabari tea estate but researcher could only get six worker's interviews.

The factory workers if they work overtime, they get 26 Rs/hour overtime wages.

The table (4.8) shows difference between salary of office staffs, sub staffs of Durgabari and Meghlibund tea estate. There is huge difference between them. Though field workers salary is same but at Durgabari workers get more basic facilities than Meghlibund tea estate workers.

Bonus

Worker of Meghlibund gets bonus during Durgapuja. As the tea estate is running at a loss, they give less bonus to workers. In the year 2018 workers got 18% bonus.

Whereas workers of Durgabari gets bonus during Durgapuja and Holi. Bonus is given according to the profit by the tea estate and work done by the workers. It is divided in two phases, during Durgapuja once and Holi once. Workers of Durgabari got 45% bonus in these two occasions in the year 2018. The secretary said if they give bonus to workers, they do not have to pay huge tax. Before they used to give 20% bonus according to the salary of worker. They had to pay huge tax that time. According to the version of founder of co-operative when an officer from Delhi visited tea estate for inspection, he came to know about the profit of the tea estate and tax amount paid that time. He advised to give Ex-gratia to workers so that huge amount of tax can be exempted. That officer also said 'these are workers hard earned money; they will be happy if they get this money'. As bonus should not exceed 20% of employees' basic wages so rest of the amount management pay to workers as Ex-gratia. This year (2018) workers got 25% Ex-gratia.

X. Working hours of the workers

Usually there are two shifts duty. Morning shift starts from 7AM. Before that there is role call- 'matha gunti' of workers. After that they are assigned of their job. They go to their respective area of tea garden. Before work starts, they worship "*Patakhaori*" devi ²¹. The areas inside of

²¹ "Bana Devi" or forest goddess by offering leaves or a small branch of leaves to a particular tree or bushes. All the worker or accompanied person who goes to the tea garden area with workers has to offer puja by offering leaves. Every plot has a tree or a bush where workers offer puja. There is a big temple of "Patakhaori"-literally meaning 'female goddess who eats leaves' at Meghlibund tea estate near the lake. Every year there used to be a big puja and 'mela'- fair. Residents of nearby villages and locality irrespective of caste class gender attends that

tea gardens are marked as ‘numbers’ e.g. number 12, number 14, number 19 so on. Morning shift end at 12 noon. But workers usually reach home around 1PM. After taking lunch they go back for afternoon shift at around 2PM-2.30PM. This shift lasts till 5PM.



Pic 4.5: Patakhaori Devi (Left), Gram Devta puja (Right)

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2020

Male workers work from morning 7AM to till 2PM. Sometimes they finish their assigned work early. In that case they can come back early at home. Sometimes during weekly holiday if any male worker works in the garden, he can avail leave on other working day. But in case of Durgabari the male workers work two shifts.

During peak season the temporary workers get everyday work but during off season temporary workers get only four days’ work. During off season timings also changes. Work starts from 7AM and till 2PM. On Friday also workers work only one shift i.e. Morning shift. Workers of Durgabari tea estate works throughout year irrespective of their nature of employment.

During leave plucking season work starts as early as 5 AM. Women workers who wish to pluck extra tea leaves and work overtime they go early in the morning for plucking tea leaves. They work in three shifts. From 5AM to 7AM and again 8AM to 12noon and 2PM to 5PM. Only one or two does not go for early morning shift. One female worker said,

with enthusiasm. Now a days the ‘Patakhaori devi’ is associated with Goddess ‘Kali’. The ‘Patakhaori devi’ does not have any idol, but the temple now have an idol of ‘Goddess Kali’ along with the Tree. (Hinduisation/ acculturation to dominant religion/ culture)

'I do not go for early morning shift because of my health issue. I have severe gastric problem. Other people go but I cannot.' (female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018)

It is unwritten rule that during peak season women worker will go and pluck leaves early in the morning. So, most of the workers goes for plucking tea leaves. This year (2018) due to huge production male workers also plucked tea leaves for a certain period at Meghlibund tea estate.

During peak season temporary workers also works three shift or two shifts for whole week at Meghlibund tea estate.

Male sardars, '*paniwala*' - water bearer who carries water in the tea garden and supplies water to workers mainly female pluckers, also works two shifts. The night guards work at night. Their duty starts at 5PM and ends at 7AM.

Three office staff comes at morning 7AM, another office staff comes at 11AM at Meghlibund tea estate. They work till 6PM. They get lunch break from 1PM to 2PM. Office staffs of Durgabari tea estate comes at 10AM and their office hour ends at 5PM. They get 30 minutes lunch break. The Pharmacist comes early and leaves early.

The priest of the Meghlibund tea estate comes early in the morning and does puja in the Shiv Temple and leave. He also cooks at tea estates Bungalow when caretaker comes to visit the tea estate.

Workers of Meghlibund get payment (*talab/talap*) on Friday, so on Friday they work one shift i.e. morning shift (7AM to 2PM) and Durgabari tea estate workers get payment on Saturday.

So, working hour at both the tea estates are more or less same, except that of temporary workers. They get work at Durgabari tea estate throughout year but at Meghlibund they get full month work only at peak season and other time they work for four days a week.

XI. Family Income

Table: 4.9: Family income of workers (Meghlibund)

Sl No.	Income range in Rs.	No. of families	%
1	Less than 2000	2	1.15
2	2000-5000	119	68.39
3	5001- 10000	37	21.26
4	Above 10000	4	2.30
5	Not Available (NA)	12	6.90

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 08/02/2019

From the above table it can be seen that 1.15% of household is having less than 2000 monthly income which is very less. In the Meghlibund tea estate temporary workers get four days' work in off season. Rest three days they were not given any work in the tea estate. They do not get wages for those days. So, during mid of December month to almost mid of April they used to have only four days' work per week. Most of the families (68.39%) falls under 2000-5000 Rs category. Even priest (reemployed temporary worker) of the tea estate also have 3500 Rs family income. During Durga puja for five days puja he gets 1000 Rs. Other time only 300 Rs/month from the tea estate for performing daily puja at Shiva Temple. Some of families have 7000 Rs, 8000 Rs or 9000 Rs family income. Most of those workers male members of family work outside of tea estate as driver or mason. Two office staffs having family income in 7000-8000 Rs range. There are four (2.3%) families whose family income is more than 10,000 Rs. Among them two families are from office staffs and other two are from workers. One worker's family is joint family. Both mother-in-law and daughter in law works in the tea estate as temporary worker. But their male members of the family work outside of tea estate. So, they have around 15000 Rs income/month. The child of one son goes to private English Medium Nursery school (only English medium school in the locality). One office staff having 50000-60000 Rs family income/month. His family also joint family. Eldest brother of the family is local political leader. Two members of the family work at Government sector. They have land property also. Another

office staff having monthly income 25000 Rs. This family is nuclear family. Son is teaching in a private English medium school, and does tuition. The office staff gets pension other than salary from tea estate. They sell cow milk also.

At Durgabari tea estate researcher could not get the monthly family income of the workers. There they get work throughout the year. They do not have to sit without work during off season. Many of the workers family members work outside of the tea estate at Government sector, or other places as driver, mason. They even migrate to other place or other state in search of work and works there. They send money to home.²²

Study from Meghlipara tea estate of Tripura (Debnath and Debnath 2017) also shows that most of the workers falls under category of 2001-5000 Rs family income group (76%). Authors took 75 household from Meghlipara tea estate for the study. Less than 2000 Rs category is 8% in that tea estate but at Meghlibund it is 1.15%. In the category of 5001-10000 Rs, there are 11% families at Meghlipara tea estate whereas at Meghlibund tea estate it is 21.26%. At Meghlibund tea estate there are 2.30% families have more than Rs 10000 monthly family income but at Meghlipara this is 5%.

Another study from Bangladesh (Chowdhury, Hasan and Karim 2011) showed that average income of workers is 1000 to 5000 BDT (Bangladesh Taka). Bhowmik's (1996) study of Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai tea districts also showed that monthly average income of workers is 550 Rs.

XII. Facilities received by the workers from the management

Government of India to assure plantation workers welfare made a law named Plantation Labour Act-1951 and in Tripura there are Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954. These Act and Rules states certain security to plantation workers. The PLA-1951 and The Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954 has made some Amendments time to time for ensuring of better basic facilities to the workers. This PLA -1951 Act covers whole India except Jammu & Kashmir. Plantation labour Act covers plantation workers of tea, coffee, rubber, cinchona, cardamom. According to this Act workers are entitled to get housing, sanitation, safe drinking water, minimum wages,

²² The TB patient's elder son also works outside of state. He works at Pune, Maharashtra. After two three months he sends 6000-7000Rs at home. Another female worker two son works outside of tea estate. One son sends money at home. Another son just started to work so he cannot send money now. But in near future he will also able to send money at home.

canteen, recreation facilities, educational facilities, medical facilities, maternity benefit, creche, leave benefit etc. There are other facilities like protection from rain, cold, safeguarding from insecticides, pesticides and time to time monitoring who handle with toxic substance, insecticides etc. by health personnel.

According to PLA-1951 facilities workers entitled to get health facilities (provision of sanitation, safe drinking water and medical facilities) welfare facilities like canteen, crèche, recreation facilities, educational facilities for workers children, housing facilities under clause number 9 to 16. Other facilities like protection from heat and cold weather, protection from handling insecticide, chemicals and toxic substance comes under clause number 17.

Next section will deal with these facilities provided by both the tea estates—private and workers co-operative tea estate.

A. Health Facilities:

i. Sanitation



Pic 4.6: Drainage system at labour line of Meghlibund (Left) and Durgabari (Right) tea estate



Pic 4. 7: Management provided sanitary latrine at Durgabari tea estate



Pic 4.8: Government provided latrine at Meghlibund tea estate at some workers house under Swachh Bharat Mission.

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018

Table 4. 10: Sanitation (Meghlibund) 174 household

Sl no		Total number	%
1.	Having own toilet facility	138	79.31
2.	Using others toilet	16	09.20
3.	Sharing	2	1.15
4.	Open space	13	07.47
5.	River Bank	5	2.87

Source: compiled by researcher from field work, 4/09/2018

Sanitation facility of the Meghlibund tea estate is not adequate. Most of the families (79.31%) have own toilet facilities. Some are provided by Government under Swachh Bharat Mission

and some are built by the workers. Some uses others toilet (09.20%). Most of the residents of three small hamlets use others toilet or go to open space. One hamlet is just establishing and they do not have any facilities now. Residents of that hamlets goes for open defecation. They do not have water, sanitation and electric facilities. Though workers said they have given written application to panchayat but facilities yet to be addressed.

In Meghlibund hamlet some families go to river bank for defecation. In one case at Meghlibund two brother's family share one toilet. They are residing in same premises.

Management does not provide sanitation facility to workers. Where as in PLA 1951 has provision for providing sanitation facilities to workers. The drainage system of that area also is not adequate. Water due to rain or from houses usually drains to the adjacent low land area or nearby paddy fields. There are kutchra drains at every hamlet.

Small Children in the tea estate area defecate in open space usually near house. Some older persons also defecate in open space in spite of having toilet facilities. Interestingly one old lady said

“I never went to toilet in my life. I always prefer to go to open space. I don't eat much and I don't defecate much.” (An old lady, Meghlibund tea estate, 2018)

In contrast to that in Durgabari tea garden, which is run by a co-operative society, the toilet and drainage systems are provided by management. There are pucca drains throughout the labour line and the system is also well planned. Every household has their own toilet provided by co-operative society. Roads connecting one line to another line is either pucca or brick road. Everything is provided by management. This is in contrast with studies from most tea estates in the South Asian region where there is a paucity of safe sanitation and water supply facilities.

Study from Bangladesh (Chowdhury, Hasan and Karim 2011) also shown that sanitary condition was not proper and there is unavailability of the proper toilet facilities and workers do defecate in open. Studies from Assam, (Xaxa 1996) West Bengal (Bhowmik 1996; Rasaily 2003) also showed that sanitation facilities are not adequate. In South India this facility is better than Assam and West Bengal. (Kalam 1996).

ii. Water Supply:



Pic 4.9: Water facility at Durgabari Tea Estate big pond (management) (Left), Well (own) (Middle), pipe water (management) (Right)

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018



Pic 4.10: Water Facility at Meghlibund Tea Estate: Natural lake (inside tea estate) (upper left) Government provided tube well and pipe water supply at the premises of Anganwadi Centre (middle), Well (own) (upper right), own pond (lower left), own tube well (lower right)

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018

Table 4.11: Water Supply (Meghlibund) 174 household

Sl no.	Types of water supply available	Total number	%
1.	Only tube-well(own)	102	58.62
2.	Government tap water	24	13.79
3.	Others tube-well	16	09.20
4.	Well (own)	13	07.47
5.	Others tube-well and own well	5	02.87
6.	Own Well and government tap water	4	02.30
7.	Others well	4	02.30
8.	Tube-well and well (both own)	3	01.72
9.	Government well	1	0.57
10.	Government well and government tube well	1	0.57
11.	Tube-well and Pond	1	0.57

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work,2018

Management does not provide water supply at Meghlibund tea estate. When researcher went for pilot study, she has seen that workers collect money from every family for electricity bill and twice a day they run the pump. Once in the morning another time is in the evening. But when again researcher went back to field, she has observed that facility is no more operating

there. Most of the families (58.62%) now having own tube well for drinking water. Other sources of water are government provided tap water, which are near road, well and pond. Well is provided from management. Every year if any house is having well, management provides labour to clean the well if necessary. Otherwise they don't provide water supply facility. Government tap water (13.79%) are used by two hamlets where tube wells are situated near road. They collect water from that tap. Distance is more or less 500 meters. Those who get water from others well (2.30%) they do not have any type of water facilities in their house. Those households who are having both own tubes well and well (1.72%) are office staffs. One office staff is having tube well and pond (0.57%) both. Government well (0.57%) government well and tube well (0.57%) used by those families who does not have their water source. They collect water from the premises of Veterinary hospital. Those tube well and well are under the veterinary hospital authority. Water facility is provided by management at Durgabari tea estate. All over the hamlet there are water supply line and pucca slab. They provide water once in the morning. Again at 11am till 2pm. Again at 4pm if there is more workload in the garden. Otherwise they provide water twice daily. There are three big ponds, two near labour line. Another in front of guest house. Name of the guest house is "*Shyamali*". There is lake also. Some of the office sub staffs houses having well or tube well of their own other than management provided drinking water facility.

Studies from Bangladesh (Mazumder and Roy 2012; Pal and Hussain 2016) also showed that though management should provide drinking water supply to workers but there was inadequate supply of drinking water.

Water supply is better in tea estates of Assam (Xaxa 1996) but not adequate. In south India water supply is good comparing to Assam and West Bengal. (Kalam 1996).

iii. Medical facilities

There was an LMF-Licentiate Medical Faculty, doctor at Meghlibund tea estate. After his death another person worked there. After death of this person LMF doctor's son was recruited as doctor. But he did not have any degree. He had only a medicine shop. He worked for few years at the tea estate. Now there is no medical personnel at tea estate. There is a PHC (Primary Health Centre) near tea estate. This health Centre is just adjacent to the Dhakaiya para hamlet and one kilometre from Meghlibund hamlet. The PHC (commonly known as hospital in the

locality) is built on land of tea estate.²³ Meghlibund tea estate management has collaborated with a medicine shop at the market. Permanent workers get medicine from there. The workers have to submit their prescription along with bills to the management. Management reimburse the cost of the medicine. But the workers have to consult at government hospital otherwise they do not get cost of medicine.

When researcher asked workers whether they get medicine or not they said all the medicine which are prescribed at government hospital they do not get. Only few medicines they get.

“we do not get vitamin ‘files’”, (here vitamin suspension) workers said. But when researcher asked management, they said they get all medicine. When researcher interviewed medicine shop owner, initially he said that workers take all medicine which has been prescribed at Government hospital. When researcher probed him further, he said,

“Do not tell workers. They entitled to get all medicine but management pays only half amount for medicine. So, I distribute them half of the medicine of a prescription. The union leader knows that. Workers of Simnacherra tea estate get full reimbursement for medicine. That is run by workers co-operative.” (medicine shop owner, 2016)

Unfortunately, the medicine shop was burned by miscreants after declaration of Assembly poll result in the month of March 2018. The shop owner has different political ideology. So, it was difficult for the workers to get medicine for few weeks. The shop owner rented a nearby shop for time being and bought some medicine from city and started again.

There is a ‘dai’ at the Meghlibund tea estate. She has been recruited by the management. She gets 400 Rs per week. There is no recruited ‘Dai’ at Durgabari tea estate.

Workers get sick leave in case of illness. They get fourteen days leave in a year

There is a pharmacist²⁴ (55years) at Durgabari tea estate. He gives medicine for minor ailments to the workers.

²³ The owner of the Meghlibund tea estate donated the land to Government of Tripura. It has been said that the name of the PHC supposed to be put in memory of owner’s father’s name but later on Government named it in the name of village name.

²⁴ The pharmacist was working at TTDC run factory at Durgabari area. He was not getting salary regularly. He approached to Sudhamay Mazumdar. He recruited him in the tea estate. He also does clerical work in the office. He stays nearby Durgabari. He is working there for 16-17 years. He gets Rs10,000 salary. Initially he worked as temporary worker for 8-9 years, after that he became permanent worker.

There is a subcentre inside the tea garden. That subcentre is government subcentre. Homeopathic and Ayurvedic doctor comes there alternate day.

Management provides cost of all medicine if worker consult at government hospital. They get vehicle fare also for going to government hospital if patient is serious.

When researcher talked with secretary, he said that those who consult private doctor outside of state those workers also get some financial benefit but when she talked with workers, they said they have taken treatment outside of state but did not get any benefit. They got benefit only when they consulted at a government hospital. Temporary workers also get medicine at Durgabari tea estate.

iv. Maternity benefit

Women workers get ninety days (90 days) maternity leave with full pay. The leave is 1.5 month before and 1.5 month after delivery. This rule is not maintained now. Workers can take entire leave after delivery also. Temporary workers do not get leave. They have to take leave without pay. They have to inform the management about their child birth. When they return back to work management again recruits them as temporary worker. Secretary of the Durgabari tea estate said that at Durgabari tea estate workers gets maternity benefit even after two children also. Other tea estates provide maternity benefit only for two child birth but Durgabari tea estate does not follow that. Here workers get maternity benefit if they have more than two children also.

Younger generation of mothers of Durgabari tea estate prefer to go to government hospital or take biomedicine from doctors. In the group discussion elder women said their children were born at home. Delivery was conducted by 'dais'. Those 'dais' was mother, aunt, grandmother or neighbours. They said

"Now a days nobody wants to take risk. Who will take responsibility if something happens? There is difference between older time and present time. We send them to doctors. They go for delivery to hospital." (female worker, Durgabari, 13/12/2018)

Primary health Centre is around 2 km away, state hospital, medical college hospital is around 10-12 km away from the Durgabari tea estate. Agartala city is also 12 km away from the tea estate. So, when women get pregnant, they prefer to go to city. They consult at state hospital or medical college hospital where they get free treatment.

B. Welfare facilities:

i. Creche:



Pic 4.11: Creche: Meghlibund and Durgabari (both non-functional)

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018/2020

There was one creche at Meghlibund tea estate which had been run by an NGO- (CHETANA INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN STUDIES) in collaboration with Government of Tripura when researcher visited to tea estate during pilot study (10/06/2016). But when researcher went back during field work (2018) the creche was not functional. When she visited on 2016, one lady was there who used to take care of children. There were two women caretakers. They used to get 1000 Rs per month. There was one torn bamboo made mat, one dysfunctional water filter only in the room. Only 7-8 children were there. One girl was reading a rhyme from a class I book to others. During lunch time she used to bring some biscuits, cakes, bread from the nearby shop and provide to children. The woman who was attending them is class IV pass. She shared her problems with researcher. She was not happy with the salary. She used to get salary after 3-4 months. So, it was difficult for her to survive with this salary.

But most of the families keep their children in the family and family members or neighbours or “*chana padhri*”—children who takes care of younger child or babies in return of cash or kind, looks after the babies or children and takes care of them. When Anganwadi Centre is open children goes to Anganwadi Centre. There they stay from morning 7am till 10am. Older children goes to primary school and stay there from 7am to 10.30am. The children who are studying at higher or higher secondary school they go at 10.30am and come back around 4pm. So, for younger children during week days till 10.30am they used to be in school or Anganwadi Centre. Most of the children goes together in school. Anganwadi Centres’ are inside the hamlets so children can go by themselves.

Researcher heard there is a creche from government inside the Durgabari tea estate. When she went to visit that creche it was closed. The creche is not functional at Durgabari tea estate. Researcher has seen family members; neighbours takes care of younger children. Older children go to Anganwadi Centre, which is inside the labour line or to school which is one kilometre away.

Though there is a provision of providing creche for children while their mother is away at work but none of the tea estate has this provision. One permanent male worker said

“Cha gacher nichei janam, cha gacher nichei maran.” (born under tea bush, will die under tea bush) I was born under tea bush. My mother went for work and there she gave birth. Where shall they keep their children? They used to take us along with them and keep us under tea bush on a cloth. Sometimes some older children used to take care of us. In between mother used to come and feed us. Nobody cared whether ant or insect or snake had bitten us or not. We grew up like that. Now no one takes children at workplace. Situation has changed.” (male permanent worker, 45 years, Dhakaiya para, 2018).

Same version has been echoed by one of female worker from Durgabari tea estate. She also said,

“We used to take our children to workplace. We kept them under tea bush by making cradle with cloth and worked. We did not have time to see whether ant or insect has bitten them or not. There was no one at home to look after babies or children. There was no creche. Now things have changed a lot. Children go to school. Family members take care of small children and babies”. (female worker 58years, Durgabari, 2018).

It shows there were no creche before also and there was no one to take care the children also at home. Though there is no creche facilities there but now families have extended and many older men and women stay at home and takes care of their grandchildren.

Another retired worker also said,

“We were three brothers and two sisters. Our mother used to take us to work place. Older children used to sit with younger children. From time to time mother used to come and fed smaller children breast milk. All mothers had done that. Now that has changed. No one takes children to work place.” (Male retired worker 60 years, Durgabari, 2018).

Even in Jaya Goala's novelette "*Parbatiya*" (Goala 1997, p.10) echoed the same story of child rearing by women workers of Natingcherra tea garden. They had to take children or babies along with them to tea garden and "*chana-padhri*"-baby seater, used to go with them for looking after the baby.

ii. Recreation facilities:

They do not have any separate room for recreation at privately owned tea estate. When owner was alive that time, they used to get football for playing. Workers even participated in tournaments and won. But now these are not performed. During Durgapuja they used to perform plays. Now that also has been stopped. Researcher has seen in the hamlets that youngsters play carrom. That carrom board is provided by Panchayat.

There is one big room at Durgabari tea estate. There workers children learn song, dance and other cultural activities. Workers also participate in those activities. There are teachers also to teach children and other workers. The workers co-operative has their own "*Jhumur*" dance troupe. They participate at different cultural function in the state. At *Simnacherra* tea estate which is owned by Durgabari workers co-operative tea estate also has one teacher for teaching them songs and dance. That female teacher is also from tea workers. They mainly teach them in "*chilomilo*" language.



Pic 4.12: Anganwadi centres (Left and middle) and Government School (Right) at tea estates

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018

iii. Education: 253 nos.

Table 4.12: Education (Meghlibund)

Sl.no		No. of workers	%
1	Illiterate	29	11.46
2	Anganwadi	5	01.98
3	Class I-V	68	26.88
4	Class VI-X	44	17.39
5	Class XI-XII	3	01.19
6	Graduate	0	0
7	Can sign name only	103	40.71
8.	Others	1	0.39

Source: compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

There are no graduates among workers in the tea estate. Children of some workers are now going to college and getting degrees. Among workers children there are two girls who studied till college.²⁵ Three boys are there who are college students now²⁶.

²⁵ One is graduate now. She wants to study farther but her parents said it's not possible for them to support her financially anymore. The university is in city and they cannot afford to send her there and provide her financially.

²⁶ (two urang, one panoria) When researcher went to one house for interviewing one students' mother, she saw him at home. So, researcher asked him why he has not gone to college that day. His mother is permanent worker. He has two younger sisters. His mother is widow. In reply he said he stayed back at home so that he could work on land. They cultivated some vegetables there and that needs to be care of at that time otherwise those vegetables will destroy. So, he will work for two or three days. After that he will go to college again. His younger sisters are in class X. They got cycle from school as they are ST.

In another case a boy is there who studied till college but could not appear final examination due to financial constraint. He recently got a job in a private company. He said when he was in class eight (VIII) his father could not buy books for him. When previous owner came to know this, he provided books and dress for him.

Most of the worker (40.71%) can only sign their name. They have learnt to sign their name from other persons. When researcher asked them, they said they learnt from “Bandhan” bank²⁷ officials. Those people when come to collect money from worker for recovery of loan taken by worker, they taught them to sign their name. So, they actually cannot write or read, they can only sign their name.

In category of class XI to XII there are only three persons (0.1.18%). All of them are office staffs.

In another category there is one person. He is the oldest (85 years old) worker in the tea estate. He was working there since he was 16 years old as a temporary worker. Later on, he served as tilla sardar, a permanent worker.²⁸

Some workers studied up to class I-V (26.88%). There are several causes for lower level of education among the workers of tea estates.²⁹ Students and their families has to compromise

²⁷ A private sector bank which started at Kolkata in the year 2001 as not-for-profit enterprise. On 23rd August, 2015 it started its operation as Bandhan Bank. Founder of Bandhan Bank is Mr. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh. The bank provides microloans for livelihood creation. They give loan to Women self- help groups or women to empower women through sustainable livelihood creation.

²⁸ *“at the age of 7-8 years I saw my paternal grandparents were working in this garden. I was born here. When I was 16 years old, I started to work as temporary worker. That time rate was 2 aanna (Hazira—daily wages). Now I get 70 Rs as daily wage. All others get 105Rs as daily wage but I get less. I do not know why. Maybe I cannot do heavy work.” (male re-employed temporary worker, Meghlibund, 16/05/2018)*

After retirement he did not get any pension benefit due to fault of an office staff.

“the ‘x’ (name of the office staff) had lost my papers. He had done many mischiefs with papers of many people. He was in charge of PF (provident fund). Now I have given some papers to ‘M’ (name of a local political leader). I have to make all those papers okay” (male re-employed temporary worker, Meghlibund, 16/05/2018)

It has been told in the hamlet that he knows everything about the tea estate. He knows about the area of the tea estate. All other staffs take his help for demarcation of area. Even present caretaker of the estate also takes his help regarding this matter. He even could demarcate different “number” (small plot of area demarcated to know the exact location inside the tea garden) accurately. When researcher asked about his education, he said he does not remember.

²⁹ After abduction of previous owner, the tea estate was closed down. Many of present worker that time left school in search of livelihood or to support their families. During pilot study in the tea estate when researcher inquired and asked to male panchayat member while they were casually chatting about the tea estate than he said,

“When our ‘malik’ was kidnapped and murdered we became guardian less. Tea estate was shut down. I was studying then. There was no food at house. There was no work. We had to starve. How could we pursue our study? If there is no food in your stomach how will you study? (‘pete vaat na thakile pohribo kemne’)” (panchayat member and permanent worker of tea estate, Meghlibund, pilot study, 2017).

with that. Main factor is the financial factor. There are three Anganwadi Centres in two hamlets of Meghlibund tea estate. Other two hamlets have Anganwadi Centre a bit far from those hamlets. One primary school is there in the Meghlibund hamlet, another high school is there, which have primary section also just adjacent to another hamlet. That land was donated by the tea estate owner. Most of the children goes to that school. It is one kilometre from the Meghlibund hamlet. Some of the children goes to another higher secondary school which is one and half kilometre from Meghlibund hamlet and from other hamlets (Bhajatilla and Natuntilla) one or one and half kilometre. That school also have primary section. Another primary school is also there which is in the market. But most of the students prefer to go to higher and higher secondary school. There is also one private run English medium school which is having nursery and primary section. Two families send their child to that nursery. (aspiration, colonial continuity)

One worker said he sent his son to that English medium school but later on could not continue due to financial constraint so he shifted his son to Bengali medium school. On observation it was seen that quality of education is better in Bengali medium school. All those Bengali medium schools are run by government.

