

Chapter III

Economic Life of the Workers

Plantation Economy in the Present Perspective

The present chapter deals with economic life of the plantation workers in the present perspective. Their migration from agrarian economy to the plantation industry has definitely affected their socio-economic life. While discussing the economic life of the workers, we shall see the organisational set up of the staff and hierarchy of them right from the Director to the workers, the composition of work force, various facilities, nature of work, workers' attitudes to the plantation work, caste and traditional occupation, caste and present occupation, caste and landholding, caste and cattle stocks, caste and material life, caste and Indebtedness, caste and income etc. in the light of present plantation economy of Mungpoo Cinchona plantation.

THE ORGANISATIONAL SET UP

The plantation has its distinct form of organisational set up which is more complex than any other organisation. The plantation has been broadly divided into four sections, viz. office, Factory, Research and Plantation (Agriculture) having establishment and non-establishment monthly rated and daily rated workers and the gazetted officers.

By "Stablishment Staff", we mean those people who are not directly involved in the production process. The management cadres are those who are the overall in-charge of the various sections of the plantation industry. By "Non-Establishment", we mean those who are directly involved as monthly rated factory workers and daily rated plantation workers in the production process of Quinine and Emetine medicines. By "Daily Rated Workers", we mean those who have been directly involved in the production process of the plantation agriculture. Both monthly rated factory workers and daily rated plantation workers are known as "Kamanee Coolies".

Category I : Management

The plantation is under the overall management of a Director who is locally known as Bara Sahib. He is assisted by four Deputy Directors who fall in the second rank of the management category. The Deputy Directors, one each for plantation, administration, factory and research are known as Chota Sahibs. All the Chota Sahibs excepting one are Bengalis.

Below the Deputy Directors, there is an Administrative Officer who occupies the third position in the management. The Accounts Officer and Research and Development Officer also occupy the third rank. The Accounts Officer is locally known as Daftari sahib. The Research and Development Officer is responsible for research laboratories of the plantation. He is the Bara Sahib of the research unit only and Chota Sahib of the plantation as

a whole. The Quinologist, Chief Chemist and Manager come in the next position of the management set up.

Category II : Establishment Staff

The Establishment staff are the pensionable staff of the plantation under the Civil Service Rules of Government of West Bengal. The Establishment staff are locally known as Babus. Here we will see the structure of various sections of the establishment cadres.

Office:

The Upper Divisional Clerks, Head Clerk and Cashier are the head of office section. They are eight in number. They are corporately known as Bara Babus. The lower divisional clerks are known as Chota Babus. The rest of the office staff such as Peon, Orderly (Ardali), Storeman, Havildar, Watchman, Chowkidars, Cleaner, Naik, Sweeper, Motor Mechanics, Motor Drivers, Night Chowkidar, Sayce, Kothimali as well as Surveyor are simply known as office Babus.

Factory

The Quinologist and Chief Chemist are known as Bara Sahibs. Below them, there are Assistant Quinologist and Analytical Chemist who are known as Chota Sahibs. The Assistant Quinologist and Analytical Chemist are directly involved in the production process of the factories. The rest of the staff in both factories (Quinine and Emetine) such as Soil Chemist, Head Carpenter,

Boiler Attendants, Mason (Grade I and II), Foremen, Blacksmiths (Grade I and II) and Electricians of the factories are corporately known as Karkhana Babus. The Babus are responsible for the Quinine and the Emetine factories having six sub-sections in each factory with more than sixty semi-skilled rank and file workers who come in the bottom of the hierarchy.

Research Unit

The Research and Development Officer, is the overall head of the unit and known as Bara Sahib. He is assisted by an Agronomist who is known as Chota Sahib. The Agronomist is to be assisted by other subordinate Sahibs such as Chemist, Botanist, Genetics, Plant Pathologist, Soil Chemist, Analytical Chemist and Horticulturist. The rest of the staff such as Assistant Horticulturist, Soil Surveyor, Agricultural Assistant, Laboratory Assistant, Nursery Mali, Chowkidar, Cleaner and Night Chowkidar are known as Annusandhan (research) Karmis (staff). They are at the bottom of hierarchy of the unit.

Hospital

There is only one doctor in the hospital. He is locally known as Doctor Sahib and he is assisted by a Compounder who supervises the works of Public Health Nurse, Assistant Nurse (Grade I and II), Trained Nurse (Grade I and II), Watchman, Hospital Cook, Cleaner, Stretcher Bearer, Diet Keeper and Night Chowkidar of the hospital. The hospital staff is locally known as Hospital Karmis. The staff are at the bottom of hierarchy of the unit.

Plantation

The Manager is the head of the plantation. He is known as Bara Sahib. He represents the plantation as a whole. He is assisted by the Assistant managers and a Divisional Officer (Horticultural Officer). The Assistant Managers and the Divisional Officer are locally known as Chota Sahibs. The Chota Sahibs look after the duties of Head Gangmen and Fieldmen. The gangmen and the Fieldmen are actually the men who have been directly involved in the production process of the plantation agriculture. They are simply known as Sahibs of the plantation. The Sahibs look after the actual works done by the daily rated plantation workers who are locally known as 'Coolies' or 'Mazdoors'. Further, the Sahibs are assisted by the other staff such as Head Carpenter, Mali, Chaprasi, Dokowala, Watchman, Mali (Grade II) and Nursery Mali of the plantation. The staff rank below the Sahibs and they are known as Kaman (plantation) Babus.