Whereas at Durgabari tea estate there are one female and male teacher from workers family who gives tuition to children of workers. They get 140 Rs per day. They are enlisted as permanent workers. Primary school is one kilometre away from the labour line. Other secondary and higher secondary schools are within three to five kilometres away. There are workers who studied till higher secondary.³⁰

In another incident one boy stopped going to school. When researcher asked her mother, who is permanent worker about that she said

“He was sick for few days. When he attended school, teacher told him to bring leave application. He did not take. Though he started to go school. But he started bunking school. We go for work early in the morning. How will we know whether he is going to school or not? His teacher repeatedly asked for leave application.” (mother of the student, Meghlibund, 2018)

One female worker said her son appeared in Madhyamik examination but could not pass. She was telling

“We cannot afford to have private tuition for our children. So, he started working so that he could save some money. Next year he will appear again. This year he did not appear.” (one female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

³⁰ Factory supervisor worker studied till higher secondary. There are many who has taken education and now are working in Government sector, state as well as central. One girl who is daughter of a worker she is serving as

Studies from Bangladesh (Mazumder and Roy 2012; Chowdhury, Hasan and Karim 2011) also showed that most of the workers are illiterate, 59.68% and 65-80% respectively. In both the studies showed that Primary education level is 37.09% and 20-35% respectively. Secondary (2.42%) and more than secondary (.081%) education level is very low among tea garden workers. (Mazumder and Roy 2012)

Even in India study from Assam showed that level of education was very low as 81.85% people did not have formal education, about 6% had primary education and 13% had secondary and higher secondary education (Xaxa 1996). Bhowmik's study of North Bengal's tea district also observed that most of the household heads were illiterate (49%). From the sample households 74% in Terai, 43% in Darjeeling and 38% in Dooars were illiterate. (Bhowmik 1996).

Khaswas study from North Bengal also showed same scenario of education among tea garden workers. Education level in tea garden workers were not good as 55% had studied elementary level, but less than 15% studied up to secondary level and less than attended in higher secondary level. (khaswas 2005).

inspector under state government. She got her job through state public service commission. Many male members of workers family work in central or state government army or paramilitary force.

iv. Housing:



Pic 4.13: Different type of housing and wall decoration by workers at Meghlibund tea estate

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018/2019



Pic 4. 14: Management provided housing at Durgabari Tea Estate

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018/2019

174 household

Table 4.13: Housing (Meghlibund)

Sl no.	Types of housing	Total number	%
1	Kutcha	155	89.08
2.	Semi Pucca	19	10.92

Source: compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

Most (89.08%) of the houses are *kutchha* at private owned tea estate. The lands in most of the cases are of estate property. There is an unwritten rule that after retirement also the worker will be able to reside on the same land but will not get ownership of the land. According to PLA an employee has to leave quarter after retirement. Usually one of the family members get job in the tea estate. Previous owner started building semi *pucca* quarter for the workers. Only four quarters were built by the previous owner before his abduction by the militant. After that no one took initiative to build other quarters. So, families stay in houses made by them. Most of the houses have mud wall and tin roof. In one household usually they have two rooms. Management provides “*chhan*” (locally available straw) and bamboo to build house. The workers usually built kitchen with those material. Another separate big room they built for staying. That big room usually made of mud wall and tin roof or “*chhan*” roof having veranda in front or sometimes three sides. That big room usually divided into two or three small rooms by giving partition. These rooms are built by workers. Wages of labour are provided by management to build management provided houses. Those labourers were from workers. They were given same wages what they should have got if they would have worked in the estate that day. This wage is very less compared to the market rate where usually a labour for constructing house gets more wages. Management provided houses are not adequate for workers. One “*ojha*” whose wife is a “*dai*” of the estate said

“What management provides for housing is not adequate. They give only straw and bamboo. During rain roof started to leak. If whole night we have to shift our bed from this place to that place how will we sleep? If we cannot sleep at night and we have to shift our bed from one place to another how will we work at day? We can’t sleep at day time, if cannot sleep at night also how will we work?” (“dinko ghum nai, rat ko o nai, kam koribo kemne”) (*ojha of the tea estate, Meghlibund, 10/06/2016*)

They decorate the wall by painting with different colour mud. All houses are neat and clean.

Many of them keep their livestock in the same room where they sleep by giving a partition of bamboo or half partition by mud wall. Even patients suffering from contagious diseases sleep

in same room along with others.³¹ Tuberculosis patients also are sharing same room.³² In one case they made a partition of bamboo in the room. One side the patient is living and another side his daughter and wife are living. When researcher asked don't, they know that the disease is highly contagious? They said they know,

“His utensils, cloths are separate. Everything is separate. He even sleeps separately. We have made a partition in the room. He sleeps at other side. We do not have extra room to provide”
(wife of the Tuberculosis patient, Meghlibund, 3rd March, 2018)

The materials provided by management is not adequate for the temporary workers of the tea estate if they do not have other provision of earning.³³

When researcher was in field there was thunderstorm in that area. Many of the management provided houses were destroyed due to storm. In the field researcher have seen that some workers are building pucca houses. When researcher inquired, she came to know that they have got this under Indira Awaas Yojana (now Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana) from government. The fund is given in the bank in the name of beneficiary in two instalments. Even under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Mission people are getting toilets. Researcher found that some mud wall houses were destroyed. When she asked to an elderly lady how it happened. She said

³¹ There is a case where two children were suffering from chicken pox also sharing same room along with parents and another small sibling.

³² He was worker of the tea estate. Recently he retired but yet to get benefit from tea estate. His wife is also a permanent worker of the tea estate. They have one daughter and one son.

Another Tuberculosis patient who is temporary worker of tea estate is also suffering from the diseases. Both cases are relapse cases. He also shares same room along with his family. He is 25 years old. His wife is temporary worker and his mother is permanent worker of the tea estate. They have two small daughters. His mother sleeps in another room. But others sleep in same room which is small. Even kitchen is also attached with the room. They don't even have any partition inside the room. They too are aware of the fact that he should be separated from others but they do not have any provision for that.

³³ One family only has one single room made of bamboo and straw. The female is temporary worker of the tea estate. This room is provided to her mother-in-law who is permanent worker of the tea estate. She has allowed them to stay in that room and she is sharing another room along with her another son. They have two children. During rain the roof leaks. In the same room they cook also. Among all other workers their condition is worst. Her husband is daily wage labour but most of the time he does not get work.

“If you do not have proper roof your house will fall like this. There were no proper roof and we do not have means to buy so gradually due to water seepage during rain it destroyed. Management was late to provide materials.” (An old lady, Meghlibund hamlet, May, 2018)

Even this time (2018) also workers were worried whether they will get housing material or not from management. Because before rainy season they used to get materials but this time management did not buy materials from market.

Durgabari co-operative society tea estate provides housing to workers. Housing facilities are better than Meghlibund tea estate. Previously houses were made of mud wall and “chhan” or tin roof. Now co-operative society is providing semi pucca houses to workers. Many of the workers got this facility. Those who has not got they are enlisted. Researcher has observed that ten new houses are being constructed. Workers who came recently to tea estate for work they are getting houses with tin material. Roof and wall both are made of tin. Those will be replaced by semi pucca houses in near future. There are no bamboo walled houses at the Durgabari tea garden. Temporary workers also get houses from the tea estate. Some of the workers living in one room housing. Persons suffering from contagious diseases share same room along with other family members.³⁴

Here in both tea estates workers know that tuberculosis is contagious but still due to financial constraint they are living in one room housing jeopardizing and compromising other family members health.

Recently, before assembly election, previous government (Left Government) decided to give land ownership where they live, to the tea workers in the state.

There were kitchen gardens for workers at Meghlibund tea estate but some are fertile land and some are tilla land which are not that productive. They have to do irrigation to produce something. So many times, those lands remain barren. Those land which are near stream or

³⁴ One tuberculosis patient, 45years old, was there. He is temporary worker. His wife is also temporary worker. They have two children. One son is working at Pune, another is studying. They also reside in management provided housing. There is one room, one kitchen which are provided by management. Both the rooms are tin made. They made one room for keeping cattle. All are attached having partition of tin. The patient was residing in the same room giving a partition in the room. His wife and son were sleeping another side. They know that this is contagious. He was wearing musk till he became sputum negative. His utensils were kept separate. Still he stays at another part of the room. They could not build another room due to financial constraint.

have facility to irrigate they cultivate on those land. Mainly seasonal vegetables and little amount of rice cultivation is done on those land.

In Durgabari there are no land for workers to cultivate. Some of the family members of workers works as share croppers outside of the tea estate. Even some temporary workers also work outside as share cropper. Otherwise some of the houses have their own kitchen garden and livestock.

Study from Bangladesh also (Mazumder and Roy 2012) showed that workers stay in mud wall and straw roofed houses. As mentioned before that the private owned tea estate is adjacent to the Bangladesh and many of them came from those area and locally available housing materials are mud and “*chhan*”. So, it seems management ignored to build *pucca* houses for the workers, except in one occasion when previous owner started to build semi *pucca* houses before his abduction.

But studies from Assam (Xaxa 1996) showed that in different tea gardens housing facilities are different. In Jorhat most of the houses are *kutcha* but in Dibrugarh most of the houses are *pucca*. Even studies from West Bengal ((Bhowmik 1996) showed that in Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri districts tea estates of Terai and Dooars region all houses are *kutcha*. There also they reside in same household as another person from same household gets job in the tea estate. In South India in Coimbatore and Nilgiri most of the houses are *pucca* except few in Coimbatore where some houses have mud floor. (Kalam 1996).

In spite of PLA1951 housing condition of workers are not according to the provision. In South India workers has to leave quarters or return the key to the management just after retirement otherwise their gratuity and provident fund is withheld by the management. Only permanent workers get quarters or housing facilities temporary workers do not get that facility. In Meghlibund also housing materials are not provided to temporary workers. Only permanent workers get those facilities. If “*chhan*” is not available or not adequate sometimes management gives polyethene sheet as roof material.

v. Electricity:**Table 4.14: Electricity (Meghlibund) 174 household**

Sl no.			% of household
1	No. of household having govt provided electricity	97	55.75
2.	No. of household Using hook line	64	36.78
3.	No. of household Do not have electricity	12	06.90
4.	No. of household Using both govt provided electricity and hook line	1	0.57

Source: compiled by researcher from field work ,2018

In this table it can be seen that most of the houses (55.75%) use government provided electricity. In second comes the houses (36.78%) who use hook line for getting power supply. Some households (06.90%) do not have electricity. They cannot use hook line also. One house uses both. His house is near the two phases of electricity post. When there is power cut, he uses hook line from other line.

Workers easily said that they use hook line for electricity consumption. Mainly the new hamlet does not have electricity facilities. They cannot even use hook line due to distance from main road and electric post. Those who are using government provided electricity they have meter and every month one man comes and take the reading. He also collects money. He also takes grievances regarding this matter.

The management of Meghlibund tea estate does not provide electricity to workers whereas the workers co-operative provides electricity to its workers. The electricity bill also is being paid by the management. The management provide one ceiling fan to every workers household.

In the study of south India (Kalam 1996) in every house there were electricity supply and management collect bill. But in others states it was not mentioned.

vi. Fuel

The workers of the Meghlibund tea estate collect firewood from the forest. They sometimes collect branches of tea bush which were cut down after tea leaves has been plucked. Only office staffs have gas stove, chullah or electric heater. All workers use firewood only. They collect firewood on Saturdays mainly. That day they get holiday. Women workers, girls go to forest for collecting firewood. Very rare cases male workers also collect firewood. Usually for collecting firewood they go in a group. They carry that firewood on their head.

Workers of Durgabari get one gas cylinder per month. For that they have to have gas connection and card otherwise they do not get gas cylinder. These gas connections are from private or co-operative companies. There is a condition for getting gas cylinder from management. The worker has to work twenty days a month. Otherwise they do not get gas cylinder that month. Secretary said they consider 3-4 days, less working days generally than the given time. Workers who does not have gas connection they use firewood for cooking. Those workers also collect firewood from nearby jungle.

C. Other facilities provided by management

Other than above mentioned facilities workers of private owned tea estate get ration from management. They get 3kg 266gm flour (Atta)/person/week from management. They get ration for dependent children also.

Workers of Durgabari do not get ration, instead that is given in cash along with wages. They get 25Rs/day/person for ration and for dependent 12Rs/day/person. Dependent ration money is given for children till 18 years of age, but girls get till they get marry. Management does not withdraw dependent ration if dependent is a student, otherwise management tell them to work if they attain 18 years of age and are not a student. Office staffs and their dependents also get ration money from tea estate.



Pic 4. 15: Workers using *Chapi/Patla* during rainy season while plucking

Source: Clicked by manager of a tea estate

Every two years interval workers get one rough blanket during winter. Women workers get “*chapi/patla* (a round big hat made of bamboo and leaves or polyethene sheet for rainy season).

Women workers get two ‘*pati gamcha*’ –long piece of cloth, one black and one white for carrying and keeping plucked tea leaves.

During Bengali New Year every worker’s family gets 500gm of fish from the management. There is a big lake in the tea estate. They get fish from that lake. During Durga puja workers get 250gm of processed tea from management. Meghlibund tea estate does not have factory now, so they buy tea from other tea estates.

Workers of Durgabari tea estate during Durgapuja and Holi get one-kilogram fish from management. There are two big ponds and lake inside the tea estate. They also get 500gm of tea from management. Other than every year the workers get different types of household items. One year they got steel almirah, another year they got utensils etc. Those who has contributed their land and permanent worker they get more benefit than the temporary workers.

Workers of Meghlibund tea estate said they used to get musk, gloves and boots from management for spraying medicine to tea plantation. The worker used to feel suffocating wearing musk. So many of them stopped wearing those. Now they do not get those. But young male workers feel that they should wear something while spraying medicine. They cover their face and head by a piece of cloth.

When researcher asked to workers of Durgabari tea estate whether male workers get anything from management during spraying of insecticide. They said they did not get. Even factory workers also do not use any safety measure. Here also workers are covering their head and face during spraying of medicine to tea plantation.

During funeral workers of Meghlibund tea estate gets firewood for burning the dead body. They cut down a tree or branches of tree from tea estate area by taking permission from management.

According to PLA-1951 workers should get safety measure from the management but here in both the cases safety measures are not given to the workers.

Workers who handles insecticides, pesticides their health records also are not kept by management.

XIII. Facilities from Government

One interesting facts researcher came to know from workers of Durgabari that they do not get facilities from government. Workers said that,

“Government does not give anything to workers of Durgabari. They always say ‘you are getting all benefits from the Durgabari workers Co-operative society so there is no necessity to give you’”. (workers of Durgabari tea estate,2018)

One worker also said to his fellow workers, *“have you ever heard anyone from Durgabari tea estate getting any benefit from Government?” (male worker, Durgabari, 2018)*

Whereas at Meghlibund tea estate researcher has observed that pucca latrine and pucca housing are sanctioned in the name of workers. Beneficiaries of these built houses and latrines with that money provided by government.

Data collected from the Anganwadi centres of both the tea estates showed that elderly women, destitute women, widows, unmarried women, differently abled (blind) workers getting social security benefit from government. They are getting seven hundred Rupees per month. The amount used to be deposited in the bank account of beneficiaries. Recently (2019) this amount has been increased to one thousand rupees per month.

XIV. Food security



Pic 4.16: Water body product workers collect as food

Source: Clicked by researcher, 2018

A. Ration card: Public Distribution System

Table 4.15: Ration Card (Meghlibund) 174 household

Sl no.	Ration card	Number of families	%
1	Have ration card	150	86.20
2	Have not ration card	14	08.05
3	Share ration card with other family	10	05.75

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 11/09/2018

At Meghlibund tea estate most of the workers household are having ration card. They collect from nearby centres. Distance of these ration shops varies from 500 meter to 1.5 km. They collect rice (5kg/person/month), kerosene oil (1lit./month), salt (amount is not available). Salt does not available regularly so when it is available card holder takes 2-3 kg. So exact amount

per month what they are getting they could not say. Atta is provided in the PDS shop but they do not collect it because they get Atta from management. Before PDS used to provide sugar but now stopped. Recently (2019) government started providing dal (musur dal) and tea at PDS shop. In the month of August 2019 government started providing tea at PDS shop. Most of the time male members of the family collect articles from ration shop either by bicycles or carry on shoulder or hand. When female collect ration, they carry on their shoulder. Before one person could collect other persons ration by showing ration cards. So, family members or extended family members could go and collect on behalf of others. Now after digitalization and introducing AADHAR card and matching of fingerprint it become impossible to collect others ration from shop. The ration card holder or one of the family members has to go and match the finger print for collecting ration. For this reason, many started complaining about this system. They are telling that *“how come we always go for collecting ration leaving our work. We get holiday only on Saturday. On that day items may not be there. So, we cannot collect on time.”*

There are some households who do not have ration card (08.04%). One of the workers said that he applied but yet to get. He said that he could not go on time and inquire about the processing of the card so he does not know the status. Sharing ration cards (05.75%) are those families who recently separated and formed new household. Like son or younger brother after marriage have separate household but their name is in the same ration card when they were in a joint family. So, they share the items of PDS. One elderly lady was saying that

“My son is married. His name is still in the ration card. They do not have separate ration card. Their kitchen is separate but they take items from this ration card. He is my son. I cannot tell him not to take. So, we both families share our items.” (Kumari Munda, permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

In another case two brothers share ration card. They take items at alternate month. Some of the household elderly mother shares the card. Their son bring items and gives to them also.

The workers of Durgabari tea estate does not get ration from management. They get PDS from government. Instead of ration from management they get money for ration. The ration shop is

one km away from labour line. There are some cases who are not getting ration due to unavailability of ration card.³⁵

B. Livestock: Meghlibund: 174 household

Table 4.16: Livestock

Sl no.	Livestock	No. of household	%
1	Have	143	82.18
2	Have not	31	17.82

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 11/09/2018

Almost all the families of Meghlibund tea estate (82.18%) have livestock. Workers of Durgabari tea estate also rear livestock. These are hen, cock, cows, goat, pigs, ducks. They own them or they rear them on sharing basis. If it is sharing than if after birth of calves the calves can be sold and half of the money along with cow or goat will be taken by the owner. The owner can extend the deal as long as he/she wishes. In case of hen the chicks will be divided in two halves after certain period of time they were born. In this case also the owner can end the deal or extend the deal.

The livestock is helpful during their financial crisis. They sell those to overcome the crisis. Not only financial crisis livestock serves as nutrition to the workers.³⁶

³⁵ One female worker said she has given for ration card but still to get. She thought researcher is some official personnel from government. So, she asked her to inquire about that. Researcher explained her role and for what purpose she was visiting them. Another worker said they still could not transfer their ration card from other district where they were residing before. So, every month one of the family member goes there and collect the items from there. Sometimes their relative collects from ration shop and keep for them. In their convenient time they go and bring ration from relative's house. When researcher asked why are not, they transferring ration card here at Durgabari. They said it takes time and they have to go to office for several days. At Durgabari they get weekly holiday only on Sunday which is also holiday for other government offices.

³⁶One of the Tuberculosis patient's mother said she sold the cow for giving her son proper care during his disease.

"What for these are (referring cow)? My son comes first. I sold my cow. Medicines are supplied from hospital but not food. You need to take good food for your strength. Otherwise only taking medicine will not cure you. by

XV. Why workers co-operative is more successful than private owned tea estate?



Pic 4.17: Tea flower (Left), tea fruit for seed (middle), tea tree (for producing seed) (Right)

Source: Clicked by researcher 2018/2019

Facilities provided to workers by the Durgabari tea estate workers co-operative Society Limited is better than the Private owned Meghlibund tea estate. Though none of the tea estate could follow PLA 1951 or The Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954 but workers co-operative could provide better social security to its workers. When the question asked to Durgabari tea estates employee and workers the founder said that “honesty and transparency” about finance and other matters related to co-operative. The privately-owned tea estates think about only profit not about workers but as Durgabari tea estate is a worker’s co-operative, workers know what is better for them and all the profit is spend on welfare of workers or tea estate. Other reasons are:

selling this cow I bought fruits, milk, meat/fish for him throughout his treatment. This way I saved my son.” (women permanent worker, Dhakaiya para, 2018)

In one incidence researcher has observed that one worker after coming from work she saw the vegetables she cooked were eaten by rat or some creature. After seeing this she threw the vegetables. But she was in a hurry to go back for afternoon shift. So, she prepared omelettes and fed her children, husband and ate herself. She said,

“look, I have hens. They lay eggs. I have small children. I need to give them eggs. But sometimes it helps when no vegetables are there to prepare”. (female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018)

In another case the worker had small poultry farm business. His daughters and son were studying in college and school. This small business was helping his children education. But he met with an accident. That time he sold those hens for his treatment.

So, workers keep livestock for various purposes.

1. **New tea bushes:** The co-operative initially established in 1935, but after demise of its owner the plantation was almost destroyed. When co-operative was established there was need to plant new tea saplings. Some of the workers also contributed their land for that to enlarge the plantation area. Usually production from new tea bush is more. As tea bush ages the production rate decreases. In 1978 new tea saplings were planted so ages of new tea bushes are only forty years old. the tea bushes at privately owned tea estate is old and for long time those has not been replaced.
2. **Higher type of tea bushes:** Usually tea saplings are developed from the seeds. There are areas in every plantation where tea trees are allowed to grow and seeds are collected from those trees for new saplings. But at Durgabari the founder activist had send his nephew to Assam (Tocklai Tea Research Institute)³⁷ for learning the method of budding of tea bush. He took training there and after coming back applied that on the plantation. These type of tea bushes gives more tea leaves and production increased. Though this type of tea bush consumes more water because the roots are not deeply rooted under the ground and needs more care than tea bush developed from seeds but production rate increases. This type of tea bush can be planted in one's courtyard also. This gave idea of small tea growers who can plant tea bush in a limited land area. Tea bushes at privately owned tea estate is developed from seeds. Once the management tried to introduce higher type of tea bush but due to lack of proper training of workers and care the initiative did not succeed. The tea bush develops from seeds grow deeper inside earth and does not need more water to survive and easy to take care. Due to this later on management drop that idea of planting new type of tea bush. They did not even bother to send someone to get training of that. They hired trained personnel from outside who only gave instruction and went back according to workers of tea estate.
3. **Compact tea bushes, there is no scattered tea bushes:** Tea bushes at Durgabari are compacted one. There is no scattered tea bush like Meghlibund tea estate where in many places' tea bushes are scattered.
4. **Better irrigation system than other privately-owned tea estate:** The founder had himself took initiative to find ground water. According to the narratives of the older workers that he showed government officials that borewell can be done in that area.

³⁷ Tocklai Tea Research Institute. It was established in 1911. The institute is near the river Tocklai at Jorhat. Initially there was a laboratory and two bungalows which were funded by the Tea Industry and subsidised by national government of India and state of Assam and Bengal. This is largest and oldest tea research institute in world.

There is irrigation system throughout the plantation whereas the privately-owned tea estate depends on well water or rain water or in some areas pipe water. If there is less rain tea growers face difficulty in irrigating tea plantation (*'Secher obave somoshyay khhudra cha baganguli'*, 'Dainik Sambad', 53rd year, Issue:297, 31st August, p.8)

5. **Timely applying of manure:** The co-operative tea estate buys and apply manure on time whereas researcher had observed that the acting manager of privately owned tea estate was struggling to get manure from owner on time. He had asked for manure but that had not reached on time and workers were complaining about that.
6. **Insecticide spray:** The co-operative tea estate every year sprays insecticide. The manager of the privately-owned tea estate showed to researcher that one type of insect attacked the tea bushes but till that day no insecticide was sprayed due to unavailability. Insecticides is sprayed in those areas where necessity is more whereas at Durgabari the workers come and take the cylinder and sprays throughout the plantation.
7. **Unity among workers:** Workers of Durgabari are united. Even researcher felt that on several time. Once one old retired worker was complaining about not getting pucca house till date. But his wife, who is also worker of tea estate said to researcher not to pay attention of that talk. She was telling 'we will get on next lot. At one time how management will give to all workers? This time ten families got next time our name will be on list'. This had been supported by other workers also who were present there. Even if there are some displeasure also but workers do not show or reveal those to outside and try to resolve those matters with in the tea estate. This is not the case of privately-owned tea estates. The workers clearly express their displeasure and sometimes agitate against management. (case of Luxmilonga, Tufanialonga, Mahabir tea estates. Chapter: 6)
8. **Collective conscience among workers:** There is not only unity among workers but also a sense of collectiveness works in them. They feel that whatever they do they should do it collectively together for betterment of tea estate. There is question of livelihood. Those workers who struggled at initial period they feel that because of the founder member and collective works done by all of them they could sustain those hard time and living a better life now. This can be seen in their social life too. They care for each other in time of need. The young mother can leave her toddler in care of neighbours while she goes for work.
9. **Sense of ownership of tea estate:** The co-operative gave workers have a sense of ownership. The worker can be a worker at the same time they can be member of

executive body and in decision making position. This position and power other privately-owned tea estate's worker does not get. When they interact with other workers of tea estate, they feel proud of that and also reflects in their attitude also. They can proudly say 'This is our garden. If we do not work for this garden who will work?' Researcher even encountered at several time when she came across girls' who were married to other tea estates, that girls' in-law's family feel proud to introduce their daughter- in- law from 'Durgabari tea estate'.

10. **Better management than other tea estates and transparency in management:** The founder of the tea estate said that, 'we keep transparency within ourselves and workers.' Whatever is earned by tea estate all these are shared with workers. The loss, profit, problems and solution too. Money matter is dealt by workers. The founder only takes honorarium from tea estate. According to him, 'I do not touch money. Its workers money. They have full authority on that. After initial struggle period when tea estate was gaining profit there was meeting how to handle monetary matter. That time people asked me what shall I take? I said to them whatever you feel right you give me. Workers and executive body decide how much they will pay me. Other monetary matters are handled by workers.'

Researcher had observed that at the factory a worker (supervisor of factory) was paying weekly payment to workers. He was keeping records too. Workers also after calculating their working day and amount of payment they will get were signing the record book. Another factory worker who was also President of executive body (2018) showed researcher the packaging section and narrated when factory will remain close and how workers will take care of all the instruments during that period, other workers assigned works for next few months when there will not be leaves to pluck (off season according to worker-mid December to mid-April) etc. It seems all are well planned. But privately-owned tea estates workers are not in a position to decide their future work. During off season temporary workers does not get work every day so they had to think alternative source of income. Even permanent workers are struggling to meet their need so they sometime secretly try to earn extra money by taking other works outside of tea estate.

Conclusion

In this chapter we brought out characteristics of two tea estates representing different ownership forms that were set up in the background of varied political situations. The facilities workers get from government as well as management also varies widely. The two-tea estate of different ownership has been taken for the study among three type of ownership of tea estate

in Tripura. One is a private ownership which established long ago which could not be traced back. Present owner's father-in-law took over the tea estate in the year 1953. Second one was privately owned when established in the year 1935. But after the demise of owner without any will or heir the garden was abandoned. Later on, in the year 1978 the then communist government proposed one of its activists to establish it as workers co-operative. He along with 15 workers who did not leave the tea estate in spite of facing hardship, started the co-operative. (one play writer termed their struggle as 'Another Long March').

In both the tea estate there are workers who were residing there since two or more generations. They came from other parts of India i.e. Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Purulia, Burdwan, Telangana, Assam and Dhaka, Sylhet of Bangladesh through middlemen by fraudulence. Many workers came to tea estates from Bangladesh after marriage or due to political, religious conflict over there. Some of the new workers migrated from other tea estates or from other district or subdivision in search better livelihood.