Category III : ^{Non -} Establishment Staff

The factory workers numbering about sixty only, 1,172 daily rated plantation workers and 1,200 casual workers are treated as non-establishment staff of Cinchona plantation industry. The sharp difference between the factory worker and the plantation worker is that former is monthly rated and later is daily rated. But the point of similarity between the two is that their wages are calculated on the number of days they work. They are non-establishment staff as they are not regulated by the Civil Service

Rules of Government of West Bengal under which they are not provided with retirement benefits.

There is no female worker in the factory—both Quinine and Emetine. So, all the workers are males only. Recently, the factories alone have been employing four hundreds casual workers per year. As per the provisions of the Plantation labour Act, 1951, there are three type of plantation workers - Adult, Adolescent and children. Adult workers are those who are above the age of 18 years; adolescents are those who are above the age of 15 years but below 18 years and child workers are those whose age is between 12 to 15 years. During the recent years, about 800 hundreds casual workers have been employed in the plantation. Locally, a factory worker's rank is above the plantation workers. All these categories form Kamanee "Coolies" or "Mazdoors" population of the plantation.

HIERARCHY OF STAFF

The Cinchona plantation, like any other organised industry, has its own hierarchy of staff, of course quite elaborate than that of tea plantations of the region. The hierarchy of staff includes all types of employees (Bhadra : 1992:72) of the plantation right from the Director to the workers.

Mungpoo Cinchona plantation being a Government owned industry, has a hierarchy of staff which does not always strictly maintain its formalities like tea plantations of the region.

Below the top ranking management, there is a category of establishment staff. The establishment category is divided into supervisory and non-supervisory staff. Hierarchically, the supervisory staff are above the non-supervisory staff. To cite a few instances in this regard, the Agronomist though more or less in the same position with Botanist, Plant Pathologist, Horticulturist etc. is the supervisory staff of the research unit. Similarly, Assistant Quinologists who are Bengali by their ethnic background are the supervisory staff of Quinine factory. In the same manner, there is an Analytical Chemist as the supervisory staff of the Emetine factory.

The Upper Divisional Clerks, four in number of which two are Kamis, one each Rai and a Temang by castes, three head clerks are there of which one is a Rai, another is a Damai and still another is a Kami by castes and a Cashier who is a Mangor by caste are supervisory staff of the office of the plantation. While lower division clerks are non-supervisory staff.

Similarly, a Head Gangman (Kami by caste) two Gangmen, Rai by caste and five Fieldmen are there of which two are Rais, one is Damai, another is Sarki and still another is Sherpa by their castes. They are supervisory staff of the plantation (agriculture). The rest of the establishment staff (see table No. 9) are non-supervisory staff of the plantation.

Table 9
Establishment Staff of the Plantation (1991-92)

Sl. No.	Names of the Posts	Number of Posts	Name of Caste	Number of persons
1.	Agronomist	1	Rai=1 (M)	1
2.	Chemist	1	Tamang=1 (M)	1
3.	Genetics	1	Gurung=1 (M)	1
	Plant Pathologist	1	Rai=1 (M)	1
	Soil Chemist	1	Limbu=1 (M)	1
	Analytical Chemist (Grade II)	1	Rai=1 (M)	1
	Horticulturist (Grade II)	1	Chhetri=1 (T)	1
4.	Assistant Horti- culturist	4	Bahun=1 (T) Sunuwar=1 (M) Sherpa=2 (M)	4
5.	Soil Surveyor	1	Tamang=1 (M)	1
6.	Upper Division Clerks	4	Kami=2 (M) Rai=1 (M) Tamang=1 (M)	4
7.	Head Clerk	3	Rai=1 (M) Damai=1 (M) Kami=1 (M)	3
	Cashier	1	Manager=1 (M)	1
8.	Agricultural Asst.	1	Rai=(M)=1	1
9.	Public Health Nurse	3	Gurung=2 (M) Kami=1 (M)	3
10.	Assistant Nurse (Grade I)	1	Rai=1 (M)	1
	Surveyor	1	Kami=1 (M)	1
	Laboratory	3	Chhetri=1 (T) Bahun=1 (T) Kami=1 (M)	3

Contd..

Table 9 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Names of the Posts	Number of Posts	Name of Caste	Number of persons
11.	Head Carpenter	4	Kami=2 (M) Rai=1 (M) Sherpa=1 (M)	4
12.	Motor Mechanics	2	Rai=1 (M) Damai=1 (M)	2
	Boiler Attendant	3	Kami=1 (M) Rai=1 (M) Limbu=1 (M)	3
	Junior Clerks	10	Bahun=4 (T) Rai=3 (M) Kami=3 (M)	10
	Compounder	1	Bengali=1 (T)	1
	Assistant Nurse (Grade II)	3	Rai=1 (M) Kami=2 (M)	3
13.	Peon	4	Dami=1 (M), Kami=2 (M) Gurung=1 (M)	4
	Orderly (Ardali)	4	Limbu=2 (M) Rai=1 (M) Dukpa=1 (M)	4
14.	Storeman	3	Dukpa=1 (M) Rai=1 (M) Kami=1 (M)	3
	Mason (Grade I)	6	Lepcha=3 (M) Rai=1 (M) Dukpa=2 (M)	6
	Motor Driver	2	Rai=1 (M) Tamang=1 (M)	2

Contd..

Table 9 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Names of the Posts	Number of Posts	Name of Caste	Number of persons
	Head Gangman	1	Kami=1 (M)	1
	Gangmen	5	Rai=3 (M) Tamang=1 (M) Bahun=1 (T)	5
	Fieldman	5	Rai=2 (M) Kami=2 (M) Bhujel=1 (M)	5
	Foreman	3	Rai=1 (M) Lepcha=1 (M) Sherpa=1 (M)	3
15.	Blacksmith	3	Rai=1 (M) Sunuwar=1 (M) Kami=1 (M)	3
16.	Trained Nurse (Grade I)	1	Lepcha=1 (M)	1
17.	Mason (Grade II)	6	Gurung=2 (M) Rai=1 (M) Kami=1 (M) Bihari=2 (T)	6
	Blacksmith (Grade II)	4	Rai=1 (M) Dukpa=2 (M) Damai=1 (M)	4
18.	Storeman (Grade II)	2	Rai=1 (M) Tamang=1 (M)	2
19.	Mali	6	Rai=1 (M) Gurung=2 (M), Kami=2 (M) Damai=1 (M)	6

Contd..

Table 9 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Names of the Posts	Number of Posts	Name of Caste	Number of persons
	Chapراسى	6	Kami=2 (M) Dukpa=1 (M) Rai=1 (M) Sherpa=1 (M) Lepcha=1 (M)	6
	Dokowala	2	Tamang=1 (M) Sarki=1 (M)	2
	Trained Dhai (Grade II)	1	Newar=1 (M)	1
	Electrician	3	Newar=1 (M) Rai=1 (M) Gurung=1 (M)	3
20.	Havildar	2	Sherpa=1 (M) Newar=1 (M)	2
21.	Watchman	5	Bahun=2 (T) Newar=1 (M) Kami=2 (M)	5
22.	Mali (Grade II)	3	Lepcha=1 (M) Damai=1 (M) Kami=1 (M)	3
	Syce	1	Tamang=1 (M)	1
	Hospital Cook	1	Kami=1 (M)	1
	Mistri (Grade II)	3	Newar=2 (M) Rai=1 (M)	3
	Nursery Mali	3	Gurung=1 (M) Kami=2 (M)	3
	Kothimali	13	Kami=4 (M) Damai=1 (M) Lepcha=3 (M) Sherpa=2 (M), Bahun=1 (T), Tamang=2 (M)	13

Table 9 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Names of the Posts	Number of Posts	Name of Caste	Number of persons
23.	Chowkidar	4	Damai=1 (M) Thakuri=1 (T) Kami=1 (M) Sherpa=1 (M)	4
	Cleaner	4	Tamang=2 (M) Rai=1 (M) Kami=1 (M)	4
	Naik	1	Tamang=1 (M)	1
	Sweeper	3	Bihari = 3	3
	Stretcher Bearer	1	Lepcha=1 (M)	1
	Diet Keeper	1	Dukpa=1 (M)	1
	Night Chowkidar	4	Rai=1 (M) Kami=1 (M) Lepcha=2 (M)	4
24.	Lower Division Clerk	20	Bahun=7 (T) Chhetri=8 (T) Kami=2 (M) Sherpa=1 (M) Rai=2 (M)	20
	Total	189		189

Source = Mungpoo Office: 1992

T= Tagadhari

M= Matwalis

Below the supervisory staff, there are a large number of non-supervisory staff. Again, even within the non-supervisory group there are some staff having hierarchy of their own.

The Chemist and the Botanist are Tamang and Chhetri by caste respectively. They are below the Agronomist of the research unit. Similarly, Genetics, Plant Pathologist, Soil Chemist, Analytical Chemist (Grade II) and Horticulturist (Grade II) are Gurung, Rai, Limbu and Chhetri by castes, who form next category of the hierarchy. There are four assistant Horticulturists of which one each is Bahun and Sunuwar and two are the Sherpas by castes. A Soil Chemist who is a Limbu by caste. A Soil Surveyor forms next category. He is Tamang by caste. There is also an Agricultural assistant who is Rai by caste in the next category and he is followed by three Laboratory Assistants of which one is Chhetri, another is a Bahun and still another is a Kami by their castes. There are four upper division clerks of which two are Kamis, one is a Rai and still another is Tamang by caste. They occupy the next category of work hierarchy. Of the three clerks one each of them are Rai, Damai and Kami by caste. There is a Cashier who is Mangar by caste whose official status is equivalent to the head clerk.

There are three Public Health Nurses of which two are Gurungs and one is Kami by caste. They form the next category in official hierarchy. Next to Public Health Nurse, there is an assistant Nurse (Grade I) who is Rai by caste. There are four Head Carpenters forming the next category among them there are two Kamis and one each is Rai and Sherpa by caste. Motor Mechanics who are two in number belong to Rai and Damai castes. Three Boiler

Attendants are there of which one each belong to Kami, Rai and Limbu. Of the ten junior clerks four are Bahuns, three are Rais and three are Kamis by caste and they form the next category in the official hierarchy.