The ownership of two tea estates affects workers lives. The two estates differ in structures. There are strict hierarchies in the private owned tea estate comprising of owner, manager, office staffs, sub staffs and workers. In the worker co-operative there are hierarchy of board members, office staffs, sub staffs and workers but board members can be from workers too. So, a board member may be president or secretary of the board at one time along with his worker status or may be only worker at other time when he/she is not board member. The social ascribed caste component also differs in both the tea estate. In the private owned tea estate owner and office staffs are Bengali brahmin or Bengali higher caste persons. There is even a priest who performs everyday puja in the shiv temple in the premises of tea estate. He cooks when caretaker comes from city to visit the tea estate. Whereas there is no Brahmin in the co-operative tea estate. There are few higher caste persons. The woman who cooks for visitors or for the person who initiated the co-operative is from workers (ST female).

When tea plantations were formed in other States during the British era they were located in closed confined areas. There were labour lines for residing labourers. In most of the tea plantations the worker was not allowed to interact with outside world. But now situation has changed. The workers who came long ago now their generations stay in the tea plantation area. Those families have extended and they have set up separate households. Gradually there were formation of hamlets and villages. The tea estate which is established later on that tea estate still have labour lines but the workers are now free to move outside of the tea estates. Previously

owners of the tea estates sometimes provided small plot of land for their sustenance. Still workers use those land for paddy or vegetable cultivation.

After independence government has provided some provisions for giving better life and social security to tea garden workers in the 'Plantation Labour Act 1951' and through Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954. This Act and Rules has been amended time to time to provide workers better security by owners of the tea estate.

Those provision affect worker's social, economic condition which in return affects their health status. In those tea estates there are difference in providing facilities to the tea workers. Though both the tea estate could not provide all the facilities according to the 'PLA-1951 but co-operative tea estate provides better housing, sanitation, water supply, medical facilities, fuel supply, electricity and wages to the workers than the private owned tea estate. The reasons for better performance of co-operative is transparency in every matter, higher quality tea bushes, timely use of fertilizer, better irrigation system and over all workers sincere commitment to the tea estate as they have a sense of ownership. This reflects when they say – "This is our garden".

Next chapter will deal with the workers morbidity, health perception, accessibility, availability and affordability of health services.

CHAPTER 5

Perception and Utilisation of Health Services

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section is describing the reported morbidity of workers. The next section is availability, accessibility and acceptability of allopathic health services and a range of traditional healers. With the availability and accessibility of the services, the treatment resort pattern by different categories of workers also discussed. The third section discusses the health perception of workers across the hierarchy. The fourth section is on maternal and child health and available nutrition programmes for mother and child. The fifth section is on constraints to accessing health services.

Since independence the health services and the society has changed a lot. When Banerji studied 19 villages during 1972 to 1975 and second phase during 1981, he had come across the changes over the period in those 19 villages in eight states. Availability and accessibility of health service along with cultural perception shapes the health perception of individual. When Carstairs (1955) and McKim Marriot (1955) studied different villages of Rajasthan (during 1950 and 1951) and Uttar Pradesh (during 1952) they focused on the acceptability of the modern medicine system by the Indian population. According to them the indigenous system of medicine was more acceptable to the rural people than allopathic medical care. If they avail allopathic medical care, they combine it with other indigenous systems. The availability of modern biomedicine also was not adequate at that time (1950, 1951, 1952). There was lack of trust too for modern biomedicine among rural people. Banerji's study (1982) showed that rural people could not access different types of health institutions because of distance from village, less political influence and due to poor economic conditions. He also argued that people who were influential socially and politically they had more access to health institution and health personnel. The health culture of the people depends upon the degree and nature of poverty they were in. The better off people had better access to health institutions. The author also argued that most of the health problems poor people suffered from were due to poor living conditions. (Banerji 1982). Sahu's (1980) study also showed that the health culture among Oran's of Rourkela was in transition. He argued that if allopathic medicine was available, accessible and affordable to people they try to avail that. He also argued that though for some minor ailments irrespective of economic condition people prefer home remedies and chronic ailments like 'asthma' people avail indigenous system if disease is not cured by allopathic medicine. Jha's study of Bihar (2004), Anand's (2004) study of Madhya Pradesh, Zurbrigg's (1985) Rakku's story of Tamil Nadu showed that the distance of health centres, economic hardship, inadequate health service put agony to these people for accessing modern health facilities. Qadeer (1985)

argued for accessing health service the socio-economic inequalities also a factor which had impact on Indian health service system and in turn determines the access to health service by the people.

The health perception of people changes according to the social, cultural, family situation. This also varies according to the availability, accessibility of health services. Soman's study (1997) of women in West Bengal showed that the perception of health changes according to economic condition of women. The better off women relate health to 'good food', 'living comfortably', 'cleanliness' and 'absence of any disease' whereas poorer women relate 'ability' to work and 'absence of any diseases. With that their perception of causation of diseases also changes. The better off women relate causes of health problem to 'ingestion of foreign body through water or food' causes diarrhoea, whereas dysentery was caused by 'ingestion of hot and rich food', hyperacidity and weakness were caused by 'heavy work load', 'irregularity and 'constant worries' about family, menstrual problem or high blood pressure were due to use of oral pill. On the other hand, poorer women relate to 'evil eye' was the cause of diseases and menstrual problem or weakness, giddiness and blackouts were due to 'operation or tubectomy'. (Soman 1997).

I. Morbidity profile of worker

Table 5.1: Self-Reported morbidity profile of workers

Sl no.	Name of the reported morbid condition	Number of respondent suffering from different diseases
1	Fever	79
2.	Cough	39
3	Headache	36
4	Body ache	34
5	Cold	30

6	Stomach problem (gastritis)	30
7	Pain (hand, leg, neck, throat)	29
8	Leucorrhoea	27
9	High blood pressure	27
10	General weakness	23
11	Dizziness/senseless	22/1
12	Backache	17
13	Eye problem	13
14	Chest pain (1 case cardiomegaly)	12(11+1)
15	Diarrhea/Dysentery	13
16	Tingling sensation	9
17	Skin problem	6
18	Diabetes	4
19	Ear problem	5
20	Accident	5
21	Anorexia	5
22	Swelling (hand and feet)	5(1+4)
23	Psychological problem	4
24	Low Blood Pressure	4
25	Asthma	3
26	Jaundice	3
27	Sore throat	3
28	Nausea/ vomiting	3

29	Dental problem	3
30	Bleeding (nose+menstrual)	3
31	Insomnia	2
32	Paralysis	2
33	Arthritis	2
34	Gall stone	1
35	Tumour	1
36	Spinal cord injury	1
37	Tuberculosis	1
38	Anaemia	1
39	Allergy	1
40	Abscess	1

Source: compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

At the tea estates workers reported morbidity was taken from 15 days minor and one-year major recall morbidity history. Most of the workers suffer from seasonal diseases. Researcher conducted field work from end of February 2018 to July 2018 at Meghlibund and Durgabari tea estates. This morbidity profile was in that season. Most of the workers suffered from seasonal fever, cough and cold. Other diseases are leucorrhoea, hypertension, tuberculosis, pain on different organs of body, diabetes. Most of the office staffs are suffering from diabetes. Only one male permanent worker had diabetes. He was tilla sardar. Later on, researcher came to know he was suffering from tuberculosis. He died due to that. When researcher took his interview, he was unaware of his condition. Another retired worker also succumbed to tuberculosis. Though here those who were presently working in the tea estate their morbidity profile was taken but when researcher asked about family history at Meghlibund tea estate, she came to know that many families have history of having tuberculosis patients, either cured or succumbed to the disease. But among office staff there is no history of tuberculosis. They have diabetes. The re-employed manager of the Meghlibund tea estate diagnosed of diabetes while

he was in nursing home after release from captivity of insurgents. Since then he was suffering from workplace tension and stressed for security of tea estate and his own. The office staff of Durgabari who is suffering from diabetes also talked about his family related stress.

Hypertension is another condition which many workers and their family members suffer from. Most of the time it is the 'felt need' of the worker which drive them to take treatment. The two cases of tuberculosis, one from Durgabari tea estate (case report SB) and another from Meghlibund tea estate (Case report PP) consulted health service centre when they felt that 'something is wrong' with their health. Even sometimes neighbours or family members or friends become 'worry' about their health and advise them to consult with 'doctor', preferably western medicine system.

Name: SB

Age: 45 years

Sex: Male

Disease: Tuberculosis with Diabetes

Duration of disease suffering: tuberculosis was diagnosed in July, 2018. Few months before this diagnosis he was diagnosed of having diabetes

He is temporary factory worker at Durgabari tea estate. He migrated from another district of Tripura and started working at Durgabari tea estate as temporary worker for four years. His wife also works at this tea estate as a temporary worker. He has two sons. One son works at Pune in a private company and another son studies in school. He was working at factory but management did not provide any protective measures for that. At the factory tea leaves undergo various phases of processing. He was exposed to that. He used to smoke 'bidi' and drink 'langi'/'hadiya'/'chuwak'. Initially he was feeling weak and was not able to work. He consulted with private allopathic doctor. He went to Medical College Hospital for treatment. Medicine had been prescribed for his symptoms. But he did not recover. He had cold, cough and fever. He had fever for 2-3 times. But not any productive cough. When he was not recovering, he again consulted a private allopathic doctor. He advised for sputum test for Tuberculosis. As he did not have any productive cough he ignored and the pathology where he went for test also ignored the advice of doctor. Later on, when he was not recovering, he went to Manipur along with his friend and took treatment for diabetes from a private hospital. There also they could not diagnose tuberculosis. He became thin and weak and his health deteriorated. He went to Pune with his friend. His son took him to a private Ayurvedic hospital. There he was diagnosed with tuberculosis of lungs and stomach. He was admitted there for seven days. They prescribed him medicine. He bought all those medicines and came back to Tripura. In Tripura he went to PHC and DOT centre and started continuing his medicine. In between his tuberculosis treatment his sugar level increased. Again, he took treatment from a private allopathic doctor. He took insulin injection. He is now sputum negative for tuberculosis after five months of treatment (22

December, 2018). His son and he took loan from people for his treatment. Till today management did not help him monetarily. After completion of treatment he has to submit his treatment papers to management than the management will re-recruit him. Now he works outside the tea estate as an agricultural daily wage labour on other people's land. He said...

"I am still not taken in the tea estate as worker. I have to submit treatment paper. Then the management will recruit me again. But I have spent so much money with in these two years I have to work now. I go outside for work now a days. I work in others field. My son also taken money for my treatment from others. He also cannot send money now. Still I have to pay 40000 to people. I need good food also. Somehow my wife managed all these months. Otherwise I would have died" (temporary worker, male, 45 years, Durgabari, 22/12/2018)

He said he can feel and tell when his health is not well. That time he consults with doctor.

His narrative shows his agony, helplessness over his financial condition. He is still sick but has to go for work. He recognises contribution of his wife and son towards him when he was sick. Though he has taken part of his treatment from government hospital but management did not give him any monetary benefit as he is a temporary worker.

Name: PP

Age: 43years

Sex: Male

Diseases: Tuberculosis

Duration of disease suffering: Recently diagnosed (December 2018)

He is permanent worker at Meghlibund tea estate. His wife also is a permanent worker. They have four children including one adopted girl child. He sometimes earns money by participating in a 'kirtan' (especially a religious song troupe which sings at different places or hired by people for singing at different religious or cultural occasions) troupe. He has habit of smoking and sometimes drinking 'langi/hadia/ chuwak'. He was suffering from cough cold and fever for few days. He thought it will cure by itself. He took some medicine from local pharmacy. Fever went off but not the cough. He started losing weight and his face started looking dull. His friends and wife started suspecting that he was suffering from tuberculosis. They advised him to go to city and get treatment from medical college hospital. He was reluctant initially. When (December 2018) researcher visited him, she too advised to take treatment as early as possible. He said 'let me gather some money, I shall go and get treatment. Even I am scared that maybe it's Tuberculosis.'

Later on, when after eight months (August 2019) researcher went back to field she came to know that he was taking treatment for tuberculosis. He went to city hospital (Medical College Hospital)

and consulted there and diagnosed of tuberculosis. He is better now and recovering from illness. He completed treatment.

There are other workers too when they feel that their diseases were not getting resolved by home remedies or other systems of medicine and hence, they preferred to access western system of medicine.

Next section is dealing with the available service workers access, afford and accept to combat morbidity. Workers access to modern allopathic medicine along with homeopathic, ayurvedic and traditional system of healing. Those systems are available there. The allopathic, homeopathic and ayurvedic system are government provided mostly. There is allopathic private sector which are also available to worker provided to affordability. Other than these the home remedies, over the counter medicine and traditional healing system are available.

II. Health facilities available and accessible for workers

Table: 5.2 Available health facilities (Allopathic, Ayurvedic, Homeopathy) near Meghlibund and Durgabari tea estate

Sl no.	Name of tea estates	Public health service	Distance from tea estate	Private health services	Distance from tea estate	Remarks
1	Meghlibund	Subcentre 2 nos. (allopathic MPW/MPS run those centres, one is DOTS centre.	One km/ 2.5 km	Pharmacy	500mt - 1km	No available pharmacist at tea estate

		Sometimes homeopathic, ayurvedic and dental surgeon from PHC visit these centres with prior information				
		PHC	0-3km	Private (Allopathic) hospital	42 km	
		CHC	21km	Nursing homes	42 km	
		District Hospital	42km	Ojha/dai	Inside hamlet of tea estate	
		Medical college hospital	42km	Herbalist/faith healers/sorceresses	Within 0-3km radius distance	One faith healer comes to hamlet and visits patients' home and provide his service
2	Durgabari	Subcentre 1no. (homeopathic and ayurvedic doctor visits at alternate day)	0km	Pharmacist recruited by tea estate	Inside tea estate	Provides medicine for minor ailments, check patient, check

						BP,visit patients home if patient is unable to move.
		PHC	2-3km	Pharmacy	1km	
		CHC	16km	Private allopathic practitioner	1km/3km/12km	
		District hospital	12km	Private (Allopathic) hospital	8-9km	
		Medical college hospital	9-10km	Nursing homes	12km	
				Ojha/dai or other traditional healers	No data available	Workers said they do not avail those service, so researcher could not get those data. If there is any also, she is not aware.

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2019

The tea estates are situated in West Tripura District of Tripura. (chapter-2) above table (5.2) shows available health centres and nature of health providers near both the tea estates. The

CHC is the same CHC in which jurisdiction both the tea estates are. There are two medical college hospitals. One is entirely government (mentioned in above table) and another is PPP model (not mentioned in above table). The PPP model medical college hospital is 47 km from privately owned tea estate and 17 km from co-operative tea estate and is another side of capital city (Agartala) so workers do not go to that hospital. That hospital charges fees. Private specialist hospital is costly and workers also prefer not to go there. All these medical facilities are in West Tripura District.

Allopathic

Meghlibund

There are two subcentres nearby hamlets. There is one 24*7 functional Primary Health Centre covering all the hamlets. PHC is nearer than the subcentres. PHC is adjacent to two hamlets and one kilometre to two kilometres from another two hamlets. Other two hamlets are three kilometres away from the PHC and from one sub-Centre those two hamlets are two kilometres away.

There is one rural hospital around 21 kilometres away from tea estate. State hospital and medical college hospital are 42 kilometres away from tea estate.

Other than this there are pharmacies at nearby markets. There is one private multi-specialty hospital in city and another private medical college hospital in the city.

Subcentres

Facilities available at sub Centre

The sub-Centre is about 2.5 km away from the tea estate. There are two sub-Centre together. One sub-Centre was dispensary previously. Later on, it converted into sub-Centre.

Human resources: There are two MPWs there, one male and one female. One MPS covers two sub-Centres. There are one 'safai karmachari'.

Timings of the sub-Centre: 8AM to 3.30PM

Available infrastructure

Pucca building

Instruments: Sphygmomanometer, digital thermometer, thermometer, weight machine (baby and adult) instrument for checking Hb%, blood sugar, Albumin, kidney tray, scissor etc.

Materials: cotton, gauge, betadine solution,

Medicine: Metronidazole (Metrogyl), PCM (Paracetamol), Diazene, Amoxicillin, Septran, Albendazole, Asthaline, Ibuprofen (Brufen), Vit. B complex, Iron, bleaching powder (Halogen tablets)

Contraceptive measure: oral pill (Mala-N), emergency pill, condom, Copper-T

Pathological test:

Malaria slide test, Hb% test, Pregnancy test, RD kit for malaria.

DOTS Centre.

Programmes: immunization programme for children and pregnant women twice monthly, 1st and 3rd Wednesday. Ante-natal and post-natal Care (ANC & PNC), Village health and nutrition day (VHND) programme, health camp, Indradhanus programme.

PHC: Area:10 acre

Table 5.3: different facilities available at PHC

Sl no		Currently available at PHC	Remarks
1.	Infrastructure		
A	Building	Yes	
B	Regular electricity	Yes	
C	Water supply	Yes	
D	Toilet	Yes	
E	Labour room	Yes	
F	Medicine/Drugs	Yes (Govt.)	No generic medicine available
G	Quarters	2	
H	number of Bed	10	
I	Timings	24*7	

J	Functional vehicle/Ambulance	1	For mother and child
2. human resources			
A	Medical officer	2	
B	Lady Medical officer	No	
C	AYUSH Medical officer	2 (homeopathic-1(female), Ayurvedic-1(male)	
D	dental surgeon	1	
E	Pharmacist	2 (allo)	
F	Health worker(female)	13(MPW),6(GNM),2(MPS)	
G	Health Worker(male)	19(MPW),2(MPS),	
H	Health Assistant(female)/lady health visitor	No	
I	Health Educator	No	
J	Laboratory Technician	1	
K	Multi skill Group-D worker	4	
L	cold chain and Vaccine Logistic Assistant	2	Looks after the matter

M	sanitary worker	5 (1 female, 4 male)	
N	Watchman	No	
O	upper division clerk	No	
P	lower division clerk	No	
Q	Malaria technical supervisor	1	
R	Optometrist	1	
S	ASHA	119	
T	AAA	1	
U	HMIS	1	
V	Driver	1	
3. Services			
A	OPD (Out Patient Department)	Yes	
B	IPD (In Patient Department)	Yes	
C	New born care service	No	
D	Referral service for delivery	Yes	
E	Pathology	Yes	
F	DOTS		
G	Delivery service	Yes	24*7
H	Vaccination	Yes	Wednesday

I	ICTC	Yes	
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Source: Collected from the authority of PHC by Researcher, 02/07/2018

There are seventeen subcentres and approximately 144-145 Anganwadi centre under this hospital.

Programmes covered by the PHC:

1. Cholo haspatal jai (Let's go to Hospital)
2. Immunisation
3. Health camp
4. Special health camp at tea garden areas
5. Administrative camp
6. Malaria camp
7. Water borne diseases camp
8. Tobacco (SHP)
9. VHND
10. Eye camp
11. Laparoscopic Ligation camp (now closed for time being till governments order)

Tests done in the pathology are Hb%, Blood group, HBsAg, HIV, VDRL, RBS, BT/CT, Urine for Alb, and sugar, MP, Sputum. Other than these, pregnancy test in OPD or IPD also done. F-ICTC Centre is also there.

CHC

1. Infrastructure

Table 5.4: Infrastructure at CHC

Sl no.		Current availability at CHC	Remarks/Suggestion
A	Building	Yes	
I	Compound wall	Partial	

ii	condition of plaster on wall	Well plastered with plaster intact everywhere	
iii	condition of floor	Floor in good condition	
B	prominent display boards in local languages/Charter of patients right	Yes	
C	Registration counter	Yes	
D	Pharmacy for drug dispensing and drug storage	Yes	
I	Counter near entrance of hospital to obtain contraceptives, ORS packets, Vitamin A and vaccination	Yes	
E	Separate public utilities for male and female	No	
F	suggestion/complaint box	Yes	
G	OPD room	Yes	
H	family welfare clinic	Yes	
I	Waiting room for patients	No	
J	Emergency room	Yes	
K	Separate ward for male and female	Yes	
L	No. of beds(male)	8	
M	No. of beds(female)	12	

N	labour room i. are deliveries conducted in labour room	Yes Yes	
O	Operation theatre	No	
P	Laboratory	Yes	
Q	Water supply	Yes	
R	Blood storage	No	
S	Electricity supply	Yes	
T	Ambulance service	Yes (1)	
U	Quarters	9	

Source: Collected by researcher from CHC, 04/07/2018

CHC

2. Human resources

A. Clinical manpower

Table 5.5: Clinical Manpower (CHC)

Sl no	Personnel	IPH S nor m	Sanctione d	In positio n	Remarks/Suggestio ns
1.	General surgeon	1		0	
2.	Physician	1		0	
3	Obstetrician/Gynaecolog ist	1		0	
4	Paediatrics	1		0	
5	Anaesthetist	1		0	On contractual appointment or hiring of services from private sectors

					on case to case basis
6	Public Health Programme Manager	1		0	On contractual appointment
7	Eye surgeon	1		0	For every 5-lakh population as per vision 2020 approved Plan of Action
8	General duty officers (Medical Officer)			4	
9	Block health officer			0	
10	Specialist of AYUSH			0	
11	General Duty Medical Officer of AYUSH			2	
12	Dental Surgeon	1		1	

Source: Collected by researcher from CHC, 04/07/2018

B. Support Manpower

Table 5.6: Support Manpower (CHC)

Sl no	Personnel	IPHS norm	Sanctioned	In Position	Remarks/Suggestion
1	a.Nursing staff	7+2			1 ANM and 1public health nurse for family welfare will be appointed under the ASHA scheme

	i.Public Health Nurse	1			
	ii.ANM	1		15	
	iii. Staff Nurse	7		9	
	iv.Nurse/ Midwife				
	b.Dresser	1			
	c.Pharmacist/computer	1		3	
	d.Lab.Technician	1		1	
	e.Radiographer	1		1	
	f.Ophthalmic Assistant	1		1	Ophthalmic Assistant may place where ever it does not exist through re-employment or contract basis
	g.Ward Boys/nursing orderly	2		0	
	h.Sweepers	3		0	
	i.Chowkidar	1		0	Flexibility may rest with the state for recruitment of personnel as per needs
	j.OPD Attendant	1		0	

k.Statistic al Assistant/ Data entry operator	1		1	
l. OT attendant	1			
m.Registr ation clerk	1			
n.pharmac ist- AYUSH			0	
o.Dhobi				
p.Mali				
q.Aya				
r.Peon				
s.Account ant/Admin Assistant			1	

Source: Collected by researcher from CHC, 04/07/2018

3. Services

Table 5.7: Services (CHC)

Sl no.		
1	Population covered (in numbers)	75706
2	Total coverage area (in sq.km)	

3	Specialist service available	
	i. medicine	No
	ii. Surgery	No
	iii. OBG	No
	iv. Paediatrics	No
	v. 24 Hours delivery service including normal and assisted deliveries	Yes
	vi. Emergency Obstetric care including surgical interventions like Caesarean Sections and other	No
	vii. New born care	Yes
	viii. Emergency care of sick children	Yes
	ix. Full range of family planning services including Laparoscopic Services	No
	x. Safe abortion care	No
	xi. Treatment of STI/RTI	Yes
	xii. Essential Laboratory Services	Yes
	xiii. Blood storage facility	No
	xiv. Referral transport service	Yes
4.	Bed Occupancy rate in the last 12 months	40-60%
5	HIV/AIDS	
	i. Availability of counselling facility on HIV/AIDS/STD	Yes
	ii. Is it a voluntary council and testing Centre (VCTC)	Yes
6	Ante natal clinic	Yes

7	Post-natal clinic	Yes
8	Immunisation session	Yes
9	Is separate septic labour room available	No

Source: Collected by researcher from CHC, 04/07/2018

The CHC lacks specialist services due to shortage of specialist health personnel and infrastructure. PHC near both tea estates provides facilities which CHC also provides. So, patient usually prefer to visit district hospital or medical college hospital once they are referred. From Durgabari tea estate the distance of CHC is more than Medical college hospital so worker from that tea estate prefer to go medical college hospital.

District hospital

Infrastructure

Table 5.8: Infrastructure (District hospital)

Sl no.		Current availability in the hospital
1	Number of indoor beds	518
2	What is the present stage of construction of the building	Construction incomplete
I	Compound wall	All around
ii	Condition of plaster on walls	Well plastered with plaster intact everywhere
iii	Condition of floor	Floor in good condition
3	Administrative block	Yes
4	Circulation area	Yes
5	Entrance area	Yes
6	Ambulatory care area (OPD)	Yes

7	Waiting spaces adjacent to each consultation and treatment room	Yes
8	Registration counter	Yes
9	Assistant and enquiry counter	Yes
10	Departments	Yes
I	General	Yes
ii	Medical	Yes
iii	Surgical	Yes
iv	Ophthalmic	Yes
v	ENT	Yes
vi	Dental	Yes
vii	Obstetrics & gynaecology	Yes
viii	Paediatrics	Yes
ix	Dermatology and venereology	Yes
x	Psychiatry	No
xi	Neonatology	Yes
xii	Orthopaedic	No
xiii	Social service	No
xiv	Infectious and communicable diseases located in remote corner with independent access	No
xv	National health programmes	Yes
11	Nursing stations	Yes
12	Diagnostic services	
I	x-ray room	Yes
ii	Ultra sound room	Yes
13	Clinical laboratory	Yes
14	Blood bank	Yes
15	Intermediate care area	

	General ward Male	1
	General ward (female)	1
	Private ward	0
	Specialist ward	9
	Nursing station	17
	Doctors duty room	Yes
16	Pharmacy	Yes
17	Intensive care unit	Yes
18	Critical care area	Yes
19	Operation theatre	Yes
20	Delivery unit	Yes
21	Physiotherapy	Yes
22	Hospital services	Yes
23	Engineering services	Yes
24	Public health engineering	
	Water supply	Yes
	Drainage and sanitation	Yes
	Waste disposal system	Yes
25	Trauma centre	No
26 27	Residential quarters for all medical and para medical staff	Yes

Source: collected from district hospital by researcher,2018

Human resources**Table 5.9: Human Resources (District Hospital)**

Sl no.	Personnel	IPHS norm	Sanctioned
1	Chief Medical Superintendent	1	1
2	Medical specialist	4	4
3	Surgery specialist	3	1
4	O&G specialist	8	8
5	Psychiatry	1	0
6	Dermatologist/Venereologist	2	1
7	Paediatrician	4	5
8	Anaesthetist (Regular/trained)	8	5
9	ENT surgeon	2	3
10	Ophthalmologist	2	6
11	Orthopaedist	2	0
12	Radiologist	5	2
13	Microbiologist	1	2
14	Pathologist and blood bank in charge	1	11
15	Casualty doctors	24	5
16	Dental surgeon	1	7
17	Forensic specialist	1	0
18	Public health manager	1	0
19	AYUSH Physician	4	0
20	Environmental officer	1	0
21	Waste management officer	1	0
	Para-Medical staffs		
22	Staff nurse	200-250	252
23	Infection control nurse	2	0

24	Hospital worker (OP/WARD/OT)	50	20
25	Sanitary worker	30	25
26	Ophthalmic assistant/ Refractionist	2	4
27	Social worker/counsellor	2	5
28	Dermatologist/STD/Leprosy	1	0
29	AIDS/STD Counsellor	2 dedicated	3
30	Cytotechnician	1	0
31	ECG Technician	1	5
32	ECHO Technician	1	0
32	Audiometrician	1	1
33	Laboratory technician (lab+blood)	6+3	27
34	Laboratory attendant	2+1	10
35	Dietician	2	0
36	PFT technician	1	0
37	Maternity assistant	4	16
38	Radiographer	12	12
39	Dark room assistant	8	4
40	Pharmacist (two may be from AYUSH)	10	16
41	Matron	9	2
42	Physiotherapist	2	2
43	Statistical assistant	1	1
44	Medical record officer/ Technician	2	1
45	Electrician	2	0
46	Plumber	2	0
47	Hospital superintendent	1	1
48	Manager	3	1
49	Accountant	4	1

50	Assistant cum computer operator	6	3
51	Blood bank in charge	1	2
52	Blood bank technician	3	9
53	Driver	4	11
54	Peon	2	0
55	Security staff	2	Outsourced

Source: Collected from district hospital by researcher, 2018

Services

Table 5.10: services (District Hospital)

Sl no.	Services	Current availability at hospital
1	General medicine	Yes
2	General surgery	Yes
3	O&G Services	Yes
4	Paediatrics including neonatology (as required for level II SNCU)	Yes
5	Emergency (accident and other emergency) casualty 24*7	Yes
6	Critical care (ICU)	Yes
7	Anaesthesia	Yes
8	Ophthalmology	Yes
9	ENT	Yes
10	Dermatology and venerology(skin&VD)RTI/STI	Yes
11	Orthopaedics	No
12	Dental care	Yes
13	Public health management	No

14	Radiology including ultrasonologist	Yes
15	Radiotherapy	No
16	Psychiatry	No
17	Plastic surgery	No
18	Allergy	No
19	Super specialties	No
20	Laboratory services	Yes
21	ECG	Yes
22	Physiotherapy	Yes
23	Dental technology (dental hygiene)	Yes
24	Drugs and pharmacy	Yes
25	Imaging services	Yes
26	CT scan	No
27	Sonography	Yes
28	Echocardiography	No
29	Endoscopy	No
30	Angiography	No
31	Pathology	Yes
32	Blood bank	Yes
33	Medico-legal/post mortem	No
34	Ambulance	Yes
35	Water supply	Yes
36	Electricity	Yes
37	Nursing services	Yes
38	Administrative services	Yes
39	Medical and surgical specialist services	
I	OPD /IPD	Yes
ii	Skin	Yes
iii	Paediatric	Yes

Iv	Cardiology procedure and diagnostic test	No
V	Endoscopic specialised procedure and diagnostic	No
Vi	Psychiatric services	No
Vii	Physiotherapy	Yes
Viii	Ophthalmology	Yes
Ix	ENT services	Yes
X	Obstetrics & Gynaecology specialist services	Yes
Xi	Dental services	Yes
Xii	Orthopaedic surgery	No
Xiii	Plastic surgery	No
Xiv	Paediatric surgery	Yes
Xv	Urology	Yes
Xvi	Biliary system	Yes
Xv	Other procedure	Yes

Source: Collected from district hospital by researcher, 2018

There are two medical college hospitals, one is government and another is public private partnership (PPP) model. The hospital attached to medical college is older hospital. Most of the referral cases go there. One private hospital act as referral centre for complicated cases.