The next category is consisting of Compounder who is a Bengali, then there are three Assistant Nurses of which one is Rai and two are Kamis. There are four Peons of which one each is Gurung and Damai, two are Kamis by caste. Again, there are four Orderly (Ardali) of which two are Limbus and one each is Rai and Dukpa. Peons and Orderly (Ardali) form another category.

Below the Peons and Orderly, there are three storemen, six Mason (Grade I), two Motor Drivers, One Head Gangmen, Five Gangmen, five Fieldmen and three Foremen who are mostly Matwalis by their caste status. The Blacksmith (Grade I) forms the next category. All of them are Matwalis. Similarly, below the Blacksmith, there is a Trained Nurse who is a Gurung by caste.

The next category is occupied by six Masons (Grade II) and four Blacksmiths (Grade II) who are again Matwalis. Below them, there are two storemen (Grade II) who are Rai and Tamang by caste. In the same way, six Malis, six Chaprasis, two Dokowalas, one Trained Dhai (Grade II) and three Electricians form another category. They belong to the Matwali castes. Havildar forms another category. Five Watchmen belong to Bahun, Newar and Kami castes.

Three Mali (Grade II) belong to Matwali caste, one Syce to Tamang, one Hospital Cook to Kami, three Mistris of which two are Newar and one is Rai. Three Nursery Malis belong to Matwali castes. All the thirteen Kothimalis belong to Matwali castes. They altogether form the next category.

Again, Chowkidars (4), Cleaner (4), Naik (1), Sweeper (3), Stretcher Bearer (1), Diet Keeper (1) and Night Chowkidar (4) form another category. Finally, lower division clerks (20) forms another category of the work hierarchy. Interestingly, majority (75%) of the lower division clerks are Tagadharis.

It is revealed from the table No. 9 that only 9.3% of non-supervisory staff belong to the Tagadharis, while 90.7% of them are Matwalis by their caste status. While the supervisory staff are recruited only from among men, the non-supervisory staff are recruited from among men and women. Women are mainly clerical staff of the offices of the plantation.

The non-establishment staff are normally known as unskilled daily rated plantation workers and semi-skilled factory monthly rated workers. They play the most important role in the production system. They are directly involved in the production process. Moreover, they do all type of works. Excepting the workers, all the establishment staff do not involve directly in the various production process.

However, the monthly rated factory workers are considered superior to the daily rated plantation workers. Under the system, the vast masses of daily rated workers in the plantation are devoid

of adequate prospect of promotions in the higher category of the plantation hierarchy.

THE WORKERS

By 'Workers', we mean here both the monthly rated factory workers and the daily rated plantation workers. The monthly rated workers are always males while the daily rated plantation workers are males, females and children. There is no child worker in the factory. Most of the daily rated workers are illiterates who are known as unskilled workers and most of the factory workers are literates who are known as semi-skilled workers.

In Mungpoo Cinchona plantation, there are 586 (47.6%) male, 284 (23.1%) female and 302 (24.5%) child workers who are paid daily wages. Again, there are 60 (4.9%) males who are paid monthly wages (see table 10). Most of the female workers had been paid at the rate fixed for the Adolescent type. In this way, the provisions of Equal Remuneration Act of 1976 had not yet been reached to the plantation till 1987, which removes wage differences between the sexes. Most of the women workers were in the age group of Adolescent i.e., above 15 years but below 18 years of their age. Above all, the plantation had adhered to the provisions of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 regarding the classification of workers and wages. However, the situation changed after 1987 with the introduction of uniform wage rates in the Cinchona plantation.

Table 10
Men, Women and Children Workers including Monthly Rated
Workers (1991-1992)

Sl. No.	Caste	A		N Daily Rated	Women Daily Rated	Children Daily Rates	Total
		M Monthly Rated					
1.	Bahun	1 (1.7%)		59 (10.1%)	25 (8.8%)	43 (14.2%)	128 (10.4%)
2.	Chhetri	2 (3.3%)		65 (11.1%)	45 (15.8%)	25 (8.3%)	137 (11.1%)
3.	Thakuri	1 (1.7%)		2 (0.3%)	5 (1.8%)	1 (0.3%)	9 (0.7%)
4.	Bihari	2 (3.3%)		2 (0.3%)	1 (0.4%)	4 (1.3%)	9 (0.7%)
5.	Newar	3 (5.0%)		11 (1.9%)	5 (1.8%)	8 (2.6%)	27 (2.2%)
6.	Mangor	2 (3.3%)		15 (2.6%)	17 (6.0%)	17 (5.6%)	51 (4.1%)
7.	Gurung	4 (6.7%)		8 (1.4%)	5 (1.8%)	4 (1.3%)	21 (1.7%)
8.	Rai	10 (16.7%)		207 (35.3%)	82 (28.9%)	76 (25.2%)	375 (30.4%)
9.	Limbu	4 (6.7%)		63 (10.7%)	7 (2.5%)	27 (8.9%)	101 (8.2%)
10.	Bhujel	1 (1.7%)		2 (0.3%)	2 (0.7%)	4 (1.3%)	9 (0.7%)
11.	Thami	-		3 (0.5%)	2 (0.7%)	1 (0.3%)	6 (0.5%)
12.	Sunuwar	-		1 (0.2%)	1 (0.4%)	1 (0.3%)	3 (0.2%)
13.	Tamang	8 (13.3%)		52 (8.9%)	29 (10.2%)	25 (8.3%)	114 (9.3%)
14.	Sherpa	3 (5.0%)		18 (3.1%)	10 (3.5%)	13 (4.3%)	44 (3.6%)

Contd..

Table 10 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Caste	M Monthly Rated	A	N Daily Rated	Women Daily Rated	Children Daily Rated	Total
15.	Lepcha	4 (6.7%)		40 (6.8%)	28 (9.9%)	26 (8.6%)	98 (8.0%)
16.	Dukpa	2 (3.3%)		10 (1.7%)	2 (0.7%)	9 (3.0%)	23 (1.9%)
17.	Kami	9 (15.0%)		23 (3.9%)	12 (4.2%)	13 (4.3%)	57 (4.6%)
18.	Damai	3 (5.0%)		4 (0.7%)	5 (1.8%)	5 (1.7%)	17 (1.4%)
19.	Sarki	1 (1.7%)		1 (0.2%)	1 (0.4%)	-	3 (0.2%)
Total		60 (4.9%)		586 (47.6%)	284 (23.1%)	302 (24.5%)	1232 (100%)

Recruitment of Workers in the Plantation

The history of labour recruitment in the plantation is the history of Sardari System. Unlike the recruitment policy which had adopted in the tea plantations of the region by following the various acts of the British Government, the Cinchona had quite a separate system of labour recruitment of its own.

Shortly after the establishment of Cinchona plantation at Mungpoo in 1862, Dr. Anderson appointed some people as the Sardars who were assigned with the responsibilities of labour recruitment, their employment and settlement in Mungpoo Cinchona plantation. The Sardars first tried to entice the local Lepchas. But since the Lepchas were shifting cultivators, the Sardars could not catch them for employing in the plantation. Secondly, the Sardars could not recruit the Lepchas or neighbouring surplus population of tea gardens forcefully due to the reason that Mungpoo was the integral part of Darjeeling hills where the various acts made for Bengal could not be applied directly as it was excluded area to the Government of Bengal. In this respect, to mention a few such acts relating to the labour recruitment in the plantations of Assam, Dooars and Terai belts had no implication for Mungpoo Cinchona plantation though it was a government owned plantation. For instance, The Inland Emigration Act III of 1863 of the British Government, which provided that all the labour recruiters should be licenced and that every intending emigrants should be closely supervised, had no meaning in Mungpoo due to the shortage of labour in the plantation (Kar :

1981:11). Thus, the act was not followed in the plantation. The other similar acts such as Workmen's Breach of Contract (Act No. VII) also were not followed in the plantation. However, as per the recommendations of ^{Labour} Enquiry Commission of 1868, which advocated for the recruitment of labourers by the plantation themselves through the agency of the plantation Sardars, the Nepali Sardars also started recruiting labourers in the Mungpoo Cinchona plantation.

Hence, the recruitment in Cinchona plantation, Mungpoo had been the sole responsibilities of the Sardars. Unlike tea plantations of Assam and Dooars or Terai belts of Bengal where the labourers were indentured from the various parts of Ranchi, Santal Parganas of Bihar, Crissa and other parts of the country, with legal security provided by the various acts, the question of recruitment in Mungpoo Cinchona plantation was little difficult as the workers were to be enticed from across the Indian borders, i.e., Nepal and Sikkim. The Sardars had to face lot of troubles in enticing the people in Nepal and Sikkim which had strictly concerned such recruitment of their nationals in the plantation. However, the question of caste and community feelings of the Sardars had played a predominant role for recruiting the workers. Each Sardar having a caste background could easily attract his fellow caste people who in turn were enticed for the work. In this way, Sardars used to bring his fellow caste members as labourers in the plantation. The process was widely acceptable to all the Sardars subsequently, as the only method of labour recruitment from Nepal and Sikkim.

In the process, the Sardars were assisted by Gallawalas who were deputed at the various places in Nepal and Sikkim. They were sent to Nepal and Sikkim in early October and used to stay there upto late February every year for recruiting, enticing and even indenturing labourers, and for such acts they were given one paise per worker per day as the commission by the management (Sharma:1991:4). Thus, a sort of competition could take place among the Sardars in recruiting workers. To induce more and more workers by showing all the advantages of work and prospects for ultimate settlement in the independent holdings (Mukherjee : 1945:17) could carry a high dignity for the Sardars in front of the management. Only a few immigrants came from Nepal who wanted to join their relatives who had already settled down in the Mungpoo Cinchona plantation. The Sardars used to entice workers to come with their own families as in that case they were more likely to stay permanently in the plantation (Sen:1977:61). The Sardars had to do this so as to please the planters who were very keen to do so by securing groups of married couple who were more profitable than securing unmarried one. To achieve this, very often the Sardars used to intoxicate the people and even forced them to marry and settle in the plantation.

A large number of Matwalis mainly Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Gurung, Thami and Mangars were recruited from eastern Nepal due to their exploitation by the Tagadharis who migrated from western Nepal (Pradhan:1991). Virtually, the Sardari system persisted as the only agency of labour recruitment in the plantation.

At the turn of century, the situation had been changed in the plantation as there appeared to have been a surplus population. To meet the situation, the planters started implementing 'Contract Clause' of Bengal Act III of 1915 which provided not only for the recruitment of labourers but also incorporated provisions for labour retrenchment. Thus, from 1930 onwards, many workers were retrenched. This system was locally known as Hatta Bahira system.