The CHC, district hospital and medical college hospital and other private allopathic health facilities are same for both the tea estate. But the PHC and subcentres are different for both the tea estate. The facilities available at the subcentres and PHC are similar for both the tea estate.

Traditional health service facilities available, accessible and acceptable to worker

There are other methods which workers take for treatment of their ailments. Those are taking or consulting to sorceries, herbalists and faith healers. There are many traditional healers in the locality of Meghlibund tea estate. Researcher took those traditional healers where workers go for consultation.

Those are

Table 5.11: profile of traditional healers

Sl no.	Type of healers	Interview taken	Sex of healers	Cast e of heal ers	Type of service provided	Remarks
1	Herbalists	2	M	1- Bra hmi n, 1- SC	Ayurvedic local herbs. Leucorrhoea, gastritis, chicken pox, alopecia, deworming, skin diseases.	The brahmin is also priest for the 'sitala' puja or other puja. His father, grandfather had been priest of the workers. The other herbalist is a barber by profession. He prepares medicine by collecting herbs from jungle if patients consult him.
2	Faith healers	1	M	SC	For obstetric and gynaecological problems (leucorrhoea, Dysmenorrhoea, Menstrual Problem, miscarriage, infertility) nightfall, Backache, stomach ache for children,	He was a vendor, now practice only faith healing.

					liver diseases, Amulets (tabij/kabaj)‘jalp ara’, ‘telpara’, ‘koripara’, treat ment by umbilical cord.	
3	Sorceries	2	F	ST	Offering puja to their deity whom they worship. They said they had vision of that deity. Massaging, ‘telpara’, ‘jalpara’	One is also Anganwadi helper. She is having ‘jata’ on her head. She is Tripuri tribe married to a Bengali higher caste. She says goddess ‘kali’ has given her vision. She is widow but wears cloths and decorate herself as married. She has residential arrangement for patients. There are temple of Goddess Kali and Shiv. Other one is wife of tea garden worker. She recently got the power of being a healer after she suffered from fit and fever. She too set up a temple inside the residential premises. As she is new, she treats less patients.
4	Traditional birth	1	F	ST		She is recruited by management. Gets

	attendant (dai)					400Rs/week, other than this she gets money or materials (cash & kind) from the family of the mother, whose delivery she conducts
5	Herbalist and faith healer both (ojha)	1	M	ST	Gives medicine and amulets (tabij) for gynaecological problems, liver diseases, dog bite, skin diseases etc.	He is husband of 'dai'. He learned these from other persons. Later on, he bought ayurvedic books and read that and consult that book. He gives medicine accordingly. Sometime he tells his patients to buy ingredients from city market and bring to him, he prepares medicine by that and gives to patients.

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

Above tables shows workers avail different types of services from wide range of category. These healers are within the locality. Other than these workers if goes to other places for visiting there they consult traditional healers.

They worship 'Sitala'³⁸ devi during spring. This deity is another incarnation of goddess 'Kali'. (Bhattacharya 1403 Bangabdo, p.4) She primarily treats chicken pox. There are 64 types of diseases (bisphotakadichotushasthirogevyo) like fevers, measles, pox and other diseases are cured by devi. (Bhattacharya 1403 Bangabdo, p.35) Other than these diseases different types

³⁸ Shitala devi- worshiped in North India, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan by different faiths. She is incarnation of Durga or Kali. She in her childhood form of 'Katyayani' cured cholera, dysentery, measles, smallpox etc. of her friends. She later on took form of 'Sitala'/Shitala' to relieve world from diseases. She usually has four hands. But here tea workers worshipping two handed devi. She was holding sticks in one hand and pitcher in another hand. She wore white saree with red borders. There were black dots on whole body. She was sitting on donkey.

of furuncles, carbuncles etc also are cured by devi. The workers worship this devi to get rid of all these diseases. The priest³⁹ here is ‘Acharya’ Brahman.

The ‘Sitala puja’ performed during summer season or when there is outbreak of the pox or measles. The puja is performed to please the ‘Sitala Devi’. Carstairs (1955) in his writings also observed that in villages of Rajasthan the ‘Sitala-Mata’ was worshiped to please her so that children do not victim of her anger. The villagers bathed her with cool water so that she become calm.



Pic 5.1: Sitala Mata

Source: Clicked by researcher during field work, 2018

³⁹ The priest here is Brahmin called ‘Acharya’. He is in a lower rank of brahmin. They perform puja for lower caste people. They also perform ‘Shitala’ puja, ‘graha puja’, ‘sani puja’ etc. They are not entitled to perform Durga puja or deities of higher rank. They can even perform rituals for Muslims. They do not discriminate with caste and religion because they are ‘Guru’—meaning ‘teacher’.

Accessibility of health service

Table 5.12: Stages of treatment resort pattern across different types of health services (Workers)

Sl. No.	Name of morbidity	Choice of Access	Preference of Access				
			1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
1	Fever	Public			PHC (Allo)		
		Private	Self (home remedies)	Pharmacy (Allopathic)			
2	Cough & cold	Public			PHC(Allo)		
		Private	Self (home remedies)	Pharmacy (Allo)			
3	Headache	Public		PHC (Allo)	Medical college hospital		
		Private	Self (home remedies)				
4	Body ache	Public		PHC (Allo)			
		Private	Self (home remedies)		Kabiraj		
5	Back ache	Public		PHC(Allo)		CHC (Allo)	
		Private	Self (home remedies)		Homeopathic		Kabiraj
6	Stomach problem (gastritis)	Public			PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital	
		Private	Self (home remedies)	Pharmacy (Allo)			Outside state (Allo)
7	Pain (hand, leg, neck, throat)	Public			PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital	

		Private	Self (home remedies)	Pharmacy (Allo)			'banaji', faith healer
8	Leucorrhoea	Public				PHC(Homeo)	PHC(Allo)
		Private	'banaji'/kabaraj/faith healer	Homeopathic	Ayurvedic		
9	High blood pressure	Public	PHC (Allo)		Medical college hospital		
		Private		Private practitioner (allo)		Ayurvedic	Homeopathic
10	General weakness	Public			PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital	
		Private	None	Pharmacy (Allo)			'banaji', 'kabaraj'
11	Dizziness/senselessness	Public		PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital		
		Private	Not taken				'banaji', 'kabaraj'
12	Eye problem	Public	PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private			Private practitioner (Allo)		
13	Diarrhoea/dysentery	Public	PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private					

14	Chest pain	Public	PHC (Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private			Private practitioner (Allo)	'kibiraj'	Not taken
15	Tingling sensation	Public	Medical college hospital	PHC(Allo)			
		Private			'banaji'		
16	Skin problem	Public		PHC (Allo)		CHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital
		Private	'banaji'	Private practitioner (Allo)	Home remedies		
17	Ear problem	Public	PHC (Allo)				
		Private		Pharmacy (allo)			
18	Accident	Public	PHC (Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private			Home remedies	Kabiraj/banaji/ojha	Homeopathic
19	Anorexia	Public	PHC(Allo)				
		Private		Private practitioner (Allo)			
20	Low blood pressure	Public	PHC (Allo)				
		Private					

21	Swelling (hand, feet)	Public	PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private			'banaji'/ojha/kabiraj		
22	Psychological problem	Public					
		Private	Faith healer/ojha/kabiraj				
23	Asthma	Public	PHC (Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private			'banaji'/ 'kabiraj'	Pharmacy (Allo)	
24	Jaundice	Public			PHC (Allo)	Medical college Hospital	
		Private	Home remedies	'banaji/faith healer			
25	Sore throat	Public	PHC (Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private					
26	Nausea/ Vomiting	Public		PHC (Allo)	Medical college hospital		
		Private	Home remedies				
27	Dental problem	Public			PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital	

		Private	Home remedies	Pharmacy (Allo)			
28	Insomnia	Public					
		Private	Not taken				
29	Paralysis	Public	PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private			Private practitioner (Allo)		
30	Bleeding (Nose)	Public	PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private					
31	Arthritis	Public		PHC(Allo)			
		Private	Home remedies		Ayurvedic	Faith healer	
32	Gall bladder stone	Public	Medical college hospital				
		Private		'kibiraji'			
33	Tumour	Public	District hospital	Medical college hospital			
		Private					
34	Spinal cord injury	Public	PHC(ALLO)	CHC(Allo)	State hospital		

		Private					
35	Anaemia	Public	PHC(Allo)				
		Private					
36	Allergy	Public	PHC(Allo)				
		Private		'banaji'			
37	Abscess	Public	PHC(Allo)	Medical college hospital	CHC (Allo)		
		Private				'kibiraji'	
38	Tuberculo sis	Public	PHC (Allo)	Medical college hospital			
		Private			'banaji'/f aith healer		

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work,2018

Table 5.13: Stages of treatment resort pattern across different types of health services (Office Staff)

Sl no	Name of morbidity	Choice of access	Preference of access					
			1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
1	Fever	Public	PHC(Allo)					
		Private						
2	Cough & cold	Public	PHC (Allo)	PHC(Homeo)				
		Private						
3	Stomach problem(gastritis)	Public	PHC(Allo)					
		Private		Private practitioner (Allo)				
4	High blood pressure	Public						
		Private	Private practitioner (Allo)					
5	Anorexia	Public	PHC(Allo)					
		Private						
6	Diabetes	Public						
		Private	Private practitioner (Allo)					
7	Uric acid	Public						
		Private	Private practitioner (Allo)					
8	Dental problem	Public						
		Private	Private practitioner (Allo)					

9	Gall bladder stone	Public	Medical college hospital					
		Private						
10	Eye problem	Public						
		Private	Private practitioner (Allo)					
11	Accident	Public						
		Private	Private practitioner (Allo)					

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

Table 5.14: Obstetric and gynaecological morbidity related accessibility of workers (Women)

Sl no.	Name of morbidity condition	Choice of access	Preference of access					Not accessed
			1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	
1	Leucorrhoea	Public				PHC (Homeopathic)	PHC (Allo)	No treatment
		Private	Banaji/kabiraji/faiith healer	Homeopathic	Ayurvedic			
2	Menorrhagia (Heavy Menstrual bleeding)	Public	PHC(Allo)					No treatment taken
		Private		Banaji/ojha				

3	Dysmenorrhoea (painful menstruation)	Public	PHC(All o)					No treatment
		Private		Ayurvedic	'banaji'/ojha			
4	Miscarriage	Public	PHC(All o)					
		Private		'kibiraji,/banaji				
5	Pain during pregnancy	Public	PHC(All o)					
		Private						

Source: Compiled by researcher from field work, 2018

Other services taken by worker

Home remedies

For simple cut injury juice of leaves (marigold leaf, '*maricha pata*') is applied on the wound. These leaves prevent bleeding from the wound. In the swollen part of injury turmeric paste is applied to heal the swollen injury. Honey along with '*chun*' (quicklime) or sugar along with '*chun*' is applied for insect bite. Neem leaves are applied for skin diseases. Other than these, an insect's hive ('*bolla*'/'*bolta*'-Wasp) is used to treat migraine headache.

Over the counter medicine

Minor ailments like seasonal fever, cold, cough or diarrhoea, toothache, for all these workers prefer to go to market in their convenient time and purchase medicine from the pharmacy. There are three medicine shops at nearest market. One medicine shop has collaboration with the tea estate. Another medicine shop is oldest shop. Its previous owner was LMF doctor. Now his sons are running the shop and they can administer saline, injection etc, though they are not professionally trained. Workers if wants to buy medicine prefer to go this shop, where as another shop is there in front of PHC and that shop owner's father and himself worked as a 'doctor' in the tea estate. Working time in the tea estate is from morning 7am to 12 noon, again 2pm to 5 pm. These timings are also OPD timings of PHC. So due to time constraint for minor

ailments they prefer to buy medicine over the counter. Saturday is holiday for workers, if they feel necessity that day only, they can go to PHC.

Above tables (5.12;5.13;5.14) shows different types of accessibility of health service according to preference of the workers. Those varies from home remedies to modern medical science and alternative medicine as well as different healing practices. Most of the higher official-office staffs, sub staffs prefer allopathy. They avail private allopathic treatment for their ailments. Whereas other workers use different method of treatment for their ailments. Sometimes all together. Very rare cases if they are not cured at public medical facilities (PHC, CHC, Medical college hospital) they go for private allopathic treatment other than medicine taken from pharmacy. There are Ayurvedic medicine seller who comes to the hamlets for selling Ayurvedic medicine. Some private companies allotted those people to sell medicine in the villages. Workers take medicine from them also. They buy medicine from them.

Sometimes all system of treatment go hand in hand. They may be taking allopathic medicine at the same time applying some home remedies, faith healers provided amulets (tabij) or visiting sorcerer and sacrificing animal to get cure. The case of psoriasis patient, diabetes along with hypertension (case SB), leucorrhoea (Case AP) patients are an example of that.

The next section is about the health perception and well-being of workers. The perception of health differs across categories of workers.

III. Social determinants of well-being and health perception of workers

1.Perception of health: hygiene to psychological health

Perception of health differs from office staff to workers. This even differs among men and women.

Relation with hygiene

Workers relates maintaining personal hygiene is very important for being healthy. Women workers relates not only personal hygiene but cleanliness of surrounding, kitchen utensil makes them happy and healthy.

“Food, water, utensils if those are clean, I feel healthy.” (Shilu Bakti, 35years, female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018)

So, for her not only food and water which should be clean to remain herself healthy, but where she keeps and prepare food that also have to be clean. To some extent the kitchen is

responsibility of women. If those area and cooking pots and food are not kept clean or not in hygienic way other family members find this as a discredit on the part of a woman. So, if she performs her responsibility it gives her sense of fulfilment and happiness which in turn makes her healthy.

Taking ‘regular bath’ they relate with maintaining personal hygiene. For the workers after coming from work cleaning themselves is very important to maintain personal hygiene. After bath almost all apply mustard oil on their body.

Relation with weather

When researcher conducted field study that time (March 2018-July 2018: first phase) was summer so the weather was very hot. Workers who has to work in the field they have to work under scorching sun so many of them said that they feel healthy if they can rest in a cold place or sit under fan or do not have to do work in hot weather. They feel dizzy or their skin burns so they do not feel good.

Even during rainy season when there is heavy rain, they find it unhealthy to work in rain. Management provide ‘*patla/chapi*’ to cover their head only not whole body. They become wet during rainy season. So, they find these unhealthy.

Maintaining regular daily routine

Maintaining daily routine related to being healthy is percept by almost everyone across hierarchy. Taking regular exercise, having food on time, taking rest, doing work all these they think if done on time every day they feel healthy and they will be healthy.

Relation between being healthy and work

Workers also relates their being healthy with work. They feel healthy and good if they work. Sitting at home or not doing any work makes them sick. But this also relates to amount of work they have to do. If work load is more, they fall sick, do not feel healthy. But as they have to do work to sustain themselves, they feel helpless in the situation. They relate ...

“Work makes me feel healthy. Sitting at home I feel weak, lazy.” (Sanjib Munda, 41years, male permanent worker, Meghlibund,2018).

“If work load is more, I feel unhealthy, less work makes me healthy. But there is no peace, we have to work.” (Mandira Urang, 26years, Female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

If they want also, they cannot sit at home without doing work. This has been echoed by most of the workers. “What to do! We have to work. Otherwise who will feed us!?” These lines are expressed by many workers. For women this is more. The work burden they have to bear is multiple. They cannot even eat food properly due to work load. They do not get time to eat food also.

“If I do not go for work, I feel healthy. But what to do! Have to work. Do not even get time for eating due to work load.” (Manju Baori, 45years, female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

“Do not get time to eat” this has been echoed by female workers only. So due to work load they feel unhealthy or sick. If work load is less that makes them happy and healthy.

Elderly women workers feel that if their work load is shared with someone, they will be healthy. For that many elderly women workers who has bachelor son they want their son to get married so that they can share their work load with daughter-in-law.

“If my son gets marry, I will be healthy. Now I have to do all work. Reducing work load will make me healthy.” (Kamalini Urang, widow, female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Basic necessity

As there was a new hamlet coming up so there are no basic things till now. There is no water supply, no electricity, no proper road. Though the hamlet is up on a ‘tilla’ (plautue) and have to go through paddy field and climb it but situated near pucca road. Residents of that hamlet relates their health perception with the availability of basic necessities.

“There is no water, no electricity, water is far away, if everything is properly available our health will be fine.” (Ramesh Urang, 30years, Male permanent worker, Natuntilla, 2018).

Relation with wages/income

Workers also relates their health perception with that of food intake. Food intake is related to wages or income of the family. Price of rice, other foods like meat, fish etc. Their perception is that if they eat ‘good food’ their health will be fine. According to them ‘good food’ is ‘eating non-veg food everyday’. Usually workers eat green leafy vegetables every day. Those vegetables they produce at kitchen garden or collects from fields, jungles. Sometimes they buy also. On market day they buy meat from market. Fish they usually catch from the waterbodies found nearby hamlets. So, they cannot afford to have non-veg food every day or every meal. Only one or two meal in a week they can have non-veg food.

“Taking food properly..... there are less wages in the garden. Income has to be adequate. One has to take proper food to be healthy” (Santosh Chasa, 37years, male permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Most of the male workers felt that they need to take “proper good food” to be healthy and for that income is necessary.

Relationship with diseases and medicine/cure

Those workers who are suffering from different types of ailments they find that if their diseases become cured, they will feel healthy.

“If my stomach pain become alright, I will feel healthy”. (Manik Urang, male permanent worker, Meghlibund,2018).

He is suffering from stomach problem for long time. He has consulted physicians many times but after few days again his problem recurs. So, he is upset for that.

Another worker who is suffering from insomnia for last fifteen years he says if he could get sleep, he will feel healthy.

Those who are suffering from diseases they find that taking medicine will help them to become healthy.

“I feel good if I take medicine for diabetes.” (Paresh Bhattacharya,67years, Priest, reemployed worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

They perceive health with a disease-free body.

“If there are no diseases, I feel healthy”. (Sakuntala Urang, female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Relationship with bad habits

Here ‘bad habits’ mainly indicate ‘drinking habit’. Keeping away from drinking habit makes them feel good. Drinking rice beer (hadiya/langi/Chuwak) is not good for health they feel. Still they drink. One worker said,

“If I do not drink, I feel good.” (Budhu urang, 58 years, male permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

He drinks all the time. He knows that this habit is making him sick still he cannot quit his drinking habit. So according to him if he does not drink, he will feel healthy and fine. Other

workers of the tea estates also said drinking is a bad habit for them. Due to this habit the male member of the families sometimes ignores their duties towards family. They spend all their wages on drinking. So female member of the families has to take all the burden of taking care of families⁴⁰.

Social interaction

Many of them being healthy means good relation with others. They find that if they keep good relation with neighbours, friends, family members they feel good. Interacting with other people also makes them happy. During off days they roam around hamlets, visit friends, relatives, chat with them, party with them and that makes them happy.

“Keeping good relation with everyone, taking food and being jolly makes me feel healthy.” (Sentu Nayek, 60 years, male permanent worker-chowkidar, Meghlibund, 2018).

‘Interacting with others nicely’, ‘roaming around’, ‘keeping good relation with others’ these are the phrases used by workers to describe their perception of being healthy.

Especially male workers felt that if they interact with other people, sit and talk with friends, roam with them to outer place like bazar they feel happy.

Women workers feel if they go to work place and interact with other people there, they feel good and tension free.

“Working make me feel good. If I go to work place, I can meet with many people there. Staying at home makes me lonely.” (Hira Urang, 27years, Female temporary worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Researcher when went with them at their work place she has seen that they not only work there they also interact with other people in many ways. They talk, sing, crack jokes, ask about family, gossip, share their happiness, sorrows, anger, frustration with one another. Researcher felt that these makes them to bring out their underlying tension and to some extent free their mind.

⁴⁰ Researcher came across many families where male members were drinking even at day time. But they are scared of their wife. One male worker said, ‘I drank today. When she (referring to his wife) will come she will be angry. I have spent all the money today. I could not control.’ (male permanent worker, 2018, meghlibund). As researcher was waiting for the female workers, she came across the anger and frustration of female worker when she came back from work and realized that her husband has spent all money in drinking.

Family happiness

Women workers relate their happiness with that of family's health and happiness. They relate childrens' wellbeing with their happiness.

"If everyone is happy and healthy, I feel good. If children are at home, I feel good." (Sabita Urang, 45years, female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Other female workers also echoed same ...

"If children are happy, I feel happy." (Anita Nayek, Female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

"Keeping good relation with everyone. If family members remain healthy, I too feel healthy." (Anjana Urang, 21 years, female temporary worker).

"If everyone is healthy at home, I too feel healthy." (Asha Panika, 38years, female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Their health perception of being healthy relates with their family's happiness.

Relation with education

Some workers feel that if they could pursue education, they would have felt better. Even some of the parents who are tea garden worker they find that if their children get education, they will feel happy and healthy. The workers know that education is one of the great instruments to overcome their sufferings and gain a better position in society. In spite of their financial constraints they try to send their children to school to get education.

"Taking good food, getting every facility and working less. Over that I would have feel better if I did not have to drop out of school. (Maran Urang, 23years, male permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

This has been felt by many of the workers children. They want to study. Their parents also feel that if they get education their life will be better. This has been echoed at Durgabari also. In their word '*chokh khulche*'--- education has opened their eyes.

In spite of struggle they want their children to get education, when the TB patient of Durgabari said *"whatever happens I want my son to study. That will make me happy."*

Entertainment:

Young women see entertainment as their means for being happy and healthy. They feel if they can roam around and watch movie or television, they feel healthy and happy other than taking 'good food'.

"Interacting with people keeps my mind fresh. There is no electricity, no television what will I watch that my mind will be peaceful? I do not feel to stay home alone." (Ganga Urang, 20 years, female temporary worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Watching television which gives entertainment as well as keeps loneliness away gives happiness to young women. These are observed by researcher that during off days or those who have small children or pregnant and not going for work to other tea gardens or working at others field they roam around the hamlets and either watch Television or sit and gossip.

"Always staying at home, under fan, watching television, I feel healthy". (Sajali Turia, 22years, female temporary worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

From this narrative also it has been seen. Her mother-in-law is permanent worker at tea estate and she has two small children. She also does not work at another place.

Mental health: 'If there is no tension'

This is the line when they relate their health perception— 'if there is no tension'. This has been said by most of the women worker. They describe their mental health condition like 'peaceful', 'without quarrel', 'peaceful environment'- especially at home than they feel healthy. Couple of women workers said that

"If there is tension, I fall sick" (Sabita Panoria, Aruna Panoria, female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

They not only fall sick but do not even eat food properly. Most of the time their tension is for children and family. In one instance worker son has appeared Madhyamik examination but could not pass so this time (June 2018) he is working somewhere to earn some money so that he can take tuition. He wants to sit for same exam next time. Her mother is tensed for his health and education. She also said that because of tension she cannot eat or sleep properly. She said if her tension goes away, she will feel healthy.

Wife of one of the office staff were worried for her son's unemployment. So be it worker or office staff, 'mother's' worry for their children is universal.

Male workers anxiety is regarding wages or tension at work place. The tea garden is running at a loss and for that their wages and other facilities also are getting disturbed.

Some of the versions are like "*If there is no tension at tea garden*", (*Santosh Chasa, male permanent worker*), "*Work place tension, what workers will tell me, what I have to face after coming here at office*" (*in charge manager, reemployed*) explains male workers tension related to workplace. The office staff of both the tea estates who were suffering from diabetes they not only talk about work place stress and tension they also talk about stress they suffer due to insecurity of future and concern about security of life. (insurgency problem)

These they say affects their health and wellbeing.

Above section said what are the domain workers relate themselves with perception of health. This varies with gender, age and hierarchy. Women's perception of being healthy revolve around her family, children and overall well-being of her loved one, peaceful environment at family, cleanliness, taking care of family, good relation with people. Though they relate 'food' as one of the elements for being healthy but male workers relates 'good food' as more important for them to be healthy. Another important factor is that those who are young, strong and healthy they find that work makes them feel healthy. Those who are aged, weak or young women or men suffering from any diseases they feel if they stay at home or take rest, food, medicine they feel healthy.

2. Relationship with work and health

Workers across the hierarchy can relate their illness with that of work. office staffs relate their illness with the pressure/ stress they get at work place due to workers demand, managing and meeting their demands, uncertainty of the future of the tea estates and personal life (case report BB, SD) whereas field workers or factory workers relates with that of long hours of work, maintaining time tables, arduous environment, pressure from higher authority for finishing work on time.

When the office staff who is suffering from hypertension and diabetes said that, "*I have to face workers agitation always. I don't have any other tension, only workplace tension.*" It became obvious that pressure from both sides reflects on health of each category of workers.

Name: BB

Age: 75 years

Sex: male

Diseases: Diabetes with Hypertension

Duration of suffering: Diabetes since 1996 and Hypertension since 2000

He is tilla babu and acting manager of Meghlibund tea estate. After retirement he has been reemployed by the management. He was abducted by militants along with previous owner of the tea estate. His salary is 7500Rs/month. He gets 1300Rs pension per month. His only child-a daughter is married and stay in city. His wife and himself consists of his family. He was first diagnosed for diabetes when he was admitted at a nursing home for three months after rescue from militants. He said...

"I was suffering from malaria. That had been persisting. No medicine was working. Then blood test was done for blood sugar. Before abduction I was not suffering from any disease. Since than I am taking medicine. Now I take insulin twice daily. I take medicine for hypertension also. Hypertension was diagnosed in the year 2000 AD. Once in a year I test blood for blood sugar. Last, I have checked in July 2018. After two hours it was 206mg/dl (post prandial). That time cataract operation was done." (office staff, 75years, Meghlibundh tea estate, 2018).

He said because of condition of tea estate he suffers from tension. In his words...