Under the Sardari system, a worker was known to another worker by the name of his Sardar under whom he was working. For instance, 80 Dhure Sardar, 6 Dhure Sardar, 16 Dhure Sardar, Gopal Sardar etc were the main Sardars having their distinct caste backgrounds. A Sardar made his own caste Dhura by his own caste workers who were recruited from Nepal and Sikkim. The same thing was done by other Sardars of various castes who made different caste Dhuras by recruiting workers from their own villages.

The Sardarship as the principle of labour recruitment could however persisted in the plantation till 1951. With the passing of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and the emergence of Wage Board, the workers had been started to be recruited from among the local people of the hill areas of Darjeeling District (Sen: 1977:59). Now, it is the Badli (substitute work) recruitment policy where the appointment is given to the dependent of a retiring labourer of the plantation. Again, even if some additional recruitment is necessary, it is done after conducting an annual survey of the labour households of the plantation in which the

certificate of one year Diploma course obtained from any recognised technical institute. In the same manner, to become a Manager or Assistant Manager, one must have been trained from any recognised institute of management and have to be experienced in the profession for a couple of years in the plantation. The same procedure is followed in case of other posts especially of the factories of the plantation.

During the recent years, it is observed that the question of implementation of 30% reservation of posts for the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes has been seriously affected the plantation. To make the scheme successful, scheduled caste/scheduled tribe organisations have been formed in the plantation. The organisations demanded that the reservation should be made effective irrespective of other factors associated with the process of its implementation. To the organisations, the factors like experience, training and qualification should be given secondary importance. On the other hand, it is of the opinion of the general castes that the question of education, training and experience should be taken into account while recruiting and promoting the workers in the higher posts especially at the technical level. They have also formed caste associations to counteract the situation.

Among the workers, 436 had been recruited from the various surrounding areas of the plantation, mainly from the adjoining tea gardens. Two hundred and seventy two of them were recruited from other parts of the district, and one hundred and nine of them were recruited from Doars areas, Sikkim and Bhutan. Another

eightynine of them were recruited from other parts of the country and two hundreds and thirteen workers were recruited from Nepal and rest were the second and third generational migrants to the plantation from Nepal and Sikkim.

If we see caste-wise distribution of the immigrant population to the plantation, it is observed that Bahuns and Chhetris were the recent migrants after 1940. Of 802 population of Bahun caste, 37 are the first generational migrants and rest are second or third generational migrants. Similar is the case with Chhetri caste. Of 768 Chhetris, 34 are the first generational migrants to the plantation and rest are found to be second or third generational migrants. These two Nepali castes along with Thakuris came here to avail better jobs in the plantation. They were not recruited by the Sardars or Gallawalas from Nepal.

Among the Matwalis like Rai, Limbu, Newar, Gurung, Mangar, Bhujel, Sunuwar, Sherpa, Lepcha, Dukpa, Kami, Damai, Sarki and Tamang numbering about 4756 population, only 142 are the first generational migrants while rest of the Matwalis are found to be the immigrants of second and third generations from Nepal and Sikkim. They were recruited by the Sardars and the Gallawalas for the plantation works.

The Wages of the Workers

Right from its inception to 1945, the male (Marad), female (Aurat) and child (Chokra) workers were unequally paid (see table 11). The wages were revised in early fifties as per the provisions

of the Minimum Wage Board. The plantation workers, for the first time, were categorised into adult, adolescent and children as per the provisions of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. Accordingly, an adult, adolescent and child workers were paid Rs. 1.10, Rs. 0.90 paise and Rs. 0.50 paise respectively. The wage structure remained same till the late sixties as the plantation had been passing through its hard days due to the recession of Cinchona products in the international markets.

However, in the late fifties, the wages of the workers were slightly revised by the management itself to boost up the morale of the workers. Finally, in 1958 with the help of Minimum Wage Board the wages of the workers were revised (see table 12). The wage rates of the plantation workers was once again revised in 1964 to encourage the plantation workers by the management itself (see table 13).

Table 11
Plantation Workers and Wages (1899 to 1945)

Sl. No.	Category of Worker	Wages per Day (in Annas)
1.	Marad	5 Annas
2.	Aurat	4 "
3.	Chokra	3 "

Source : Mungpoo Office : 1991

Table 12
Wages during 1958-59

Sl. No.	Category of Worker	Wages per Day (in Rs.)
1.	Adult	3.54
2.	Adolescent	2.69
3.	Child	1.01

Source : Mungpoo Office : 1992.

Table 13
Wages During 1964-1968

Sl. No.	Category of Worker	Wages per Day (in Rs.)
1.	Adult	3.83
2.	Adolescent	2.83
3.	Child	1.97

Source : Wage Board : 1969:4

In 1969, the third Minimum Wage Board, under the United Front Government of West Bengal, held its meeting exactly after ten years since 1958, and finally, on 20.3.1969, the Board fixed up the rate of wages for the workers in the following manner.

The supervisory staff were decided to be governed by the provisions of West Bengal Civil Service Rules in determining their wages besides their service conditions. In this way, the staff were

exempted from the purview of the recommendations of Minimum Wage Board. The non-establishment factory workers were to be regulated by the provisions of Factory Act, 1948. But their wages would be determined by the Minimum Wage Board along with the daily rated plantation workers. However, the wages of non-establishment factory workers would be calculated on the number of days they work and they would be paid on monthly basis as they were considered as monthly rated workers. In the process, the daily rated plantation workers had been continuing with the same procedure of weekly payment.