"Caretaker stay in Agartala. I have to look after all matters here. Every morning when I come here, I feel tension. I don't know what shall I face after coming here. Whenever any problem happens workers come to me. There is financial problem in the tea estate. Till 2012 AD gratuity and pension are cleared by owner but after that no one is getting pension and gratuity. Workers are giving their share but the caretaker is not depositing owners side share to the fund of workers. Whenever this issue come caretaker threatens to leave tea estate if owner pay his money which he spent for tea estate. There is irregularity in workers payment, we don't get manure, medicine, labour force regularly. This is a big garden. We need at least 500 workers. But only 250 workers are there. Because of financial problem we cannot recruit more workers but, in this locality, there are no scarcity of workers. I have to face workers agitation always. I don't have any other tension, only workplace tension." (office staff, 75years, Meghlibundh tea estate2018)

In his opinion maintaining regularity is the key to have a good health. Since 1997 he and his wife became vegetarian. He follows strict diet chart. Though he does not do any exercise but he rides bicycle for coming to his workplace. He consults private allopathic practitioner in Agartala.

Name: SD

Age: 56 years

Sex: Male

Disease: Diabetes and Hypertension

Duration of disease suffering: Diabetes for ten years at the time of interview (21/12/2018)

Hypertension since 2014.

He is male permanent office staff of Durgabari tea estate. He has been working for 35 years at the tea estate. His salary is 28000 Rs. He has a daughter who studies in school (class IV) and wife. he used to stay in a joint family previously but now in a nuclear family. As he was eldest at home, he had many responsibilities towards his other siblings and family. He is suffering from diabetes for ten years and hypertension since 2014. He had suffered from stroke twice, once in the year 2016 and another in the year 2018. He consulted private allopathic doctor in city and outside of state. Every day he takes medicine for his ailments. He takes home remedies also along with allopathic treatment. He has not got any monetary benefit from management. He said they will propose to management for monetary benefit from management in case any worker take treatment outside of state. He maintains regularity. He does Yoga and exercise. He strictly follows diet chart. He said...

“I was the eldest among brothers. We stayed in a joint family for 25years. I had family burden. I looked after them. I know here I get less salary. If I would have worked in government sector my salary would have been more now. I got job here through my father’s recommendation. My daughter is still small. I shall retire after two years. My

health is also not good. Last time I went to Vellore for treatment. I spend so much money. I have no land property also. I do not have any idea what shall I do after retirement?” (male permanent worker, office staff, 56 years, Durgabari, 21/12/2018)

When workers said that they have work under ‘scorching sun’, ‘during rainy season’ ‘without getting proper protective measures’ and if they want also ‘they cannot take rest’ reflects the hard, arduous working condition of workers. They get headache, fever, body ache, pain on leg and hand. While plucking tea leaf their ‘fingers bleeds, cracks’, and plucking tea leaves is ‘not an easy job’ for the female workers. The usual working hour starts at 7am morning and finishes at 5 pm evening. They get 2hours break in between for lunch. Though the first shift ends at 12 noon but most of the time from plucking area to office is far way. After weighing of the plucked leaves, the female workers can come to house. Most of the time it became 1pm. They have to do some house hold work also sometimes and if young children are there, they have to fed them too. They do not get time to eat properly due to time constraints. Again at 2pm they have to report to the ‘sardar’ otherwise they get scolded or not allowed to work. Their wages were cut. Long working hours, burden of works at home as well as work place, burden of child rearing and not having food properly make female worker weak. They complain of ‘giddiness’, ‘black out’, ‘feeling weak’, ‘feel like staying at home’, ‘feel like to take rest’. During peak season when they have to work three shifts it become very difficult for female workers. Though most of the male member of the family recognize the burden of work female has to do and try to help them but it’s not adequate.

Workers related headache, body ache, pain in hand, leg with their work-related phenomena and weather. When researcher took interview that was summer. So weather was sunny and hot. Women worker said

“Look throughout day we have to work under scorching sun. obviously, there will be headache. But what to do. We have to work only.” (female workers, Meghlibund, 2018).



Pic 5.2: ‘Farati’, instrument made of bamboo used by female workers to pluck tea leaves (Left), women workers using ‘farati’ for plucking tea leaf (Right)

Source: Clicked by researcher and displayed with consent of workers, 2018

They use “*farati*”- a small bamboo made sharp instrument which helps in plucking of tea leaves, for plucking tea leaves. There is a belief that women workers use two fingers to pluck tea leaves. But no...this is not true. When researcher saw this and asked about this instrument, they explained to her

“Who will pluck with two fingers? Our skin cracks. Blood oozes out from fingers. This is not an easy job. That’s why we use ‘farati’.” (female workers, Meghlibund, 2018).

Researcher was surprised to know the truth. She was thinking what media and advertisement projects and what reality is. They hold leaves in one hand and tear with ‘farati’. Continuously doing so hands pain.

They have to walk throughout the day. It may be through the tea bushes or for other works like collecting firewood from forest, going to market or going to one hamlet to another hamlet.

“We walk miles after miles throughout day since morning to evening. Even on holidays there are so many works to do at house. Our leg pains. ‘pa to dukhaboi’. (female workers, Meghlibund,2018).

They even related less food intake due to heavy workload. Early in the morning they go for work after having roti with salted tea or previous days rice with sobji. In the work place at around 11AM they take tiffin (snacks). These vary from puffed rice (Muri), smashed mixture of potato and tea leaves, fruits, biscuits, cakes, chips, even rice etc. They share their tiffin and eat in a group. Those who take rice they usually eat separately. Rice they take when they do not get time to eat in the morning. After coming home, they take bath and do some household

work, give food to children and by that time it is again time for to go to work. Most of the time they take food hurriedly. So, they cannot take food properly. Regarding food intake female workers said,

“We do not have time to eat due to work load. There are foods at home but we cannot eat properly. If we become late at work place sardar will scold us. Who wants to get scolded? Sometimes they do not allow us to work also.” (female workers, Meghibund, 2018).

So, the food intake is not only for time constraints but also pressure on work place as well as home also.

The pressure on women workers is much more that is recognized by the male workers also. They all said that women have more work load. They have to work home as well as in the field. Here researcher has observed that men also helps in household work. They cook, cut vegetables, do other household work if they come back from work before their female members of home. One male worker said,

“We do not wait for our women. We do our work. everybody has to do work otherwise how will we eat?” (Male worker, Meghlibund, 2018)

Leucorrhoea is another problem women workers or other women, girls in the hamlets suffers from (Case report AP). Many are suffering from several years. When researcher asked them about personal hygiene, they said positively but when she further probed than she came to know that at work place if needed they go for open defecation and use river water or stagnant water from pit. There are no toilet facilities throughout the garden. They have to come to hamlets or go for open defecation and use river water. In the hamlets also younger children defecate in open space. Those were thrown in the toilet by adult people or in a narrow pit nearby. These causes worm infestation of the inhabitants.

Name: AP

Age: NA

Sex: female

Diseases: Leucorrhoea

Duration of suffering: since she was 14-15 years old

She is permanent worker in the Meghlibund tea estate. Her husband also a permanent worker in the tea estate and Panchayat member. She lives in a joint family along with in-laws and teen aged children. She has been suffering from leucorrhoea since her adolescence period. She was unmarried that time. She has taken medicine from herbalist, from faith healer, from local Ayurvedic practitioner and allopathic practitioner. But after some days the problem recurs. She has taken an ointment which researcher has prescribed to her. She is very thin and looks anaemic. Sometimes she suffers from menorrhagia. She said she feels weak and dizzy.

“I feel weak, I do not feel like eating anything. I took Ayurvedic medicine. Three files (here suspension) I took. 280 Rs each. Now I do not feel dizzy but I feel weak.”
(female permanent worker, married Meghlibund, 2018)

IV. Maternal, child health and contraception

Child birth weight:

This data was collected from Anganwadi Centre and ASHA: (Dhakaiya Para)

Table: 5.15 child birth weight of tea workers in relation to others (Dhakaiya Para)

S	Nam	Age	Cast	Ethnic	Tea garden	Deliver	Sex	Birth	Place
l	e of	of	e of	ity of	worker/wor	y date	of	weight	of
o	moth	moth	moth	mothe	ker's wife		baby	of	deliver
	er	er	er	r	or not			baby	y
1	L	19	ST	Urang	Yes	29/3/20 18	F	2.5 kg	PHC
2	P	19	SC	Benga li	Yes	25/3/20 18	M	2.2 kg	CHC (Anoth er

									district)
3	R	21	ST	Urang	Yes	10/5/2018	F	3kg	PHC
4	Li	24	G	Bengali	No	22/12/2017	F	3kg	PPP model Medical college hospital (caesarean)
5	B	19	G	Bengali	No	10/02/2018	F	3.4 kg	District Hospital (caesarean)
6	M	23	G	Bengali	No	7/11/2017	F (twins)	2.2kg, 2.00kg	Private nursing home (caesarean)
7	Pr	25	ST	Vil	Yes	20/08/2017	M	2.4 kg	Medical college hospital

Source: Collected from ASHA and Anganwadi worker and compiled by researcher, 01/07/2018

Table: 5.16 child birth weight of tea workers in relation to others (Meghlibund)

Sl no	Name of mother	Caste of mother	Ethnicity of mother	Tea garden worker/worker's wife/ or not	Delivery date	Sex of baby	Weight of baby	Place of delivery
1	S	SC		Yes	18/01/2018	M	NA	Medical college hospital
2	K	ST	Urang	Yes	10/01/2018	M	2.5 kg	PHC
3	A	SC		Yes	26/03/2018	M	2.5kg	Home
4	G	SC		Yes	8/04/2018	F	3.00kg	PHC
5	P	G		Yes	21/03/2018	M	2.5 kg	Home
6	N	SC	Bengali	No	13/06/2018	M	NA	Medical college hospital
7	M	OBC	Oria	No	24/03/2017	M	2.6kg	Medical college hospital(caesarean)
8	Ap	SC		No	21/6/2017	F	NA	Medical college hospital
9	R	SC		Yes	13/06/2017	M	NA	Home
10	An	ST	Urang	Yes	11/03/2017	F	2.7kg	Home
11	Ay	ST	Urang	Yes	31/08/2017	F	2.4 kg	PHC
12	Kr	G	Oria	No	21/11/2017	F	3.1 kg	Medical college hospital

1 3	Lm	ST	Munda	Yes	26/10/20 17	F	NA	Subdivision hospital (another district)
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Source: Collected and compiled by researcher from ASHA, 2/07/2018

Both the tables show that birth weight of tea garden workers baby and those who are not tea garden worker or ethnicity is Bengali does not have difference in birth weight of babies. In those two tables it is also showed that baby girl birth weight is more than baby boys birth weight. Only in two cases girls birth weight is less than normal⁴¹. There is only one twin birth and weight of the babies are 2.00 kg and 2.200 kg. Mother is not tea garden worker or not tea garden workers wife, they are Bengali Brahmin. She delivered her baby at Medical college hospital. Another is tea garden worker whose girls birth weight is 2.4kg. she delivered at PHC.

In the Meghlibund hamlet there are babies who were born at home. They were delivered by 'dai' or mothers relatives or neighbours. Mothers age varies from 19 years to 25 years. In the table 5.16 (Meghlibund) mothers age is not mentioned but as researcher knows those mothers personally, she knows the age of the mothers. Immunizations of children are given on time. The Anganwadi and ASHA records shows that children are immunized. Mothers are also immunized during pregnancy. (Tetanus Toxoid first and second dose).

Table: 5.17 Child birth weight at Durgabari tea estate

Sl no.	Code of the mother	Cast e of the mother	Age of the mother	Whether tea garden worker/wor ker's wife	Ethnic ity of the mothe r	Se x of bab y	Weig ht of baby	Date of delivery	Place of delivery
1	BK(M)	ST	20	Yes	Munda	M	2.5kg	3/5/19	PHC
2	SC	G	20	No	Benga li	F	2.5kg	23/7/18	Nursing home
3	AU	SC	22	Yes	Oria	F	2.6kg	4/4/18	Medical college hospital(caesa rean)

⁴¹ According to WHO babies born less than 2.5 kg irrespective of gestation age is termed as Low Birth Weight (LBW) baby.

4	AM	ST	NA	Yes	Munda	F	3kg	12/3/17	Medical college hospital
5	PT	SC	NA	Yes	Oria	M	3.6kg	13/6/17	District hospital
6	SM(K)	SC	NA	Yes	Bengali	M	2.2kg	22/5/17	Medical college hospital
7	BT	SC	NA	Yes	Oria	M	2.5kg	17/10/17	On the way to hospital (vehicle). Mother in law helped
8	GU	ST	NA	Yes	Orang	M	2.6kg	10/6/18	District hospital
9	RM	ST	NA	Yes	Munda	M	2.6kg	27/10/18	Medical college hospital
10	SG	SC	NA	Yes	Goala	F	3.7kg	28/10/18	District hospital
11	AB	SC	NA	Yes	Bhumi j	F	1.8kg	28/6/19 (premature delivery)	Medical college hospital
12	AMU	ST	NA	Yes	Munda	M	3.2kg	9/5/19	Medical college hospital

Source: Collected from two Anganwadi centres situated at Durgabari tea estate and compiled by researcher, 2019

The babies born at Durgabari tea estate show better birth weight than the babies born at Meghlibund tea estate. All the babies were born at different health institutions. Only two babies have low birth weight, one of them who (female) were born prematurely has low birth weight (1.8kg) another male baby (2.2kg) born to a Bengali mother. Like Meghlibund the age of the mothers are also less. Though in some cases Anganwadi centre did not record mothers age but the Anganwadi worker said all mothers are within 25 years of age. In one case she said mother's age was only 14 or 15 years. She delivered a small baby and the child is now malnourished and low weight. Anganwadi workers of both the centres said there is no infant or mother mortality with in last twelve years. (as they have been working there for last twelve years so they could provide that data. Previous data they do not have.) All mothers and children are immunised.

Older women have version about child, child birth and wellbeing of mother and child that god has given so he will take care of that. In one incident at Meghlibund the baby (son) died after one month of delivery. The elderly lady (mother-in-law, she is retired worker of tea estate) said to researcher,

“Children are gifted by God, if he wants, he will keep, if he does not, he will take. What can we do?” (elderly retired woman worker, Meghlibund, 11/6/2016).

Next year her daughter-in-law delivered another baby (son). Because she had complication during her first pregnancy this time, they have taken her to medical college hospital. The baby survived. Within one year she delivered two babies because of that she looks so weak and anaemic. In another case (she is female temporary worker) also first-born child died and next year she again delivered another baby. That child was delivered at medical college hospital. He was in ICU (Intensive Care Unit) for six days. That baby, also having breathing trouble when researcher visited their home she came to know. They have consulted private paediatrician at city. In this case also mother is anaemic and weak. Those mothers whose first-born child survived they take two- or three-years interval before having another child. Most of the new mothers are between 19 year to 25 years of age.

In another case delivery has been conducted in PHC. It was normal delivery. The weight of the baby was 2.7kg but she developed complications after birth. Mother and baby had been referred to medical college hospital but the baby died on the way to hospital.

The latest NFHS data shows (NFHS-4;2015-2016) that IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) in Tripura is 27% (total). In rural area it is 32%. In NFHS-3 this rate was 51%. This is state data but there is no data among tea garden workers. Above tables (5.15; 5.16) shows that birth weight of babies born to tea garden workers or tea garden workers wife does not have any difference with other who are not tea garden workers or workers wife, but death rate is more among tea garden workers babies. There was no death among other babies born to other than tea garden workers. Why infant mortality rate is more among the tea garden workers? When researcher inquired at PHC they said that there is no infant mortality. But when researcher inquire at field, she came to know there is infant mortality.

Table 5.18: Percentage of delivery at different place

Sl no.	Place of delivery	Number of deliveries	%
1	Institutional Delivery	16	80%
2	Home delivery	4	20%

Source: Compiled by researcher from table 5.15 and 5.16

Tables (table 5.15, 5.16, 5.17) also shows most of the delivery happened at institutions, be it PHC, CHC, District hospital or Medical college hospital. In NFHS-4 state (Tripura) data also shows that 79.9% deliveries happened in the institutes (urban-92.6% and Rural 75.7%). Only 1.2% of total deliveries happened at home by skilled health personnel (urban-1%; Rural-1.3%). There are no total data in NFHS-4 about deliveries conducted at home by dais or other persons. Only skilled personnel conducted delivery data has been given. Among twenty deliveries four deliveries happened at home by dais or relatives. All four of them are tea garden workers. Above table (table 5.18) shows that 80% of deliveries happened in public or private institutes where as 20% at home. This data relates with the delivery conducted at institute data of NFHS-4 (79.9%). But this data is higher than rural data (75.7%).

There were six expectant mothers under Dhakaiya para Anganwadi Centre, ten under Meghlibund Number 2 and two under Meghlibund Number 1 Anganwadi Centre till December 2018. All of them taken tetanus toxoid immunization. Iron tablets has been given to adolescent girls and expectant mothers. But ASHA and Anganwadi workers complained that those tablets women or girls does not take regularly. There are two expectant mothers at Durgabari tea estate. All of the mothers were immunised.

The workers of Meghlibund does not use contraceptive method that elaborately. Though in sub-Centre, PHC have provision for supplying contraceptive method but they are not inclined to use that. Older generations have many children. Middle aged generation has at least four children. New generation has two children or sometimes three. Male workers are not keen to use contraception. So, responsibility falls on women. But they sometimes are unable to access that. In PHC there used to be laparoscopic ligation camp but few has taken that opportunity.

When researcher asked about contraception in group discussion most of them said they follow “calendar method” (“*mainnya choli*”) or “withdrawal method”.

At Durgabari workers follow contraceptive method. Though elderly women said during group discussion...

“In our time we did not have all these. Children were born. Those who survived they survived, those who did not they did not. It was God’s wish. (Elderly women, Durgabari 13/12/2018)

There at Durgabari the age of marriage is early. There were women who has undergone laparoscopic ligation around 25 or 27 years old. One couple recently got married, boy’s age is only 19 years which is below the legal age of marriage in India.⁴² Both girl and boy’s age are same. One female worker said...

“I underwent ligation. I have two children; both are by caesarean section. So, I did it. I do not want any”. (Female worker, 25years old, Durbabari, 13/12/2018)

Most of the women either take contraceptive pills or undergo ligation. Anganwadi workers also said that they take contraceptive pills and condom from the centre.

Nutrition programmes for children and mother

Anganwadi Centre: Anganwadi Centre provides “khichuri” to children who attend the Centre. They provide for pregnant and lactating mother and elderly people. In the morning children gets biscuits. After that khichuri. On Wednesday they get a boiled egg with khichuri. Recently at Anganwadi centre government started giving breakfast to children. The menu is different every day. Recently from April 2019 at Anganwadi centre government started providing different type of breakfast to children. The menu of breakfast is

Table: 5.19: Menu of breakfast at Anganwadi centre in Tripura

Sl no	Day	Menu
1	Monday	Suji (halua,salted)
2	Tuesday	Chola Muri (boiled brown chickpeas and puffed rice)

⁴² In both the tea estates during group discussion it came out that workers get marry at early age. Within 20 years of age most of the female got married and within 25 years of age most of the male got married. According to NFHS-4 data marital age in Tripura is 2nd lowest in India (child marriage 15-19 years age in Tripura-21.06% whereas in India it is 11.09%

3	Wednesday	Boiled egg
4	Thursday	Chirar polao (polao of beaten rice/flattened rice)
5	Friday	Chola Muri (boiled brown chickpeas and puffed rice)
6	Saturday	Boiled egg

Source: Collected from Anganwadi centre and compiled by researcher, 2019

At school: At school under midday meal programme children from class I to class VIII gets meal. Six days they get meal. The meal varies from khichuri to rice, dal, rice- mixed vegetables, rice- soybean, rice-egg curry etc. Before 'payes' (*payasam*/rice pudding) used to be given on Saturday. Now that has been stopped. That day rice *sobji* or khichuri is given now.

Recently in school too menu has been changed for Mid-Day Meal. Previously school used to provide egg curry once in a week. New menu is

Table: 5.20: Menu of Mid-Day-Meal in schools of Tripura

Sl no.	Day	Menu
1	Monday	Khichuri (dal+chawl+sobji)
2	Tuesday	Rice-egg curry
3	Wednesday	Rice- sobji (soya bean, potato, available seasonal sobji)
4	Thursday	Rice-egg curry
5	Friday	Rice-sobji
6	Saturday	Khichuri (dal+chawl+sobji)

Source: Collected from nearby Primary and High schools of tea estates and compiled by researcher, 2019

Researcher has observed that from Anganwadi Centre people take khichuri to home. The workers provide utensils to get food from Anganwadi Centre. Because children are small and workers go for work so those who stay back at home, they take food on behalf of children. Before going for work most of the mother give roti-tea or rice to children. So, when Anganwadi

Centre provide food those small children cannot eat. They take home and eat at around 11am. Mothers of Durgabari tea estate come and eat khichuri with children. Sometimes if mothers are away at work they took at home. Children too eat at the Anganwadi centre.

Programmes at Anganwadi centres and schools

Anganwadi centres implement VHND-Village Health and Nutrition Day Programme along with PHC. Anganwadi centre also implement ECCE-Early Childhood Care and Education programme, monthly meeting with mother and child, meeting about nutrition, RBSK-Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, immunisation programme, National deworming programme along with health department. Anganwadi centre also provide contraceptive measures to couples. Recently since June 2019 two new programme started for expecting mothers and babies. One is 'Sadh'- baby shower- giving nutritious food to mother at five/seven/nine month of pregnancy, another 'Annaprasan'- first rice eating ceremony of babies. Anganwadi centre implement these programmes at alternate month till researcher visited those centres (August-2019). They also implement hand wash day at Anganwadi centres. RBSK-Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram team visited Anganwadi centres of Durgabari in the year 2015, 2016,2018,2019, but they have not visited Anganwadi centres of Meghlibund tea estates. They have not visited schools also in that area. This finding is similar to Das's M.Phil (2015) study. (Das 2019). One RBSK team cannot cover all the Anganwadi centres and schools in one year. Many times, distant Anganwadi centres and schools are left out. Meghlibund tea estate is 42 kilometres away from Agartala and Durgabari is near about 12 kilometres.

Schools usually keeps record of height and weight of students. There were Rubella vaccination programme at school from PHC. There was deworming programme too at Primary School. Recently there were Rubella Vaccination Programme (February -2019), Tobacco Awareness Programme (13/08/2019) from PHC, De-worming Programme (08/08/2019, 19/08/2019) in schools. Other than these programmes there are Adolescence Programme, Banmohotsav, self defence programme, Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti (cultural programmes) and National programmes has been observed at High Schools. The RBSK team has not visited these schools since the programme launched in 2013 in Tripura.

V. Constraints faced by workers for accessibility of health service

Distance and accessibility

Though there are two sub-Centre but PHC is nearer to the hamlets. There are two hamlets, which are at equal distance from PHC and sub-Centre. So, people of those two hamlets prefer to go to PHC. There are 24*7 service in the PHC. The land of the PHC was donated by the owner of the tea estate. The medicine shops are also near to PHC. The market is also nearer to PHC. The shop which has collaboration with the tea estate also in the market. So, if ailments are not cured by other means than workers go to PHC.

The CHC is 21 km from the Meghlibund tea estate and from Durgabari tea estate the CHC is also same distance. The same CHC covers both the tea estates. The human resources and facilities are not adequate in the CHC. The CHC also serve as the outlet Centre for Medical college students. As in the previous tables (5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7) shown that facilities are inadequate so from Meghlibund tea estate workers most of the time goes to district hospital or medical college hospital which are 42km away from tea estate, for secondary or tertiary care. Even in-charge of CHC told to researcher that people from those tea estates does not come for consultation to the CHC, they directly go to district or medical college hospital.

PHC is almost two kilometres away from Durgabari tea estate. The district hospital is 12km and Medical college hospital is also almost same distance like district hospital. So, the workers prefer to go to city and take treatment there. For minor ailments they go to the nearby market and consult private medical practitioner there or take medicine from medicine shop. The pharmacist of the tea estate also provide medicine for fever, diarrhoea, cough and cold etc.

The Agartala- Simna road connects the hamlets of Meghlibund tea estate to the city. Buses and jeeps are available at regular interval starting from 5 am to 5.30 pm to city. From city buses starts from 6 am to 6.30 pm. It takes one and half hour to two hours to reach the city. From city bus stand district hospital and medical college hospital both are at 15 minutes distance. Other than this personal or hired vehicles are available for transport. The same road connects CHC also. Both PHC and CHC is near the road.

Durgabari tea estate is connected to the city by buses, jeeps, auto service. Transports are available all round the clock though at night less vehicles are available. Durgabari tea estate has its own vehicle. There are five vehicles. In case of emergency those vehicles are used. There is provision for hiring auto. Owner of those autos are known to workers and they are

available whenever needed. From the tea estate it takes half hour to reach district and medical college hospital. To reach CHC it takes 45 minutes to one hour from the tea estate.

Meghlibund tea estate sometimes provides vehicles to workers if they fell sick during work. There are few mini trucks and goods autos owned by local businessmen. Sometimes workers hire those vehicles if patient is sick and unable to walk due to illness. Referral cases from PHC hire vehicles to go to district or medical college hospital. Pregnant women get ambulance or if not, available they get financial assistance from PHC for hiring vehicle.

Timings and accessibility

The timings of health Centre also restrict accessibility of the service. The OPD timings for PHC and CHC are morning 8 am to 1.30 pm and evening 4 pm to 6 pm. The timings of sub-Centre are 8 am to 3.30 pm. workers work time in the tea estate starts from morning 7 am to 12 pm which extends to 1 pm also, afternoon working time is 2 pm to 5 pm. During peak season work starts from 5 am. There are three shifts that time. So, if they want to come to hospital, they have to take leave and come or else their one-day wages have to be compromised. So, most of the worker either buy over the counter from medicine shop or take other means. In serious cases they go to health Centre. Traditional healers are inside the hamlets or near the hamlets. One healer visits hamlet on Saturday. Other herbalists they can consult according to their convenient time.

Lack of human resources

It has been observed that due to lack of reliable human resources they delay going to the health service centre. Most of the time workers go to work. Children and elderly people or sick persons stay back home. They cannot take the sick persons to health care. When other members get time, they consult health care. If emergency than workers has to take leave from work and take sick persons to health care. If leave is not there, they have to lose one day wage. In the case of Tuberculosis (Case profile KT) also there were no reliable persons to take the patient to DOTS Centre for taking injection. His wife used to go for work.

Name: KT

Age: 59 years

Sex: male

Disease: Tuberculosis

Duration of suffering: first phase he suffered and got cured after taking medicine.

Again, relapsed in the year 2018

He was retired permanent worker of Meghlibund tea estate. He had wife, daughter and son. Wife is also tea garden worker (permanent). Daughter and son stay at home. First time when he suffered tuberculosis, he took medicine from nearby DOTS centre and completed the treatment. Later on, he started taking liquor (country made rice beer-hadiya/langi/chuwak) and again became sick. He was diagnosed again for tuberculosis. He started taking medicine again from the same DOTS centre. He was taking medicine irregularly. Reason he cited that due to his weakness he was not able to go to DOTS centre and take injections and medicine regularly. In his words...

“Madam listen I took medicine. I could not take injection. I feel so weak. I cannot go to health centre for taking injection. I cannot walk. First time when I took medicine, I supposed to get money after finishing my treatment but I did not get. You need to take good diet if you have this disease. Who will give me good diet? I cannot afford. I told ASHA to give me injection at home but she declined. I took few injections. At market at one medicine shop they kept my injections but I could not go there also.” (male Tuberculosis patient, age-59, retired worker of Meghlibund tea estate, 2018).

Though ASHA visited him at his house but she was not able to do anything about giving him injection as she was not trained to do that. She said...

“I used to give him strips of medicine but he never took regularly. Many times, I went to his house and requested him to take medicine but he never listens”.

Same thing was echoed by the MPWs and MPS of the DOTS centre.

“Yes, we know the case. He supposed to take injection but he does not take that regularly. Medicine also he does not take regularly.”

His family members too unable to take him to DOTS centre regularly. The DOTS centre is 2.5 km away and the market where medicine shop is 1 km away from his house. The wife said...