Table 14
Monthly Wages of the workers (1969-70)

Sl. No.	Category of Worker	Wages (in Rs.)
1.	Adult	100.0
2.	Adolescent	73.50
3.	Children	51.25

Source : Wage Board : 1969:5.

Table 15
Daily Wage Rate of plantation workers during 1969-70

Sl. No.	Category of Worker	Wages (in Rs.)
1.	Adult	4.00
2.	Adolescent	3.03
3.	Children	2.27

Source : Wage Board : 1969:6

Again, in 1971, the daily wages of the workers were revised by which an adult, adolescent and child workers were paid Rs. 4.42, Rs. 3.85 and Rs. 2.58 respectively. The wages remained same till 1980. In 1980 the wages reached to Rs. 8.11 for an adult, Rs. 7.07 for an adolescent and Rs. 6.27 for a child worker in the plantation.

Similarly, in 1981, the wage rate was again revised and fixed upto Rs. 15/- per worker. In 1984, just at the eve of the modernisation of plantation industry, the wage rate was fixed to Rs. 26.50 per worker per day, and it remained same till 1987. The greatest change which had been done in the revision of wage in 1987 was that all the plantation workers irrespective of categories had been given uniform wage rates.

Today, the daily wages of the workers are paid on the basis of time as well as piece rate. Normally, the workers have to work for eight hours in a day and six days in a week. A worker is paid daily wage which is locally known as Hazira. Another type of work is known as Thicka under which a worker is given a specific amount of work which the worker has to complete within the working hours.

Wages in the tea plantation industry varies from one place to another (Bhadra:1983:141). Previously, the differences in wage payment were done in the plantation as per the sex variation. It is seen that male workers were paid much more than the female workers. The Cinchona plantation was included in the Scheduled Employment under the The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 which provided that the state government is to fix up the minimum rate of wages for the workers. The wage rates are to be reviewed in every five

years and the employers are bound to pay the minimum wages to the workers. There was another act known as the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 which made it mandatory for the employer to pay the agreed wage. The 15th session of the Indian Labour Conference held in July, 1957 also passed a resolution stating that the workers in all major industries should not only have a guaranteed minimum wage but a need-based minimum wage (Bhadra: 1983:142).

In the Cinchona plantation, the plantation workers are now paid a uniform wages of Rs. 30.18 per worker per day irrespective of regular, seasonal, adult or minor categories. Till 1987, the Minimum Wage Board had to fix the wage rate for adult, adolescent and children separately. For instance, in 1982 the wage Board fixed up the rate for adult worker at Rs. 27.88 per day, Rs. 24.22 for adolescent worker per day and Rs. 22.22 for child worker per day.

Salary structure of the Establishment and Non-Establishment Staff

The monthly rated workers of Quinine and Emetine factories are paid on the basis of their categories. There are two type of factory workers, viz., (a) factory worker (Grade I) and (b) factory worker (Grade II). Fomrer is paid Rs. 1357/- as gross salary per month and later is paid Rs. 1265/- per month.

The establishment staff consisting of supervisory and non-supervisory categories are divided into 23 grades on the basis of their salaries. Similarly, the managerial staff are divided into five grades with separate salary structure (Mungpoo Office: 1992).

The Director is paid a gross salary of Rs. 6,000/- per month. Each Deputy Director is drawing a Rs. 5,000/- per month. The Administrative Officer, Accounts Officer and Research and Development Officer are drawing a sum of Rs. 4,500/- per month. The Manager, Quinologist and Chief Chemist are drawing a sum of Rs. 4,000/- per month. Lastly, the Assistant Managers, Production Chemist, Assistant Quinologist, Analytical Chemist and Horticultural Overseer (Divisional Officer) are drawing Rs. 3,000/- per month.

The establishment staff of Research and Development unit such as Genetics, Plant Pathologist, Soil Chemist, Analytical Chemist (Grade II) and Horticulturist (Grade II) are getting Rs. 2952/- per month. The Botanist and Chemist of the unit are getting Rs. 2953/- per month. Finally, the Agronomist of the unit is drawing Rs. 2962/- per month.

The Upper Division Clerks, Head Clerks and Cashier are drawing Rs. 2610/- per month. The Soil Chemist is getting Rs. 2617/- per month. The Soil Surveyor is paid Rs. 2715/- per month. The Assistant Horticulturist is drawing salary of Rs. 2755/- per month.

The Assistant Nurse and Laboratory Assistant are paid Rs. 2160/- per month. The Public Health Nurse is drawing her monthly salary of Rs. 2360/-. The Agricultural Assistant is drawing his salary of Rs. 2564/- per month.

The Peons and Orderly (Ardali) are paid Rs. 1865/- per month. The staff like Head Carpenter, Motor Mechanic, Boiler Attendant, Laboratory Attendant, Junior Clerks, Compounder and Assistant Nurse are paid Rs. 1920/- per month.

The staff like Storeman, Mason, ~~Motor~~ Driver, Head Gangman, Fieldman, Gangman and Foreman are drawing Rs. 1755/- per month.