“Early in the morning I go to work, afternoon I came back for lunch and again I go back to work. Only Saturday I get rest but that day also there are so many works to do. If I don't go for work who will look after family?” (female permanent worker, wife of tuberculosis patient, Meghlibund tea estate, 2018)

<p>He succumbed to his disease.</p>

He did not get the monetary benefit he was supposed to get after finishing his treatment. His financial condition did not allow him to take proper nutrition during and after his treatment. His habit has already suppressed immunity of his body and made him vulnerable to infection. Again, he was infected with tuberculosis. His family was struggling to survive with sole income of his wife. ASHA was not trained to handle such patients. Health personnel blamed the patient for his irregularity. Even ASHA took his signature that he is not willing to take treatment where as his financial, health status, family condition was not in his favour to avail treatment. ASHA got his sign in a paper where it was written that he was not willing to take treatment. The ASHA and health personnel safe guarded themselves by putting blame on the patient. Whereas, the patient was willing to take treatment if situation was in his favour. This case of tuberculosis reflects the almost same condition like Rakku's story. (Zubrigg 1984). There was hunger, malnutrition, fear of losing one day wages, inadequate training of health personnel, blaming on patient, inadequate living condition, management not cared for the worker's condition, economic constraint all these had favoured increase in another number of tuberculosis mortality.

Financial constraints

Workers' wages are 105Rs/day. They get wages weekly. This wage is very less. Previous chapter (chapter 4, family income table) we have seen that their family income is very less. So, whenever anyone fall sick it become difficult for them to consult health service care immediately. They wait for their wages. Sometimes they buy medicine from medicine shop in credit. One girl child is having nodules in her neck. Her father died of tuberculosis. Her mother and grandmother both are permanent workers of tea estate. When her father was alive, he took her to medical college hospital. There needle aspiration cytology has been advised for those nodules. Her mother said,

"Her father died. Now it is very difficult for us to take her to city. We do not have money. Whatever we earn we spend at home. We cannot do outside work too. I have two more

daughters and one son. Where will we get money for treatment? We showed (faith healer), he said it's nothing.” (mother of the girl, permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

The nodules can be due to tuberculosis. It's suspected case of tuberculosis. But due to financial constraint they are unable to take treatment.

Another female worker who is suffering from psoriasis also echoed same story.

“I am suffering from this disease for long. When my husband was alive, I did not have this disease. After his death I got this disease. At PHC I have shown many times but they said it will not cure completely. I went to medical college hospital. They prescribed me some medicine and ointments. I applied. I got cured partially. But I could not continue. I do not have money. Look I have to look after everything. There is no earning member. My children (three children) are small.” (Female permanent worker, 40years, Meghlibund, 15/12/2018).

Last time when researcher visited her, she went to medical college hospital. Her condition got worse. She borrowed money and took treatment. She also took treatment from herbalist, homeopathic and faith healers. She has done home remedies also.

Another female permanent worker said she cannot continue her medicine for hypertension (case profile BU) due to financial constraint.

“I am alone. Nobody is there to work and earn. I have to do all work. Sometimes I stop taking medicine. Now I do not have money so I cannot buy medicine. I can feel when my pressure increases.” (Female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 15/12/2018).

These narratives show workers are aware of their diseases condition but due to financial constraints they cannot take treatment properly or they have to take medicine irregularly.

Name: BU

Age: NA

Sex: Female

Disease: Hypertension

Duration of suffering: One year

She is female permanent worker at Meghlibund tea estate. She works at bungalow of tea estate owner. Though no one stays there but once in a week the owner come and stay for sometimes. Every day she goes there and clean the bungalow. She keeps the bungalow in arranged manner. She has three daughters, two of them got married and another is still unmarried. Her elderly father, one grandchild stays with her. She is widow. Her one daughter is also widow and works as a temporary worker in the tea estate. She used to feel dizzy. One day she was feeling dizzy and could not get up from bed. She was feeling weak too. She went to government hospital (PHC). She used to drink salted tea. At PHC doctors prescribed medicine for hypertension. But she cannot take those medicine regularly due to financial constraint. She said...

“I cannot take medicine regularly. Now I do not have money so I cannot buy medicine. I am alone at home. I have to do all the work. Sometimes I stop taking medicine. Sometimes I do not remember to take medicine due to work load..... if I feel that I am having problem then I go to hospital.” (female permanent worker, Meghlibund,15/12/2018)

She does not have any particular diet chart like tilla babu. Whatever she gets she eat those only. Other than wages she gets 700Rs under Widow Scheme from government. She said...

“Whatever I can afford I eat. Rice, vegetables, dal, fish, if there is money then I buy meat. Sometimes rice has to eat only with smashed potato.” (female permanent worker, Meghlibund,15/12/2018)

She also said, ‘like this is going on if I am sick also. Have to go on even if with the support of stick also. There is no other way.’ She cannot take leave even if she is sick. She only gets 14days leave /year. If she takes leave beyond 14 days, she does not get wage for that day. So, she has to compromise her health with work.

Shyness

Female workers who are suffering from gynaecological problems like leucorrhoea, menorrhagia, dysmenorrhoea they feel shy to consult doctors at health service Centre. At PHC there are no lady medical officer. Only homeopathic medical officer is lady. She comes thrice weekly at PHC. Other three days she has to visit sub-Centre. Most of the workers are not aware of the presence of lady homeopathic medical officer. They feel shy to consult with male doctors there. Women said,

“All are male. How to tell them all these problems!! ‘laj lage’ ...(feel shy)”. (women workers, Meghlibund, 2018).

Gender

Female members of the family sometimes do not get privilege to access health care. Though they earn still they have to depend on elderly or male member of the house to get permission to avail and access medical service. One female permanent worker was suffering from leucorrhoea for long time. Her condition worsened. When researcher came to know she advised her and her husband to take her for treatment. After few days when researcher inquired about her to her husband, he said he has taken her for treatment. But when again researcher went to collect data from the woman she said,

“To tell you the truth he has not taken me to doctor. How will I become alright? Always working for this family (angrily...), but no one cares for my health. I am becoming thin and weak. Still have to work for everyone. Always have to make everyone happy.” (Female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 15/12/2018).

When researcher pursued her again to convince her husband she said,

“Look male are male only... (with heavy sigh). They only want work from us. Without permission I cannot go for treatment. They need everything arranged at home, if we die also.” (Female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 15/12/2018).

It shows her constraint to access and avail treatment for her ailment. Though she is working and earning but she does not have freedom to spend that money when needed for her.

One thing researcher observed that most of the women's wages are withdrawn by male member of the family, either by husband or son, or relatives who works in the tea estate.

Conclusion

In this chapter it has been seen that workers perception of health, accessibility of different types of health services differs according to the hierarchy of work. Due to the difference of accessibility of health services it has been seen that women from tea garden workers family deliver at home by 'dai' or relatives. This is 20% of overall deliveries. This data is similar to NFHS-4 data though they have not shown overall delivery done at home but they have shown institutional delivery data which is 79.9%. The workers not only access allopathic but other services too for different ailments they suffer. Sometimes all together. Financial constraints, gender, time, manpower sometimes distance restrict them to avail health service.

In both the tea garden studied here almost for accessing and availing health service workers access same type of services. Workers of Durgabari access allopathic services more than Meghlibund tea estate. This may be due to location of the tea estate, financial condition, education level. Regarding health perception both tea estate almost has same perception. There is no child delivery at home at Durgabari. Even adopting contraceptive method also Durgabari is ahead of Meghlibund. The morbidity profile of the workers shows that the higher officials suffers from more non-communicable diseases than workers. Other diseases suffered by workers are seasonal diseases, leucorrhoea, hypertension. The difference between office staffs, workers of private owned and workers co-operative tea estate is suffering in terms of Tuberculosis and infant mortality rate. The infant mortality rate and tuberculosis patients are more in private owned tea estate. There are more prevalence and incidence of tuberculosis and death due to this disease is more at private owned tea estate. Whereas only one case at Durgabari tea estate, the patient is temporary factory workers. There is no incidence of tuberculosis among permanent or other workers of Durgabari tea estate for last 3-4 years except the single case. In the previous chapter we have seen that co-operative tea estate is providing better facilities to its workers than private owned tea estates.

CHAPTER 6

Discussion and conclusion

Introduction

Diseases are not only caused by biological agents as seen in biomedicine but societal factors also play role in causation of diseases. Health of a person is not only the freedom from diseases or germs but also many social, environmental and cultural factors. The perception of 'being healthy' is subjective and an individual perception. This individual perception is not only related to the social factors or medical factors but also cultural perceptions of the society to which they belong. This perception leads an individual to take treatment from different health systems available, accessible, affordable and acceptable to them. All these are interrelated and one could argue that acceptability depends upon the affordability as well as availability and accessibility of health services. This thesis explores the social determinants of health of tea garden workers in Tripura through an interdisciplinary approach. The study was conducted among workers across the hierarchy of work in the tea gardens of Tripura with reference to living and working conditions; availability, affordability and accessibility to health services; the adequacy of social security measures given by the government as well as the management of the tea estate. The first chapter of this thesis presented an overview of discovery of tea and the evolution of the tea industry in India. Through the variation of the lived and health experiences of tea industries across countries the gaps had been identified and the overall objectives is to study the social determinants of health among tea garden workers across hierarchy has been taken.

The tea industry of Tripura had a different history from those in the North East and has gone through different phases of transformation. There are likely to be more changes given the present political scenario (from March 2018) in the state that will have an impact on the tea industry and its workers in the future as the present government has taken some measures for betterment of the tea industry in the state.

The conditions of tea workers vary across hierarchy across different forms of ownership of tea estates. This has been analysed by exploring the different dimensions of living and working condition in two selected tea estates in Tripura. It has been seen that depending on the type of ownership, there are differences in living and working conditions, welfare measures provided by the management, access and availability of health services, affordability and acceptability of health services across the selected tea estates. These factors influence the perceptions of health and health status of workers across the hierarchy of work. The economic relations of workers within the tea estate is reflected in their health perception, illness seeking behaviour

and utilization of health services across hierarchy of workers. The following section summarises the historical and socio-political context of the tea industry in Tripura; structure of work relations in the selected tea estates; perceptions and experiences of workers regarding health and illness seeking behaviour.

I. Phases of transformation of tea industry in Tripura

A. 1916-1949—phases of establishment of tea industry—period of monarchy

The tea industry was set up by monarchy of Tripura in 1916 on advice of Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore, who was friend of kings of Tripura, to boost the revenue of Tripura. There were rules for the tea plantation of Tripura. The owners were Bengali entrepreneurs. The king of Tripura invited them for setting up of tea industry because the tribes of Tripura practised burn and slash cultivation. He did not even allow the British to enter the tea industry in Tripura, whereas in other states of India they established the tea industry.

There were rules regarding leasing out of land to entrepreneurs for setting up of tea industry. Maharaja wanted revenue from the tea industry and this purpose had been fulfilled as the tea industry was bringing revenue to the state. He did not interfere in the internal matters of the tea plantations.

There was problem of labour recruitment in the initial period of establishment of tea industry. There was shortage of labour. This was overcome when the Maharaja brought workers from Assam who left tea gardens of Assam during the Chargola Exodus (Chapter 3). There were several provisions for the workers who came to Tripura due to Chargola Exodus. Workers were given freedom to choose the provisions offered by Maharaja (Chapter 3).

Though there are no official documents available about how workers from other parts of India came to Tripura to work in the tea plantation. But the narratives of workers during field work (February 2018-December 2018) and several short stories, novels, poems written by recent generation of workers' children or workers themselves shows that workers came to Tripura from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Purulia, Odisha, Burdwan, Chhattisgarh, Bangladesh (Sylhet, Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla), Madhya Pradesh, Ranchi, Rajasthan at different points in time. The inhabitants of Tripura were reluctant to work in the tea estate due to different reason (Chapter 3). They still are not willing to work in the tea estates. So, workers of tea gardens still are generation of those people who came when tea gardens were set up (1916) to work or took up work in the tea estate as workers. The tea industry helped in generating revenues for Tripura.

The purpose of setting up of the industry was fulfilled. There were periods of decline in the industry due to the Indian and world political and economic unrest during the freedom struggle, World War II and Great Economic Depression. There was conflict with the owners of the tea estate and the monarchy but all these problems were overcome by the tea industry gradually.

B. 1949-1978: Incorporation into the Indian Union and Statehood

After independence Tripura joined the Indian union through the Tripura Merger Agreement of 9th September 1949 on 15th October 1949. Tripura became 'C' category state of India. During this time the Congress party was active in Tripura. During monarchy the communist party was banned in Tripura by the monarchy. Later on, the communist party along with the tribal activists of Tripura who wanted to uplift the situation started to gain popularity among tribes of Tripura and other inhabitants of Tripura. The Congress party was seen as the party of royals and businessmen.

In 1948, 1st January the 'Tripura Cha Mazdur Union' of Tripura was formed under the banner of the Congress party. This was the first union which was formed in Tripura to address the tea workers issues. In 1954 a new Tripura Plantation Rule 1954 came into force. In 1955 the "Tripura Cha Shramik Union" was formed under the banner of CITU with the initiative of Shri Birendra Chandra Datta. The "Tripura Cha Mazdur Union" was the first union to organise the tea garden workers and make a difference to the living conditions of workers. They took initiative to give education to the children of tea garden workers. They started demanding workers right from the government. Because of that there was formation of labour office at Agartala to address the issue of workers. Later on, when the Left government came to power in 1978, they took initiatives to upgrade the tea industry in Tripura. By this time Tripura got statehood status on 21st January 1972. In 1975 there were only 39 tea estates. Due to reduction of tea estates in Tripura there was an impact on the labour force of Tripura. The tea industry faced a problem. There was lack of basic amenities, irregular ration, non-payment of provident fund. The left government took initiative to hand over those tea garden to co-operatives and co-operative tea gardens were established. Tachai was the first tea garden to form co-operative garden and Durgabri of Sadar subdivision was the second to be workers co-operative (Chapter 4).

During 1970's the ownership pattern started changing. Initially Marwaris' started coming into the tea industry by financing the tea estates (e. g. Ramdurlavpur) at different times. Later on, Punjabi's also started to show interest in the tea industry in Tripura. (Chapter 3)

C. 1980-2000: Government initiative to improve tea industry: gradual change in ownership: socio-political unrest

In 1980 the Tripura Tea Development Corporation were formed with the initiative of Tripura government (Left Government). The government took over the sick tea gardens in the year 1986. The TTDC were made the nodal agency for small tea growers. Here on the other side there was ethnic unrest. In 1980 the Mandai/Mandwi massacre⁴³ left fear in the minds of Bengali's. The owner of tea estates who were mostly Bengalis, started abandoning tea estates. The insurgency problem started in the state. There were different insurgent groups who targeted Bengali owners and staff of tea estates. From 1994 to 2000 eleven employees and two tea estate owners had been kidnapped and killed by militants. Many of the officials paid huge ransom and were released, but after paying ransom also others were killed by the militants. This caused fear in the minds of tea garden owners. Gradually the owners who were Bengali started abandoning tea estates. At present there are Bengali, Punjabi and Marwari owners (Chapter-2 table 2.7). Other than private ownership there are workers co-operative, TTDC (Tripura Tea Development Corporation). Private ownership again divided into big tea estate owners and small tea growers (Chapter-3, table-3.4). Insurgency hampered the livelihood of the tea garden workers due to decline in tea industry. This also contributed to the decline of privately owned tea estates. Previously all the tea estates were owned by private ownership but now there are 16 tea estates which are run by workers co-operative or TTDC among 58 (now 52 are operating) tea estate. Among small tea growers there are tribes of Tripura who initially were not interested in tea industry. Small tea growers comprise of diversity identities that include Bengali Hindus and Muslims, tribal, Manipuri etc, whereas at initial stage it was only Bengali Hindu brahmin or higher caste people who were owners of tea estates. Since 1994 the small tea growers are cultivating tea in the state. There are 2483 tribal small tea growers among 4,346 small tea growers. (<https://in.news.yahoo.com/tripura-workshop-organised-developing-skill-small-tea-growers-031149066.html>,<https://knnindia.co.in/news/newsdetails/state/10-day-workshop-held-in-tripura-for-skill-development-of-small-tea-growers> ,retrieved on 6/07/2019)

Though the ownership pattern changed but the workers remained same who had come hundreds of years ago in Tripura to work as tea garden workers. The workers of tea gardens are the

⁴³ 8th June, 1980 there was mass massacre of Bengalis by tribal insurgents at Mandwai/Mandai, 30 km from state capital Agartala, Tripura. According to unofficial sources, presses, eyewitnesses there were 350 -400 Bengali people who were murdered, but officially it is said that 255 Bengalis were massacred.

generations of those workers. They may be 3rd /4th generation of those workers. These workers now do not have any communication with their states of origin.

The Left government decided to devolve power to the workers of tea gardens by incorporating them into the three tier Panchayat body (chapter-3) and also gave them the status of SC/ST/OBC which they would have enjoyed in their home state (chapter-3) and a new identity were given to them in Tripura.

D. 2001-2019: decline in insurgency: change of power in state: new initiative

Gradual decline of insurgency in the state leads tea estates to re-open with the intervention from government. Though many of the owners started living in safer places and not in the tea garden premises which they used to do before insurgency, the workers continued living where they used to live. During insurgency after tea estates were closed down, many workers left tea estates in search of alternate employment for livelihood. After opening of tea estates many of them returned to work in the tea estates and were re-employed as workers again. But sometimes they were not taken back as permanent workers but were taken as temporary workers. Workers in most of the cases agreed as they were not skilled in other works other than tea garden works. Another reason also played role that they started living in familiar places with known people and tea garden provides regular works and some social security. The “Tripura Cha Shramik Union” was more active in the state. The “Tripura Cha Mazdur Union” became less active among tea garden workers. Most of the workers depend upon the only source of income as ‘labourer’ of tea garden but owners have other business along with tea industry. So, if tea garden closes at one place the owners usually do not have problem as they try to compensate their loss from other source of business. The table below showing some of the tea estate owners ranges of other businesses. So ultimately it was the ‘workers’ who are left behind to suffer if any political, social, economic or ethnic problem arises.

Table 6.1: Other businesses of tea estate owners

Sl no.	Name of tea garden/estate/societies owners	Name of tea estates	Other business
1	Ratan Lal Sirohia/ Narendrapur Tea Company limited	Narendrapur tea estate, Maheshpur tea estate	Shareholder Sirohia & sons, Promoter & Promoter group, Dhullie Tea Plantation Private Limited, Director of 14 companies (13 actives, 1 strike off), Sirohia Finvest Company Private Limited
2	Vijay Sirohia/ Mekhlipara Tea Company Limited	Mekhlipara Tea Estate	Do
3	Rajiv Pincha	Harendranagar Tea Estate	Borgang Tea Company Private Limited/ Borgang tea estate, Assam
4	R N Kajaria	Kalyanpur Tea Estate, Harishnagar Tea Estate	Anil Plantation Private Limited
5	Mahesh Kumar Narula/ Ramdurlavpur Tea Company Limited	Ramdurlavpur Tea Estate	NA
6	Anil Kanoria	Sarala tea estate, Brajendranagar Tea Estate	Hanuman Group, Hanuman Fin stock Private Limited, Hattikhira Tea Estate, Assam, Tindharia Tea Estate, Darjeeling,

			Hanuman Agro Industries Limited (HAIL), Paper Mill (Pulp mill and integrated pulp & paper unit {Rice straw & Jute waste}), export of Assam & South Indian tea
7	Dr. Ashok Kumarnain/ Huplongcherra tea company limited	Huplongcherra tea estate	NA
8	Miss Neha Jain/ Dharmanagar Tea Estate Private Limited	Dharmanagar Tea Estate	NA
9	Kanai Dasgupta, Gopal Dasgupta & Dasgupta	Phanindranagar Tea Estate	NA
10	Nitish Ranjan Debroy	Halaicherra Tea Estate, Sova Tea Estate	NA
11	Mohammad Mokarram Khan	Devastal Tea estate, Nottingcherra Tea Estate, Heracherra Tea Estate, Sonamukhi Tea Estate (All are non-functional as owner has abandoned these tea estates. Workers are surviving by plucking tea leaves and selling green	Sunshine Tea Processing Company Private Limited, (Trademark- TeaZup), Mineral & Aerated water and other non-alcoholic drinks, fruit syrups and other preparations for making beverages.

		leaves to other tea estates)	
12	Santibrata Chakraborty*	Rangrung Tea Estate	NA
13	ITP limited	Manu Valley Tea Estate, Kalishasan Tea Estate, Jagannathpur Tea Estate, Golokpur Tea Estate, Pearacherra Tea Estate	Wholesale of Agricultural raw material, live animal, tobacco products, food beverages
14	Mahabir Tea Estate Private Limited	Mahabir Tea Estate	Agriculture and allied activities
15	Kollol Dey	Madhurilata Tea Estate	Madhurilata Rubber Plantation
16	Pankaj Nayan Trivedi/ Tufanialonga Tea company limited	Tufanialonga Tea Estate	Secretary of Tripura Institute of Pharmaceutical Science (TIPS), D. S Healthcare private limited, D.S. Research and Hospital Institute Private Limited, D.S Foundation, Council for cancer care, D.S energy infra developers limited, Electro land India trading private limited, Merlin Pharma India private limited. Supply

			chemical, chemical products, electricity, gas steam, hot water supply, manufacture of medical, precision and optical instruments, watches & clocks in Karnataka and West Bengal
17	Tipperah Tea Corporation limited/Pankaj Nayan Trivedi	Luxmilonga Tea Estate	Do
18	Sandhir Agarwal	Fatikcherra Tea Estate	Kamala tea company limited, Kamala Tea Estate, Darjeeling, Kadambini Tea Estate, Jalpaiguri, OAKS Tea Estate, Sonada, Darjeeling
19	Durgabari Tea Workers co-operative society limited	Simnacherra Tea Estate	Durgabari Tea Workers co-operative society limited (Durgabari tea estate)
20	Manjushree Chakraborty*/ Prabir Kumar Nag (taken lease)	Meghlibund Tea Estate	K. R Lynch (Agartala) (surgical and medical instruments and material) (P K Nag)
21	Abhijit Nandi	Krishnapur Tea Estate	Krishnapur Tea Company Limited, horticulture,

			growing crops and gardening
22	Rita Chakraborty*	Kalkalia Tea Estate	NA
23	Suresh Kumar Chaudhury	Haridaspur Tea Estate, Gopalnagar Tea Estate	Partnership with Kalkalia tea estate owner
24	Chaya Chaudhury	Adarini Tea Estate	NA
25	Awdesh Kumar Singh	Kalyanpur Tea estate (non-functional)	NA
26	Nawaratan Puglia/ Ranibari Tea Company Limited	Ranibari Tea Estate	NA
27	Dilkhusa Tea co. Limited	Murticherra Tea Estate	Fortuna Agro Plantation Limited. Growing crops, marketing, gardening, horticulture

*from same family

Source: Compiled by Researcher, 2019

The tea of Tripura did not have any brand name though there were 21 tea processing units in the state. The auction of tea used to be in Guwahati and Kolkata centres. The tea was blended with other state tea and marketing was done under different brand name. So, in the market there were less recognition of tea of Tripura. Since 2013 tea from different tea estates of Tripura were exported to Iran, Afghanistan, Britain, Pakistan, Italy, Germany and Russia. (Chapter-3).

The pay hike for workers occurs at an interval of every three-years through tripartite meeting. Last pay hike was 25th April 2015. But after that there was no fee hike till today. This fee hike supposed to be done in the year 2018. But there was change in government with the Bharatiya Janata Party coming to power in March, 2018 by defeating Left Government who ruled for 25 years. There is initiative to improve the marketing of tea to other states and outside of states but none is taking initiative to increase or revise the wages of workers. After defeat to BJP the “Tripura Cha Shramik Union” also are not coming to voice the workers demand whereas there is still no strong union for tea workers from the ruling party side. Recently on 19th June 2019

after agitation from workers about the wage hike there was a meeting. But the owners Association (TAI-Tea Association of India) tried not to hike wages as there is a court case going on. In the year 2018 the then left government increased wages of workers from 105 Rs to 175 Rs without tripartite meeting. Because of that the owners Association had filed a petition at High Court against increase of wages. In this meeting they tried to bypass the wage hike matter by citing that reason. But the labour commissioner has given seven-day time to owners' association, The Tea Association of India, for their opinion. ('Treepakhshiya baithake 7 din er notice cha malik pakhshake', Dainik Sambad, Agartala, 20th June, 2019, 53rd Year, ISSUE 226, page 12). In the meantime, the Durgabari tea estate increased 10 Rs/ day wages for workers. Now workers' wages at Durgabari tea estate is 115 Rs/day. According to the new manager of Meghlibund tea estate that from 4 ½ kg green tea leaves one-kilogram processed tea is produced. Approximately 84 Rs to 113-115 Rs is spend to produce one-kilogram processed tea. Whereas one kilogram of processed tea of Tripura was sold at auction centre at the rate of 177 Rs and recently at the rate of 201 Rs ('Cha nigomer noya record, auction e 201-taka kg cha pata', Dainik Sambad, Agartala, 2nd October, 2019, 53rd year, Issue: 328, pp.12). The rough expenditure he explained that factory, carrying charge, auction centre charge and labour charge. Labour charge is only 0.75 Rs/kg tea. According to him that charge is also more. He opined that workers should not be provided with welfare measure. Those measures make workers lazy. According to his view tea industry will run into loss if welfare measure and wages of workers are not cut down. He has even given example of Assam tea industry. So, if this is the view of owners of tea estate how will the workers living standard improve?

i. Changing recent political scenario: impact on tea industry in Tripura

Future of tea industry- Global market for tea of Tripura and its implication for workers

The tea of Tripura is categorised as 'orthodox' category. Since it has good blending quality the tea of Tripura is mixed with Assam tea or other tea and market it in other parts of India. One of such tea is 'Goodwyn tea' under 'Sirohia' group of companies. The Tripura tea was exported from Golakpur tea estate to Iran in the year 2013, 'Jewel Tip' tea of Manu Valley tea estate (Unokoti District) to Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Britain and Russia and Ludhua tea estate (South Tripura district) exports tea to Italy and Germany. Durgabari tea estate sells 'Durgabari Gold' in the state and has its own internal market. Recently TTDC took initiative to give brand name of Tripura tea and logo and made its own logo and gave it the brand name "Tripureswari tea" and started marketing it. They have opened counter at Gorkhabasti, 'Uttara' at Orient Chowmuhani, 'Tea corner' at Birchandra library area, TTDC stall at Lake Chowmuhani area

for selling tea packets. There are demand of Tripura tea in neighbouring country Bangladesh. Present Chief minister Mr. Biplab Deb taking initiative to export tea to Bangladesh. ('Sadichhai Tripurar cha Shilpa ke ghure darabar bhorsa jogachhe', Dainik Sambad, Agartala, 28th April, 2019, 53rd year, issue 174).

Recently the TTDC and Tripura government proposed to auction tea at Sreemangal auction centre of Bangladesh which is nearer to Tripura than Guwahati and Kolkata. This auction centre is only 5 km from Hiracherra tea estate at Kailashahar subdivision of Unokoti District. There was also proposal for cultivating tea near the buffer area of border fencing area by small tea growers. This cultivation will be done under Indira- Mujib pact 1971 which allows farmers who has land on buffer area to cultivate at buffer area from 6am to 5pm. There is also proposal to set an auction centre in the state capital Agartala. (<https://worldteanews.com/tea-industry-news-and-features/tripura-tea-growers-seek-india-tea-board-branding-as-tripureshwari-tea> accessed on 6/07/2019)

There is growing demand for organic tea in the market and Tea Board encourages to produce organic tea. Organic tea for Rs 8000 (\$110)/kg sells from this region compared to the Rs 400 (\$5.50)/kg. Fatikcherra tea estate of Sidhai Mohanpur in West Tripura district was the first tea garden in Tripura to get certificate of organic tea garden in the year 2004. Ludhua Cooperative Tea Estate in South Tripura district also produce organic tea. This year (2018) their production of organic black tea was 125,000 kilograms and 10,000 kilograms of organic green tea. Some small growers also producing organic tea. (<https://worldteanews.com/tea-industry-news-and-features/tripura-tea-growers-seek-india-tea-board-branding-as-tripureshwari-tea> accessed on 6/07/2019)

Fatikcherra tea estate in West Tripura district in Tripura is the first tea estate which has produced white tea in 2019. This tea estate started more than hundred years ago (established in the year 1918). Joydeep Ganguly who is the manager of the tea estate and from Darjeeling ventured to produce white tea in the tea estate. He produced 6.8 kg white tea in the year 2019. This white tea was sold at Rs 5,500 per kg, with in few days. (<https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/tripura/after-green-tea-tripura-etches-its-name-as-white-tea-producer-in-northeast-region/> accessed on 6/7/2019)

There was proposal from concerned inhabitants of Tripura to make tea plantation areas as tourist places so that revenue can be earned by states. Most of the tea gardens has history of hundreds of years, some even has history related to freedom struggle of India (Masterda Surya

Sen, the freedom fighter and leader of Chittagong Armoury raid/Chittagong uprising took shelter at Kalisashon tea estate of North Tripura District for few days after the incidence) other than splendour scenic beauty. ('Paryatan shilpo bikase cha bagicha', Dainik Sambad, Agartala, 9th May, 2019, 53rd year, Issue 184, page 5)

There was a proposal recently to make Hiracherra tea estate as co-operative tea estate as the tea estate is running at loss.

Recently tea from Tripura sold 5000 kg of tea at the rate of 177 Rs/kg at auction centre in Kolkata. This is the first time in 39 years that the tea from Tripura got such a price. Previously the rate was less except one when the rate Tripura tea got was 146 Rs/kg. The TTDC chairman claimed that due to new brand name i.e 'Tripuraswari' tea, the quality of Tripura tea improved and as a result it could get high price at auction centre. (39 years e najir, auction e sarbochho dar pelo Tripurar cha, Dainik Sambad, Agartala, 10th July, 2019, 53rd year, Issue 246, Page 12)

The present BJP government is trying to create a market for tea of Tripura. Most of the strategies proposed or taken by this government is to increase marketing of the tea. Whereas regarding the wage hike of the workers the government was silent. After agitation from workers there was meeting but no solution came out due to the owner's association's objection. The labour commissioner has given seven-day time to owners' association. In the pre-election agenda, the present government promised that there will be increases of wage from present wage 105 Rs/day to 370 Rs/day. The last pay hike was in the year 2015, May. After that there was no pay hike whereas there should be revision of wages every three years. There were tea workers who retired but still to get pension and other benefits from the management of privately-owned tea estates. Some of the workers even died but did not get benefit (e.g the TB patient at privately owned tea estate, chapter 5). The initiative taken to market tea may bring revenue to state and also increase income of owners but what about the workers? Will their grievances be addressed? Will there be better implementation of PLA 1951 or Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954? What about their hard-earned money which they deposited in the Provident fund so that after retirement they can get some benefit? The government is hardly taking any measures to address these issues.

The Tripura tea has got own logo "Tripureswari Brand", now the tea can be sold outside the state with its own name. Over the years there was change of ownership due to political, economic and social reasons but the workers remain same. Their ethnicity has not changed. The aboriginal tribes of Tripura are becoming owners now and trying to get economic benefits

whereas before they were reluctant to be in tea business and tea workers due to social reason. Most of the small tea growers are aborigine tribes of Tripura. There are female small tea growers also. Whereas the workers whose forefathers were workers of tea estates they still are workers of tea estate except in co-operatives where some workers have their share.

E. Recent crisis-2020: COVID-19: Corona virus pandemic and state callousness about tea industry and tea workers

Recently corona virus infection throughout world became a major concern. The disease started in China and spread throughout world. World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared it Pandemic. Most of the countries of the world declared ‘lockdown’ and ‘social distancing’ other than maintaining hygiene to fight with the disease as till now there is no vaccine or curative measure available for the disease. Our honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi too had declared nationwide ‘lockdown’ on 24th march, 2020 for 21 days i. e. till 14th of April. Later on, this ‘lockdown’ has been extended nationwide again at four phases till 31st May, 2020 giving some relaxation to revive economic activity in different categorised zone which has been divided according to the documented/ recorded COVID 19 positive cases and intensity of spreading of COVID 19.

Table 6.2: period of lockdown in India due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Sl no.	Period of lockdown	Comments
1.	Phase 1- 25 th March -14 th April,2020	Total lockdown
2.	Phase 2- 15 th April-3 rd May,2020	From 20 th April conditional lifting where spread had been minimal
3.	Phase 3- 4 th May- 17 th May, 2020	All district had been divided into four category -red, orange, green and containment zones. relaxation had been applied accordingly.
4.	Phase 4- 18 th May-31 st May,2020	On 30 th May it had been declared that on June onwards till June 30 th

		lockdown will be only at containment zones.
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Source: Declaration by Indian government during pandemic and compiled by researcher, 2020

Table 6.3: period of ‘unlock’ during COVID-19 Pandemic by Indian government

Sl no.	Period of ‘unlock’	Comments
1.	Unlock 1.0-1 st June -30 th June, 2020	In phased manner service was resumed from 8 th June except at containment zones
2.	Unlock 2.0- 1 st July -31 st July, 2020	Almost all activities were permitted outside containment zones except opening of educational institutions, recreation facility centres, any kind of large gathering, international air travel.
3.	Unlock 3.0- 1 st August-31 st August	Night curfew has been removed, gymnasium, yoga centres will open from 5 th August. Educational institutions will remain close.

Source: Declaration by Indian government and compiled by researcher,2020

Chief minister of Tripura Shri Biplab Kumar Deb too declared ‘lockdown’ in the state from 22nd March to 31st March, 2020. PM of India declared ‘Janata curfew’ on 22nd March, 2020 nationwide. It started from 7am and lasted till 9pm. But in tea gardens of Tripura the management told tea garden workers that the said curfew was from 7pm to 9pm. They were allowed to work in the tea garden. Generally plucking of tea leaves started from mid of March but due to lockdown the plucking could not be started. As government has instructed to pay wages to workers and provide ration to workers co-operative tea gardens and TTDC run tea gardens provided ration and wages to workers for 15 days but privately owned tea estates provided ration and wages only for seven days to workers. (COVID-19, Rajyer Cha shilpe neme esche boro biporjoy, 4th April. 2020, Dainik Sambad, 54th year, issue 146). But

management raised question that how long are they going to pay workers without the industry running? There was pressure on government from owners and management to open the tea estate and allow workers to work. They have argued that tea is an agricultural product so it comes under essential commodity. (here I like to mention that I am a member of WhatsApp group –‘Tea Cultivation & Practices’. In this group I have come across the arguments which owners and managers of tea estates were raising and they shared different orders from different state governments as well as central government regarding this matter). The government of India issued an order (No.40-3/2020-DM-1(A) dated 24.03.2020 GOI, Ministry of Home Affairs) and added sub clause (f) to clause 5 for opening tea industry along with plantation during lockdown. Another order came from Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare on 28th March, 2020. The order said, ‘Agriculture-Farming and allied activities exempted from lockdown, Availability of food grains to be ensured, harvesting to continue uninterrupted’. Later on, Assam government issued an order that from 1st April tea garden workers will be allowed to work with permission from District Magistrate and with supervision from Health Department by abiding the instruction from health department (order in Assamese language). Bihar government also given permission to start work in tea gardens (order NHM/BHDS/116/2020-696 in Hindi). In that order The Agriculture Department of Bihar has given some instruction to the management and workers for implementing hygiene like keeping separate utensils, water bottle, frequent hand washing with soap, washing cloths every day with detergent or soap and dry it on sunlight etc. and social distancing (1-meter gap with each other while working) while plucking tea leaves and manufacturing tea. Government of Kerala too in an order (GO (Ms) No. 59/2020/GAD Thiruvanthapuram, dated 03/04/2020 in English) given permission to tea, coffee, cardamom, oil palm, Cashew and clove plantation to open and perform plantation activities with certain guidelines to maintain social distancing (like workers only from labour line are allowed to work not from outside of labour line, 6 feet distance from one worker to other while weighing, one worker at one ½ acre land or block). Members of TAI (Tea Association of India) of different states started taking permission for opening of tea estates and resume works. Though now Assam government when COVID-19 positive case was found in Assam is reluctant to give permission to tea estates to resume work. Whereas Tripura Government and TTDC has given permission to tea estate to resume work (‘Bidhinishedh rekhe cha shilpe uthche lockdown, swasthi’, Dainik Sambad, 54th year, issue 148, 6th April, 2020). In Tripura too till to date (8.4.2020) one COVID-19 positive case has been found. Now question arises will management follow the order and instruction of central and state government regarding maintaining social distancing or providing hygienic measure to workers? Gradually

Corona positive cases started increasing in the state, what will happen to worker? Will they be able to maintain hygiene and ‘social distancing’ at work place? Many privately owned tea estates did not provide ration and wages to workers in spite of orders from government. Will not this might cause spread of Corona virus infection among workers and their families? It’s true that along with other industries tea industry also will face economic hardship but is it greater than the workers’ health? As we have seen that owners are not dependent on tea business but they have other business too but workers are dependent on this work. In the order from central government it is said that 50% of total work force will be allowed to work. Will it be maintained? Now this is the peak season for tea leaves plucking and with full workforce also sometimes it become difficult to pluck leaves properly. Most of the time workers work overtime (three shifts) during this season and management hire workers from outside too to pluck leaves. Last year we have seen at Meghlibund male workers too plucked tea leaves during peak season. So, will management follow the instruction of government? Government is requesting people to be at home and not to come out but irony is that plantation and agricultural workers are allowed to come out in bulk and work.

The Chief minister of Tripura again announced lockdown on 5th July (for one day) in Tripura due to increase of COVID-19 cases in Tripura. It was not clear why for one day curfew had been imposed. Sunday being holiday most of the offices and markets remain closed except basic essential shops. So, what purpose that one day curfew will serve is not clear. Later on, this curfew has been extended as night curfew from 11th July, 2020. It will start at Indo-Bangla border areas (within 2km of border area) from 7pm to 7am and other areas from 9pm to 5am to restrict peoples’ movement (“COVID rukhte sara rajye balabot night curfew”, Dainik Sambad, 54th year, issue 243, 12th July, 2020, ISSN-0971-7153, Page 1). Everyday cases are increasing and now containment zones are 49 (12/7/2020) in Tripura. In other areas most of the economic activities has started. This year TTDC produced 4 lakhs kilogram tea in Tripura (more than previous year-1lakh 70 thousand kg) (“Corporation manei khsoti noy praman koreche cha nigam: Biplab”, Dainik Sambad, 54th year, 9th July, 2020, issue 240, ISSN-0971-7153, page 8). Without workers full strength how is it possible to pluck tea leaves and produce this amount of tea this year? Is there any ‘social distancing’?

iii. Factors which might affect prospect of tea industry in Tripura

1. Political intervention and inexperienced tea cultivators:

There is 'hidden' political pressure 'regarding whom to provide benefits among small tea growers.' According to the opinion of one of the officers from the tea board was that recently the new small tea growers are getting benefit and permission according to the political inclination of the applicant. Small tea growers get monetary benefit for one year from the tea board to grow tea saplings and take care of the garden. They too get free tea saplings. To get this benefit many people are applying for grant. But after two three years they do not care for the garden and tea bushes die. These people do not have any experience about tea cultivation. But those who have experience they are not getting permission due to differing political ideology. This according to the officer is hampering prospect of tea industry in Tripura. In 2018(till 28th February) there were only 2773 small tea growers but in the year 2019, July the number increases to 4346. Within one and half years the number doubled. The officer said that 4346 small tea growers will be on paper but in reality, they will be less. This fact had been echoed by the manager of privately-owned tea estate also. The major causes of decline in numbers will be the lack of experience of those cultivating tea. The proposal of cultivating tea near border fencing and buffer area is also a 'not very good idea' according to the officer. There are incidents of miscreants cutting down the products (other agricultural products) at those buffer areas at night.

2. Intervention in the co-operative sector and its future in Tripura:

Another factor which officers from the tea board and co-operative officials voiced was their concern about the future of co-operatives is that there are going to be huge changes in the co-operative sectors. The President of one co-operative said,

“As per as I am concerned future of the co-operative societies does not appear to be bright. This is mainly due to procurement policy of the present government. Recently the finance department of Tripura has issued instruction to all the Head of the Department to procure their needed articles through Government-e-Marketing (GeM), as a result which the local co-operative societies as well as business personnel will not be in a position to supply materials at competitive rates. Moreover, due to present slowdown of the economy demand of any short of material has declined sharply. It is understood that government should spend/allocate huge fund for infrastructural development at other social welfare schemes so that money reaches to the poorest of the poor and demand is generated in the market. The manufacturers themselves

are quoting rates, which are obviously much less than the rates offered by the local co-operative societies as well as businessmen. The manufacturers mainly belong to Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra (all corporate houses, MNCs)." (President of a co-operative, 71years, retired Government employee, working at co-operative sector since 2007, 26/02/2020, Agartala).

He also said that other external forces putting pressure on co-operative sector. He said,

"The political party's hired miscreants do not allow the co-operative societies to participate in the tender floated by various government department and autonomous bodies." (President of a co-operative, 71years, retired Government employee, working at co-operative sector since 2007, 26/02/2020, Agartala).

Even recent news ("Samabay Samiti labh er mukh na dekhle bilop: Mukhyomantri", 'Dainik Sambad,' 15th November, 2019, Issue 15, Year 54, Page 1 and 6, ISSN-0971-7153) echoed the problem co-operative sector facing. According to the news in last 25 years there were 636 co-operatives but after BJP government came in to power in the year 2018, till to date they have approved 653 new co-operatives. Why the rise in numbers within two years? Now Chief minister has given ultimatum saying that those co-operatives that are not functioning well will be shut down. The most successful co-operative tea estate's founder member has been removed from his post after the new government took over citing his age as the reason. Since January 2020 he stopped taking honorarium from tea estate and stopped coming to the tea estate. This was because the local BJP MLA voiced displeasure about his involvement with the tea estate. The researcher has observed that the founder member is very active and everyday morning comes to the tea estate and present there till evening. He looks after the whole tea estate. He once said, "I am a bachelor, this tea estate and workers are my children." His political inclination is different and when in the year 1978 Left government came into power and started co-operative sector again this tea garden was handed over to this person. He along with 15 workers established this co-operative tea garden. He not only looked after this tea garden but other co-operative tea garden also used to take his advice for running co-operative tea estates. He even showed how to cultivate tea at one's courtyard and later on this become the initiative factor of small tea grower's tea garden. The present president of tea estate said,

"We do feel his absence. Whenever we want to take any big decision, we feel that he would have been here. We try our best. When he was here, he used to look after everything. He was the pillar of the tea estate and was experienced." (Present President of Co-operative tea estate and Tilla Sardar of worker, 37 years 19.03.2020, Durgabari).

The president also said *“though he does not come to tea estate I convey his vision to other workers, ‘if this tea estate survives not only you but your future generation also will survive. So, do not be selfish, work for all, work together”*. (Present President of Co-operative tea estate and Tilla Sardar of worker, 37 years 19.03.2020, Durgabari)

We have seen that the co-operative tea estate’s workers are in a better position economically and that is reflected on their health status compared to the workers in the privately-owned tea estate. What will happen to the worker if the co-operative sector does not work properly? The new government is now paying small tea growers for green tea leaves at 16Rs/kg if they give their leaves to TTDC tea processing factory. Before small growers from different areas of Tripura (mostly from Sonamura subdivision and Sadar, Jirania and Mohonpur subdivision) used to give their green tea leaves to Durgabari workers co-operative society’s tea processing factory. They used to pay 14Rs/kg green tea leaves and bonus 2Rs/ kg but this (2019) year TTDC increased rate so small growers are now giving their leaves to TTDC factory. This causes decline of income for Durgabari co-operative society. But workers still manage to get wage hike. What will happen to these workers in this ‘economic slowdown’ market without accessibility to basic necessities? The government is busy with marketing of tea and increasing number of tea gardens but will these really help in boosting the tea industry in Tripura without the welfare of workers?

3. Labour shortage:

There is shortage of skilled labour at tea industry now. After MNREGA came into force the labourers when ‘working days’ granted, prefer to go for MNREGA work rather than working in tea gardens. During peak season this hampers the plucking of tea leaves. Even during other periods if anyone gets work outside the tea estate such as construction work or working at others field or decorators work tea garden workers prefer to take those job as wages are much higher in those jobs (min. 350 Rs/ Day other than two times tiffin).

The co-operative tea estate brings (chapter-4) workers from other tea estates during the peak season. The acting manager of the privately-owned tea estate said that many gardens suffer due to labour shortage. They have strict rules that no tea garden workers can work outside of the tea estate and if the rule is violated, they can be sacked from their job as tea garden worker or next time they will not be taken as worker. Fearing this many of the workers during peak season do not take up other work, but other time they secretly work. The workers of privately-owned tea estate do MNREGA work. The Panchayat member who is also worker of tea estate adjusted

the time of MNREGA work for tea garden workers. On weekdays, in the early morning those workers who are entitled for MNREGA work do so before the usual tea garden work and also on their off day they can work for MNREGA. The management also does not interfere in this matter.

In 2018, male and female workers also plucked tea leaves during peak season at the privately owned tea estate. According to the acting manager due to financial crisis and indifference from the owner's side they could not recruit more workers in the tea estate. Small tea growers hire workers on contract basis or daily wage basis. They do not provide any other benefit to the workers. But researcher has observed that many temporary workers go to work at small tea grower's garden.

4. Border fencing and migration:

Tripura is surrounded by Bangladesh on three sides. Many workers migrated from Bangladesh due to marriage or socio-political unrest (chapter 3). The border needs to be guarded. So, there were fencing on three sides of Tripura. This restricted migration from that country to Tripura. Now workers are reluctant to make filial relationship with people of that country due to inaccessibility. One worker said, "*we have relatives there, my grandfather migrated to this tea estate after marriage. Every year we used to go and visit our relatives and vice versa. But after border fencing, we could not visit them even once.*" (Male worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Marriage, which was another factor for migrating girls to the tea estate also has been stopped after border fencing. Both side of people are now reluctant about this because they 'will not see daughters' once they cross border.

Most of the young generation males are migrating to cities or other states in search of better work or employment. Initially they enrol themselves with some skilled workers workshop or team. They learn work and after certain period they started to work with that team or individually. Those who are getting education they search for government service or works in different service sector. Some of the new generation male-female start their own business or tuition centre.

5. Conflict between workers and owners:

Recently (October 2019) there had been workers agitation at Luxmilonga and Tufanialonga tea estate regarding an appointment of office staff. The owner is same of these two tea estates. Workers closed down the tea estate offices and the manager's office for indefinite periods after

recruitment of an office staff. According to the workers that the recruitment was illegal. The recruited office staff is husband of Pradhan of Luxmilonga Gram Panchayat and supporter of ruling party. According to workers there are many Madhyamik pass, Higher Secondary Pass, B.A pass eligible candidates from workers children and they should be given priority to get employment at the tea estates as they are more competent than outside candidate. But the junior manager was reluctant to give job to the workers children.

Workers even complained that during Durga Puja many female workers worked overtime but owners had not paid their wages till date. They also allege that many retired workers are not getting retirement benefit after retirement. ('Niyoger Prosne Matobirodh, Andolone Cha Bagichar Shamikra', 'Dainik Sambad', 19th October, 2019, 53rd year, Issue 340, pp. 5)

Another tea estate, Mahabir tea estate of Kamalpur was given to co-operative. The two directors of the tea estate Shaibalik Choudhuri and Dr. Saibal Choudhuri claimed that the formation of co-operative is illegal and they too complained against another director Sudipta Choudhuri and managing director Dipankar Choudhuri claiming that those two were behind the formation of co-operative. The tea estate has 23 (twenty-three) shareholders but they reside in Kolkata. They had taken loan at different times from different government and non-government agencies but could not refund the loans. The tea estate was running at loss. Workers provident fund dues, electricity bill was not paid. Workers were not getting ration regularly. President Bhanupratap Lodhi and Secretary Prasenjit Gour denied all allegations. Those two directors also alleged that the MLA of that area is taking interest of that tea estate and the president and secretary are not from the tea estates workers. They were not paying GST, Gratuity and PS according to the co-operative rule. The two directors had filed a case at HCTL. (Mahabir Cha Bagane Shramik Samabay Samity Gothon Niye Aini Prosno Utheche', Dainik Sambad, 21/ 10/2019, 53rd year, Issue: 342, pp. 5)

Workers of Murticherra tea estate of Kailasahar, gheraoed manager D K Singh about different issues faced by workers. They raised nine issues like regular ration of workers, depositing money to Provident fund, constructing workers quarter, regular medical check-up of workers etc. to management. ('Murticherra Cha Baganer Manager Gherao, Prasashoner Hastokhhep', Dainik Sambad, 26/10/2019, 53rd year, Issue: 347, pp:4)

Above incidences are showing workers displeasure about the management of privately-owned tea estates.

6. Old tea bushes:

The tea industry is more than hundred years old. Tea bushes at many tea estates were not replanted. This will affect the production of tea in near future. One tea plant can produce good tea leaves till 50 years of age. After that the quality decreases.

7. Introduction of modern techniques:

Owners of tea estates should introduce modern techniques like modern irrigation system, modern machinery, high yielding tea bushes to increase production of tea.

8. Ethnic clash and insurgency problem:

Though now there is decline in insurgency problem in Tripura but the fear is still there. Researcher had to choose her time judiciously to interview workers at far places near insurgency infiltrated areas. Bengali employees of tea estates also in fear to go far interior places to look after the plantation. Recently there were withdrawal of TSR (Tripura State Rifles) forces (camps) from interior places by state government. Those camps were set up to combat with insurgency and provide security to local people. Now local people are scared that again insurgency might flare up and for that they have agitated against government recently ('TSR Camp protyahaar er protibad e poth oborodh', Dainik Sambad, 26th October, 2019, 53rd year, Issue: 347, pp.3). If so, the tea industry will again see a setback.

9. Recent pandemic outbreak of COVID-19 and resulted lockdown throughout country:

Recently the pandemic outbreak of Corona virus and resulted lockdown will have impact on tea industry in future along with economic slowdown to "economic recession" and "economic depression" as most of the economic activity came to a standstill. The leave plucking season starts from mid of March but due to 'social distancing' and 'lockdown' it is not be possible for workers to go for work. The state imposed 'lockdown' till 14th of April (on 24th March, 2020 according to the order of honourable PM of India). The new leaves will grow bigger and will destroy on bushes if not plucked on time. This will lead to decline in production of tea. If workers do not work will they be payed wages? Though government has declared to pay wages but will owners implement that order? There is fear among workers about surviving in this situation. This will impact the tea industry in near future. Already during 2019 the tea industry of Tripura saw a drawback in auction market. The manager of Meghlibund tea estate and president of Durgabari workers co-operative society voiced their concern about declined rate of tea at Guwahati auction market. Though Durgabari Gold tea sell their packaged tea at the

rate of 130 Rs/ kg at local market. Though there is lockdown due to COVID-19 but in the month of July the TTDC declared that they could sell their 'Tripureswari cha' at auction market of Kolkata at the rate of 231Rs/ kg ("Corporation manei khsoti noy praman koreche cha nigam: Biplab", *Dainik Sambad*, 54th year, 9th July, 2020, issue 240, ISSN-0971-7153, page 8). What about the other privately owned and co-operative tea estates situation? Government is silent about that.

II. Ownership pattern and social relation of workers of the tea estates

We have taken two types of ownership in our study. The privately-owned tea estate and co-operative tea estate. The privately-owned tea estate owner was a Zamindar previously whereas the co-operative started by an activist of communist party with the help of communist government. Ideology of both the owner differs from the very beginning. Though the late owner of the privately-owned tea estate tried to implement some of the provisions of PLA1951 but before doing so he was abducted and killed by militants. Later on, the person who took over the tea estate on lease he is not willing to do anything for the workers of the tea estate. He did not even deposit the owner's share of provident fund money to the employees' provident fund whereas the workers are depositing their share to the provident fund. As a result, permanent workers who are retiring are not getting their provident fund money back after retirement. This problem is not only with this tea estate but with other private owned tea estates also (e.g Brahmakunda, Krishnapur tea estates of Mohanpur subdivision of West Tripura district) ('Cha sramikder pension pradane hayranir abhijog', staff reporter, *Dainik Sambad*, Agartala, 5th May, 2019, 53rd year, page 9). Whereas the workers co-operative workers get their money or benefit on time. The private owned tea estate even fails to pay wages of workers on time. The relationship of the owner and workers always has a strict hierarchy. The hierarchy is maintained throughout. The co-operative board members can be from the workers, from the office staffs. It means a worker can be secretary or president or board member at the same time he or she can be a ground level worker. This gives a sense of responsibility as being in a power position and decision-making position. The founder of the co-operative comes every morning in the tea estate and during 'matha gunti'- attendance, remain present there. He personally knows the workers. He stays there till evening, in spite of his old age (85years at the time of field work, 2018). Whereas the owner of the private tea estate comes once in a week and the actual owner is absentee owner. They live in Kolkata (West Bengal, another state). Worker does not have access to the owner of the tea estate, they can only voice their grievances to the acting manager of the tea estate. Recently (August 2019) the privately-owned tea estate

employed a manager. He has been given free bungalow, medical facilities, fuel charges, caretaker of bungalow, maid other than monetary package which he has not revealed to researcher. His recruitment is contractual. He maintains strict hierarchy position with worker and office staffs. (while visiting him researcher felt that he is portraying himself as an image of British ruler. He was wearing a khaki three quarter pant, a T- shirt, cap and shoe with shocks. He is Rajput and from Chhattisgarh. He has been working as manager at different tea estates of Tripura since 1997). Though these workers are residing in this tea garden for generations and working as workers but in general they know they are not owner of the tea estate rather they are workers, but the workers of co-operative thinks that the tea plantation is belongs to them and collectively they should think and work for the betterment of the tea estate. This has been reflected in their work and attitude, when they say – ‘**This is our garden**’.

The social relationship between owner and workers does effect on other relationship too. In one side there is master and worker relation and in another side relationship as co-workers and co-owners. This relationship reflects on their work.

III. The ownership and economic relation

The ownership and management pattern reflect in the outcome of the tea estates economic gain. The private owned tea estate is running at loss whereas the co-operative is booming economically. They bought another tea estate. As a result, the co-operative tea estate could provide better facilities to the workers. They have better housing, sanitation, water supply, electricity, fuel, recreation, medical facilities than the privately-owned tea estate. They could pay more bonus and ex-gratia to the workers of the tea estate other than time to time extra facilities awarded to them in kind. All the facilities temporary workers also get though some facilities permanent workers get more. But temporary workers do not get facilities from private owned management. The privately-owned tea estate even could not pay wages on time, though they pay but the payment become 2-3 days late. This affect workers life. The workers also find difficulty to maintain day to day life which reflects on their narration.

“There was no ‘talap’ (payment) this week, I am the only earning member at home it’s difficult to survive, those who has two earning member they are too finding it difficult to make ends meet. How can I?” (Female permanent worker, Meghlibund, 2018).

Researcher has observed that in many of the households, people are eating only rice with salt or boiled potato or rice with only dal when there is delay in wage payment. Whatever they earn in a week they survive with that till next pay day. It became difficult to run their households if

they are not paid on time. The sufferers would have been more families of workers if there was not small kitchen garden at most of the families, or jackfruit trees, drumstick leaves or drumstick tree in the locality, near the road. In time of crisis the workers collect these and also eat food available in the forest, water bodies and edible products. Even after payment there are constant economic pressures from vendors from whom they purchase rice, cloths etc. Usually those vendors roam around the hamlets and sell rice and cloths on credit. But they collect money every week from workers till the amount is paid fully. Usually this cycle goes on. Because workers in time of need buy products from them on credit rather than established shops in the market due to flexibility of payment to them.

The temporary workers do not get works throughout year but co-operative workers get work throughout year. This also has effect on workers income and job security.

The co-operative tea estate on the other hand always pays workers on time. Researcher has observed that their living standard are also better.

The facilities provided by government to tea garden workers at private owned tea estates are housing facility and toilet under Swachh Bharat Mission. Other than these there are social security schemes for destitute women, widow women, elderly person, differently abled people. Some of the workers are getting these facilities from the state government. But at co-operative tea estate workers said they do not get facilities from government as they get facilities from the management. Anganwadi workers of Durgabari tea estate said there are people from workers who gets benefit from the government under different social security schemes.

The wages, bonus, facilities from management as well as government has effects on workers life. As we know that living condition and social, political relation depends on the economic relation in a given social structure we can see here that the ownership pattern affects the economic relation of the workers of the both the tea estate. In turn that affects the workers life. This is reflected on the health status of the workers. The workers have better chance to avail and afford medical facilities at co-operative tea estate. They have better acceptability of the health facilities which are available to them. Banerji's study (1982), Sahu's study (1980), Soman's study (1997) also showed that economically better off people can avail and access health service more than the poorer section of people.

IV. Health status of workers in these two tea estates

The co-operative system started in Tripura long ago⁴⁴. Previous chapters (chapter-4,5) we have seen that comparing to privately owned tea estate with the co-operative owned tea estate is doing better. They could provide better basic amenities to their workers. Whereas the privately-owned tea estate is struggling for its existence. They cannot provide the basic amenities to their workers properly. Though both the tea estates are far behind of providing welfare facilities to the workers according to Plantation Labour Act 1951 and Tripura Plantation Labour Rules 1954 but the co-operative is far better than the privately-owned tea estate. This is reflected in the living condition of the workers and in the social status of the workers of co-operative tea estate. As a result, they are able to provide education to their children. The women workers can afford to make their decisions regarding reproductive health better than the privately-owned tea estate women workers. Woman workers decision making about her reproductive life reflects when she chooses permanent conception after having two children. In the group discussion it came out that other women also support her decision and they too prefer to have contraceptive measures. Where as in the group discussion at privately owned tea estate when researcher asked about contraceptive measures most of the women workers were reluctant to tell. When probed further a woman worker said “if you do not sleep with your man will he keep you at home?” Others too supported her. They rarely follow proper contraceptive measures rather they follow ‘calendar’ or ‘withdrawal method’. When asked about failure of those method they were unable to say anything. Even regarding taking treatment women have less power regarding their health. The irony is that there is woman panchayat member among them, who previously was ‘Gram Pradhan’.

The seasonal diseases across hierarchy is almost same in both the tea estates. But the difference is in **infant mortality, tuberculosis cases and institutional deliveries**. The co-operative only has one tuberculosis case after long gap of 4-5 years. (here researcher like to mention that the worker is temporary worker and working in the factory which might be another causative factor for diseases) But in privately owned tea estate almost there are 2-3 cases of tuberculosis patients among the workers. Some of them may be cured but some of them are not cured and succumbed

⁴⁴ The co-operative movement in Tripura started in accordance with the provisions of Bombay Co-Operative Societies Act 1925. Co-Operative movement started its career with the registration of Swasti Samabaya Samity Ltd. in 1949. But the movement got momentum since 1978 after the enactment of Tripura Co-Operative Societies Act, 1974 and the Co-operative Societies Rules, 1976. In Tripura 2-tier system of co-operative movement is followed i. e state level and primary level. The dominant sector of the co-operative movement in the state comprises Agri-credit societies i.e LAMPS, PACS, FSS Marketing, Fisheries and Weavers societies. The co-operative movement in Tripura encompasses the economic activities with special focus on the economically background classes including tribe section of people.

into diseases. Many homes had tuberculosis patients. The difference is related to the diseases suffering of the workers. Even at co-operative tea estate the tuberculosis patient is temporary worker. Though the temporary workers get facilities from the tea estate but it is less than the permanent workers. So, there remain differences in accessibility and affordability of the basic amenities and medical facilities. In both the tea estates there are inadequate medical facilities, though the co-operative tries to provide some short of medical facilities to workers. The tuberculosis patient with diabetes of the co-operative tea estate and one tuberculosis patient who also was suffering from diabetes of privately-owned tea estate had same symptoms. The patient of co-operative tea estate survived but the patient from privately owned tea estate did not. The patient from co-operative went to avail treatment from private practitioner of state to outside of state and later on government facilities after diagnosis of the diseases. But the permanent worker from the privately-owned tea estate could not be diagnosed early and when he was diagnosed having tuberculosis with diabetes his life could not be saved. Here 'felt need' of the former patient took him to take treatment. He said *"I can understand when I am sick. When I feel that something is not right about my body I consult with doctor. My sugar level increased in between treatment of TB and I could tell. So, I consulted doctor. They prescribed me medicine and I became alright."* His ability to afford the treatment also played a role other than vicinity of the health centres. Whereas the privately-owned tea estate worker's house was near the militant disturbed area. The well-equipped state medical college hospital is almost 42km away. Though his wife and himself worked as a permanent worker but they could not go to hospital in time. The facilities and bonuses allow the workers of co-operative to get better life where as workers of privately-owned tea estate struggle to meet their ends meet with their wages and very less facilities provided to the management.

The workers co-operative hamlets also have well sanitation system. Researcher observed that regarding drinking habits the workers co-operative workers are less in consuming than the private tea estate worker. The relapse cases of tuberculosis at private tea estate had history of consuming liquor after completing the treatment of tuberculosis. But after consuming the liquor their diseases again relapses.

V. Perception of being healthy: two different ownership tea estates

There is difference between co-operative tea estate and private owned tea estate workers regarding the perception of being healthy. The privately-owned tea estate workers voiced that there is lack of basic amenities which effects their perception about being healthy. They are in

constant fear of losing their job or not getting wages in time. They are even tense about the future of the tea estate which is running at loss. They are tense about the ownership of the tea estate as the actual owner is an absentee owner and the person who took over the tea estate threatens to abandon the tea estate whenever there is any crisis. Whereas the co-operative tea estates worker does not face such type of threats. Their main concern is children's education and better life. Their perception of being healthy means if they can work, they feel healthy. They too feel healthy if there are no diseases or no tension related to family. Whereas the privately-owned tea estate workers feel work place tension other than diseases or children's education. There is always uncertainty about the tea estate so workers feel that those issues effect their health perception and overall well-being. Whereas the co-operative tea estate workers do not feel that pressure and they feel that if they fell in trouble the tea estate will help them to overcome the problem.

VI. Illness seeking behaviour

The workers of two different tea estates avail treatment from different available health facilities available to them. The privately owned tea estate workers avail faith healers, sorcerers, traditional healers' treatment more than the co-operative tea estate. Their first choice of treatment of traditional treatment is in case of leucorrhoea, skin diseases, psychological problems, chicken pox. Some chronic diseases like pain in different organs, swelling in body, feet, Asthma, arthritis, jaundice and in some cases of Tuberculosis traditional healing is the other choice of treatment along with allopathic system of medicine. Home remedies is the first choice of availing treatment in all sphere of workers irrespective of hierarchy. In case of acute illness, the workers in both tea estates try to avail allopathic treatment from nearby allopathic facilities available to them. Availing Ayurvedic and Homeopathic treatment from nearby PHC, CHC or subcentre is very less. Leucorrhoea is the one disease for which workers do not go for allopathic treatment rather they prefer traditional healing, Ayurvedic or Homeopathic medicine. Most of the gynaecological illness sought treatment from ayurvedic, traditional healing, homeopathic medicine after availing allopathic treatment for subsiding acute illness. The office staff of both the tea estate prefer allopathic medicine and most of them access treatment from private practitioner. Illness seeking behaviour again depends on economic condition of workers, acceptability, accessibility, availability of health services. Sahu's (1980) study shows that those who are far off at interior place they prefer available and accessible treatment available to them. Here the workers of privately owned tea estate have lesser accessibility and affordability of allopathic medicine from private sector. In case of chronic

diseases workers sought multiple way of treatment. Most of the time they shift from allopathic to traditional healing, Ayurvedic or Homeopathic medicine along with home remedies.

VII. Interlinking behavioural, societal and cultural perspective

The tuberculosis patient who could 'feel' his need and know what might be the causation of disease took biomedical treatment. The individual approach to biomedicine and treatment provided by medical personnel indicates the behavioural approaches to diseases and health. (behavioural perspective)

The workers of two tea estate observed stark differences in socio-economic condition and welfare measures provided by management, available and accessible health service and affordability of those health service, decision making power which leads to difference in health status of workers in these two tea estates. (societal approach/perspective)

The workers from both the tea estates have differential patterns of access and availing health services. They relate some diseases with the cultural realm they are in. Sitala puja, to keep away different diseases (poxes, fevers, measles, different types of furuncle and carbuncles etc) 'patakhaori' puja before going for plucking tea leaves or taking 'faith healers' or 'sorcerers' services for 'leucorrhoea', 'menstrual problem', 'infertility', 'gram devta' puja for keeping the village safe, eating mixed vegetable curry on last day of Bengali year for keeping away skin diseases and other diseases, praying for good health and free from diseases and sickness are some cultural perception of diseases causation and healing/curative/preventive measures workers take. This too differ in both the tea estate workers. Though 'taking herbal' or 'home remedies' for diseases workers of both tea estates are in same boat but for taking services of 'faith healers' or 'sorcerers' the privately owned tea estates workers are keener to take. This may be due to unaffordability and less accessibility and availability of biomedical health services. (cultural approach/perspective)

Conclusion

The study explored two types of ownership of tea estate in Tripura. This thesis explores the social determinants of health of tea garden workers in Tripura. This study had found out that better living and working condition, better management and social security measures provided by co-operative sector had better outcome in health of tea estate workers than the privately owned tea estate. The TTDC (Government) ownership tea estate had not been selected for the

study. It needs to be explored further to know the health of the workers of the government owned tea estates.

Measures can be taken to improve the health of privately owned tea estate:

1. Better management by the owner of the tea estate.
2. Not to remain absentee owner and solely dependent on manager of the tea estate rather come and visit tea estate regularly and monitor/ supervise the tea estates condition. This way the owner will be aware of the grievances of the workers and will try to address them. This way workers too will feel that they have proper owner and their problems has been taken care of.
3. To give workers their due/pending gratuity.
4. Better implementation of PLA 1951 and Tripura Plantation Labour Rule 1954 by the owner and TTDC should supervise the matter.
5. Timely payment of wages, bonus of the workers.
6. Government should address the insurgency problem more strictly so that not only tea industry but other economic activities in interior areas can run smoothly.
7. Re-open the factory of the tea estate. This way workers will get work throughout the year. (According to old office staff and workers once this privately owned tea estate was one of the best tea estates in Tripura but due to insurgency this tea estate's condition declined).
8. Recruitment of health personnel e. g pharmacist to look after minor illness of workers so that they do not have to rush to other health service facilities by jeopardising their one-day wages.
9. Creation of local markets for locally processed tea.

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ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE I

Pre-pilot study:

To get some idea of the tea plantation researcher did a pre pilot study in the study area, i.e in Meghlibund Tea Estate during October to December 2015.

Rough findings of pre-pilot study:

Study area: Meghliband Tea Estate, subdivision: Mohanpur District: West Tripura District

Part of the plantation falls under TTAADC, (Village Council: Saratchoudhuri, Hezamara Block) and Panchayat: Vidyasagar

Total area: 349.82-hectare, plantation area: 200hectare.

History of the tea estate:

The tea estate was brought by present owner from a Bengali Brahmin in the year 1953 AD. The present owner is no single owner but the estate is property of inheritance and has several owners. Only one of them used to run the estate but for selling it needs approval of other shareholders too. In the year 1995 the owner who mainly run the estate was abducted along with a Tilla babu by the militants (ATTF- All Tripura Tiger Force)) of Tripura and after paying huge ransom too was murdered. Tilla babu was released. Even his body was not found. After that incidence the garden was closed for several years. With the initiative of than Government of Tripura the garden was reopened. But owner of the garden was not staying there anymore as before the owner used to stay most of the time in the garden bungalow.

In the year 1999 the garden was given to lease for 99 years to a Bengali higher caste person who has other business too and resides in Agartala. He used to visit the garden once in a week, mainly on Sunday. He too was abducted by militants but later on released. After his abduction the factory which was working before was closed since 2000 AD. Now the garden runs by selling green tea leaves to other estate—Ramdurlavpur tea estate which is in another district. They sell green tea leaves 13.50rs/ kg. Estate is running in loss but still workers are trying to make it work.

Flow chart 1 Rough structure of the workers positions and wage structure up to office staff in the tea estate

Owner of the tea garden (Absentee) Bengali Brahmin



The garden was given to lease in
1999 for 99 years (Bengali higher caste)



Manager (stays in Agartala, 42 km from garden,) Bengali Brahmin



Other office staffs (local people) mostly Bengali

(2 Tilla babu or field supervisor-both (one is working from 1973, from 2011 on extension, wage 7500Rs/month. Another from 1984, now on extension from 2014, wage, 7000rs/month)

Brahmin, 3 clerks, Bengali higher caste (one working from 1997, wage Rs5500/month, second one from 2009, wage 3000Rs/month, third one 2012, wage 3000Rs/month)

1 mechanical supervisor, Bengali higher caste (from 2012, 5000Rs/month)



Workers (Munda, Santal, Oraon -ST), Oria, Nayek-OBC. 266 nos.
permanent workers, near about 100 contractual workers



Female (tea leaves plucker)

male (field)

Source: Compiled by researcher from pre pilot study

Working hour for workers is

Morning -7am to 12 noon

Evening -3pm to 7pm

Facility given by tea estate to workers –

Land for building house as the previous owner of the estate made unwritten rule that after retirement of the worker also if no one works in the garden from that family still they can live in that land provided by the estate. But they will not get land holding of the land.

Materials to build house –locally available straw (known as “*chhan*” to make roof of room), bamboo or mud wall room.

Originally most of the houses are having mud wall and tin roofed rooms. They take estate provided roof material and one of the rooms in almost every house having estate provided roof material and mud or bamboo wall. Other rooms are of mostly tin roofed. All the houses they keep clean. Almost all household is having livestock like pigs, cows, goats, hen and ducks. Almost all do kitchen gardening which provides vegetables. Other than these houses have betel nut, coconut tree or other economically beneficial trees.

For drinking water –well (this is the popular water source in that area, though now a day’s tube well or water supply provided by government is available).

Ration - 3kg 266gm flour (atta), /person/week

Leave- 14days/year

Maternity leave-90days

There is one “Shiva temple” in the garden and yearly puja is conducted in that temple. On that day all workers get holiday with full wage.

Six days working day, Saturday holiday because that day is local market or “Haat” day.

MNREGA has also an impact on workers life. When they are entitled MNREGA working days they manage it with the Panchayat members who himself/herself are garden worker. They manage working time according to their convenience.

Toilet facility they are getting from government under “Sachh Bharat Mission”.

Other than this everybody uses *kutcha* toilet of their own or uses neighbours.

Drainage system is not adequate. There is no *pucca* drain, only *kutcha* drain, which usually drained in to nearby field or pit.

Newer generation is eager to get education. This year 15 students appeared in Madhyamik (10th board) examination but none could pass. Students mainly go to nearby Primary school and High school (Government, Bengali medium.)

Medical facility – from nearby PHC, The PHC is adjacent to one Hamlet i.e. Dhakaiya Para, and about 1km from Meghlibandh. It is a functional PHC, 24*7, with indoor and outpatient department, a Homeopathic and Ayurvedic, Dental set up from NRHM.

There are DOTS centre in the hospital, functional pathology, tests done in the pathology are Hb%, Blood group, HBsAg, HIV, VDRL, RBS, BT/CT, Urine for Alb, and sugar, MP, Sputum. Other than these, pregnancy test in OPD or IPD also done. F-ICTC Centre is also there.

An LMF doctor was recruited by tea garden but after his death his son who is not qualified but runs a pharmacy took over his father’s position and provided service in the garden for several years and other unqualified personnel was there who also provided medical service.

Now there is one pharmacy in the market to which estate made arrangement that medicine prescribed by the PHC to workers will be distributed by that pharmacy and bill of those medicines will be paid by estate. Workers have to submit their prescription to estate authority. Authority said that they pay for all medicine but when researcher inquired, she came to know from workers that only some medicine they get from pharmacy other like vitamin suspension has to buy by them. When researcher intervened further with the medicine shopkeeper, he revealed that actually half amount re-imburements are given from the management and workers does not know that. But nearby tea estate which is of co-operative is giving full reimbursement to their employees. He requested me not to reveal this to workers. The union leader of the garden is aware of the fact.

Other than these facility workers depend on local faith healer “*ojha*”, who is also tea garden worker.

There are different specialties’ of “*ojha*”s that perform their work according to their specialty, like dog bite, snake bite.

They even go far places to get treatment from “*ojha*”

A “*dai*” has been recruited from management, she gets 400 Rs per week by management.

There are three Anganwadi centres in two hamlets, two are functional in Meghlibund hamlet but one at Dhakaiya para is not functional. One baby care centre is there for the garden workers children, which is run by an NGO (CHETANA INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN STUDIES) in collaboration with Tripura government. One primary school is in the Meghlibund hamlet another high school which has its primary section and one higher secondary school which also has primary section from the Meghlibund hamlet is about one km away. But from Dhakaiya para hamlet high school is adjacent to that hamlet and higher secondary school is about 2.5 km away. From the workers it is known that previously estate owner who was abducted and killed by insurgents used to provide school dress and books to workers school going children but after his demise the garden was closed for almost three years and after re-opening of the garden that facility was withdrawn.

Durgabari tea garden:

This tea garden is a worker’s co-operative tea garden. It is situated near Agartala at Durgabari.

Study area: Durgabari tea estate workers co-operative society Ltd., Subdivision: Mohanpur,

District: West Tripura District

Total area of Durgabari tea estate:74.124-hectare, plantation area: 58.54 hectare

ANNEXURE II

Interview schedule for the workers of the Tea Estates

Social profile

Name of the hamlet:

Name of the block:

Name of the Subdivision:

Name of the district:

Name of the panchayat/ADC village:

Name of the respondent	age	Sex	Religion	Community (SC/ST/OBC/GENERAL)	Marital status	Educational qualification:	Type of family
						i. illiterate ii. Literate: a. anganwadi b. i-v c. v-x d.x-xii e. graduate and above f. others	

2. How many member/members are there in the family?

Sl no.	Name	Age	sex	Relationship with respondent	Educational statuses/qualifications	Occupation

VIII

Household details

1. House ownership: _____	
2. Type of House: _____ _____	3. Number of rooms: _____
4. Electrification status: _____ Government/other source	
5. Source of Drinking Water: _____ Distance from house _____	
6. Toilet Facility: _____	
7. Land Owned _____	8. Monthly Income: _____
9. Do you have agricultural production: _____	10. Do you have livestock: _____
11. Primary source of energy for cooking: _____ _____	12. If any vehicle Specifies: _____

1. Self / shared / tenant / other; Pucca / semi pucca / kuccha / Thached / other; 5. own well / own tank / pipeline / other well / public tap / other; 6. open ground / own compound / own toilet / other toilet / back water; 11. Gas cylinder / fire woods / Electricity / Solar stove / others.

Service profile in the tea estate:

- 1. Name of the worker:
- 2. Designation in the tea estate:
- 3. Nature (type) of work in the tea estate:
- 4. Nature of service in the tea estate:

a. permanent

Duration of service as permanent worker:

b. temporary/ contract

If contractual:

Duration of contract:

5. Timings of work:

6. Salary structure:

a. fixed.....amount

b. daily rated..... Amount per day.....

c. monthly.....

d. weekly

e. other

Facilities from management:

Do you get facilities from management?

If yes.....

Elaborate please.....

a. housing

b. water supply and sanitation.....

c. ration.....

d. medical facility.....

e. crèche

f. electricity.....

g. fuel.....

h. education facility for children.....

i. recreation facility.....

Food security and supply:

Sl. No.		
1.	PDS:	a. does you have ration card? If yes Type of ration card.... BPL / APL / Andtyodaya / Annapoorna; b. what and how much do you get from the PDS? c. how you collect from the PDS?
2.	ICDS:	a. does your children get/got meal from anganwadi centre? If yes.... How many days in a week? If no.. Why? b. does you/your wife got/get meal from Anganwadi centre during pregnancy and lactation? If yes..... How many days in a week?
3.	MDM:	a. does your children get MDM at school? If yes.... Do they take that food? What they get?

ANNEXURE III

Interview schedule for workers of the Tea Estate

Morbidity profile and access to health services:

Name of the hamlet:

Name of the block:

Name of the Subdivision:

Name of the district:

Name of the panchayat/ADC village:

Name of the respondent

For morbidity profile NSSO standard format has been adapted.

1. Minor morbidity experience within 15 (fifteen) days

Sl no	Age	Relationship with respondent	Nature of reported ailments	Type of health service provider	Type of service taken	Source of availing medicine	Distance of health service centre from respondent's house
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

2. Major morbidity experience within one year:

Sl no	Age	Relationship with respondent	Nature of reported ailments	If differently able, kind of disability	Type of health service provider	Type of service taken	Source of availing medicine
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

3. How do you go to health service centre?

4. Do you fall sick during work?

If yes..... how often?

If no...

5. What do you think about being healthy?

6. Who looks after you when you fall ill?

7. How do you manage your work during your illness?

ANNEXURE IV

Service facility:

Sub centre:

Type of Sub-Centre:

Facility provided:

Sl no.		
1.	Infrastructure: <u>Sub centre building</u> Government: Rented: Regular electricity supply: Water supply: Toilet: Labour room: Medicine/drugs: Instruments:	
2.	Human resources: ANM MHW Additional ANM Safai-karmachari	Nos.
3.	Services: Immunization Oral pill distribution NIRODH distribution Treatment for common ailments Test for Malaria, pregnancy, blood sugar, urine albumin Hb% ANC PNC DOTS Neo-Natal care	

PHC:

Type of PHC:

Facility provided:

Sl no.		
1.	Infrastructure: building: Regular electricity:	

	Water supply: Toilet: Labour room: Medicine/drugs: Instruments: Quarters: No. of beds: Timings: Functional vehicles/ambulance:	
	Human resources:	Nos.
	Medical officer Lady Medical officer AYUSH doctors Pharmacists Nurse –midwife Health worker (female) Health Assistant (male) Health Assistant(female)/lady health visitor Health educator Laboratory Technician Cold chain and Vaccine Logistic Assistant Multi skilled Group-D worker Sanitary worker cum watchman Upper division clerk Lower division clerk Driver	
	Services: OPD IPD New born care service: Referral services for delivery Pathology: DOTS: ICTC	

CHC

Sl no.	
1.	Infrastructure: building: Regular electricity: Water supply: Toilet: Labour room: Medicine/drugs: Instruments: Quarters:

	No. of beds: Timings: Functional vehicles/ambulance Functional Operation theatre: Blood storage facility:	
2.	Human resources:	Nos.
	Block medical officer/Medical Superintendent Public health specialist Public health nurse General surgeon Obstetrician and Gynaecologist Paediatrician Anaesthetist Physician General duty medical officer Dental surgeon Medical officer -AYUSH Public Health Manager Staff nurse Pharmacist Pharmacist- AYUSH Laboratory technician Radiographer Dietician Ophthalmic Assistant Dental Assistant Cold chain and Vaccine Logistic Assistant OT technician Multi Rehabilitation/ community Based Rehabilitation Worker Counsellor Registration clerk Statistical Assistant/Data entry operator Account assistant Administrative assistant Dresser Ward boys/nursing orderly Driver	
3.	Services: OPD IPD New born care service: Pathology: DOTS: Specialized services: ICTC	

Sub divisional hospital:

Sl no		
1.	Infrastructure: building: Regular electricity: Water supply: Toilet: Labour room: Medicine/drugs: Instruments: Quarters: No. of beds: Timings: Functional vehicles/ambulance Functional Operation theatre: Blood storage facility: Radiography facility: Ultra sound facility:	
2.	Human resources:	Nos.
	Medical officer Obstetric and Gynaecologist Paediatrician Anaesthetist AYUSH doctors Public Health Manager	
3.	Services: OPD IPD New born care service: Pathology: DOTS: Specialized services: Blood storage facility: Radiography facility: Ultra sound facility:	

District hospitals:

Sl no		
1.	Infrastructure: building:	

	Regular electricity: Water supply: Toilet: Labour room: Medicine/drugs: Instruments: Quarters: No. of beds: Timings: Functional vehicles/ambulance Functional Operation theatre: Blood storage facility: Radiography facility: Ultra sound facility: Critical care unit: Suggestion and complaint box:	
2.	Human resources:	Nos.
	Medicine Surgery Obstetric and Gynaecologist Paediatrician Ophthalmology Orthopaedics Radiology Pathology ENT Dental Medical officer Dermatology Psychiatry Anaesthetist AYUSH doctors Microbiology Forensic specialist Staff nurse Lab tech Store keeper Radiographer ECG tech/ECO Audiometrician Ophth. Assistant EEG tech. Dietician Physiotherapist O.T Technician Social workers Counsellor Dermatology technician	

	Cyto- technician Biomedical engineer Darkroom assistant Dental technician Rehabilitation therapist Hospital administrator Housekeeper Admin officer Medical record officer Medical record assistant Accounts /finance officer	
3.	Services: OPD IPD New born care service: Pathology: DOTS: Specialized services: Blood storage facility: Radiography facility: Ultra sound facility: Critical care unit:	

State hospitals:

Sl no	
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1.	Infrastructure: building: Regular electricity: Water supply: Toilet: Labour room: Medicine/drugs: Instruments: Quarters: No. of beds: Timings: Functional vehicles/ambulance Functional Operation theatre: Blood storage facility: Radiography facility: Ultra sound facility: Critical care unit: Suggestion and complaint box:	
2.	Human resources:	Nos.
	Medicine Surgery Obstetric and Gynaecologist Paediatrician Ophthalmology Orthopaedics Radiology Pathology ENT Dental Medical officer Dermatology Psychiatry Anaesthetist AYUSH doctors Microbiology Forensic specialist Staff nurse Lab tech Store keeper Radiographer ECG tech/ECO Audiometrician Ophth. Assistant EEG tech. Dietician Physiotherapist O.T Technician Social workers	

	<p>Counsellor Dermatology technician Cyto- technician Biomedical engineer Darkroom assistant Dental technician Rehabilitation therapist Hospital administrator Housekeeper Admin officer Medical record officer Medical record assistant Accounts /finance officer</p>	
3.	<p>Services: OPD IPD New born care service: Pathology: DOTS: Specialized services: Blood storage facility: Radiography facility: Ultra sound facility: Critical care unit: MCH clinic Emergency ARV clinic Ambulance RSBY Counselling ICTC</p>	

ANNEXURE V

Group discussion:

History:

1. How long have you been residing in this tea garden?
2. Please share any recollection of the history of the tea garden that you have heard from family and friends.

Health perception:

1. What are the attributes of a healthy person?
2. What is needed to be healthy?
3. Share about your perception of being healthy.

Work:

1. What type of work you do in the garden?
2. Do you think your work condition affects your health?

Maternal health and child health:

1. At what age you got married? Or, how old were you when you got married?
2. Share the experience when you became mother for the first time.
3. Do you have any idea about contraceptive method?
4. Have you experienced any abortions/miscarriages?

ANNEXURE VI

CONSENT FORM (for the participant)

The advantages and disadvantages of the research in which I am expected to participate has been explained to me.

I, willingly, under no pressure from the researcher

(i) I agree to take part in this research, and agree to participate in all investigations which will help acquire knowledge for the benefit of the mankind.

(ii) It is informed by the researcher if I am not comfortable to answer any of the questions I may choose not to answer /skip the question and move on to next question.

(iii) I willingly give permission to researcher for audio-recording of my interview.

My consent is explicitly not for any personal information. For disclosing any such personal information obtained from me further consent should be obtained.

I have been informed that JNU and the researchers (PI ... Barnali Das and her colleagues) will take my prior consent before they draw benefits.

Signatures

Subject/ participant

witness

principle

Investigator