The Lower Division Clerks are paid Rs. 1290/- per month. The staff like Mali, Sayce, Hospital Cook, Mistri, Nursery Mali, Kothimali, are paid Rs. 1357/- per month. The watchman is getting Rs. 1375/- per month. The Havildar is paid Rs. 1400/- per month. The staff like Mali, Chaprasi, Dokowala, Trained Dhari and Electrician are paid Rs. 1613/- per month. The Mason (Grade I) and Blacksmith are paid Rs. 1617/- per month. The Trained Nurse is paid monthly salary of Rs. 1647/- and Blacksmith (Grade I) is paid Rs. 1753/- per month.

It is apparent from the above discussion that the establishment staff of the Research unit are highly paid staff among the other establishment staff of the plantation. The rationale behind this is that they are the most skilled staff with technical training and degrees.

Job Facilities of the Workers

Today, the workers are supplied with rations as per the provisions of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. An Adult worker is given 3 kg. and 250 grams rations per week at subsidised rate.

Excepting for the managerial and supervisory staff, almost all the plantation workers are provided with the Pucca houses made of wooden materials with CI sheets at the roofs. However, it is noticed that the size of the houses allotted depends on the classification formula which is normally prepared after following

the provisions of the Plantation Labour Rules, 1956 of the Government of West Bengal (see table 16).

Table 16
Family and House types

Sl. No.	Type of House	No. of Family Members	Size of House
1.	A	Upto 5 Members	19 ft x 13 ft
2.	B	" 8 "	18 ft x 20 ft
3.	C	Above 10 Members	14 ft x 22 ft
4	D	Above 12 Members	40 ft x 30 ft (Fire place with Chimney)

Source : Mungpoo Office:1992

Altogether 2,600 (including staff quarters) houses have been constructed in the plantation since sixties. Most of the labour houses were constructed during the seventh five year plan period (Chatterjee : 1990:28). The house types that were found during my field work has been cited here in the following table No. 17 which can provide us a picture of changes from their traditional house pattern.

Table 17
Workers and House types

Sl. No.	Caste	Total household	HOUSE TYPES		HOUSE TYPES	
			Puccka	Percentage	Kuccha	Percentage
1.	Bahun	127	101	79.5	26	20.5
2.	Chhetri	123	110	89.4	13	10.6
3.	Thakuri	2	2	100.0	-	-
4.	Bihari	2	2	100.0	-	-
5.	Newar	45	39	86.0	6	13.3
6.	Mangar	21	16	76.2	5	23.8
7.	Gurung	17	14	82.4	3	17.6
8.	Rai	312	262	84.0	50	16.0
9.	Limbu	132	109	82.6	23	17.4
10.	Bhujel	8	5	62.5	3	37.5
11.	Sunuwar	3	3	100.0	-	-
12.	Thami	3	2	66.7	1	33.3
13.	Tamang	88	74	84.0	14	15.9
14.	Sherpa	33	26	78.8	7	21.2
15.	Lepcha	82	72	87.8	10	11.0
16.	Dukpa	18	16	88.9	2	11.1
17.	Kami	38	28	73.7	10	26.3
18.	Damai	16	11	68.5	5	31.5
19.	Sarki	1	-	-	1	100.0
Total		1071	892	83.3	179	16.7

The 1951 Act provides for sanitary latrine in every plantation on the basis of one latrine in every fifty acres under cultivation. But there is no such latrine in the plantation even today. The Act also provides drinking water supply to the workers. Recently 90,000 metres of the plantation areas have been covered with G. I. pipes for supply of drinking water (Chatterjee:1990:5). A water reservoir is made at the top of the plantation. As these pipes are not sufficient for the workers, many of them have been found carrying water from the springs and Jhoras.

To look after the health of the workers, there is a 16 bedded hospital in the plantation. The workers who have been hospitalised due to serious illness are given the light duties as prescribed by the Medical Officer. There are altogether four ambulances in all the four Cinchona and other Medicinal plantations. There are four nurses, a doctor and a compounder in Mungpoo. Due to the lack of financial assistance, the hospital has not been able to provide adequate services to the workers.

As per the 1951 Act every worker is entitled to enjoy a medical leave for a period of 14 days in every year at the rate of two third of his or her daily minimum wages. The West Bengal Plantation Rules, 1956 provides that every woman worker should enjoy a maternity leave with full pay for six weeks pre-natal stage and six weeks for post-natal stage. In case of death of a woman at the time of delivery, the maternity wages are to be given to the person who is looking after the woman and who takes the responsibility of rearing the child.

Upto 1950, the Superintendent of Cinchona plantations, General Manager, Manager, Quinologist, Accounts Officer and Assistant Managers were given 3 acres of Khetland, while Munsis, were allotted two and half acres, two acres to the Gangman, one acre for Chaprasi, Chowkidar, Clerk and other management and supervisory staff. A worker was given one acre of Khetland and 25 decimals to a Chokra worker. People of the plantation had to grow necessary vegetables in the Khetland to meet their daily necessities. But since two decades, the plantation workers have been given only 25 decimals of Khetland or a sum of Rs. 3/- as Khetland Allowance per month to a worker if the suitable land is not available. The question of distribution of Khetland had become very complicated issue due to the introduction and application of Hatta Bahira during the decades of first half of the present century. The issue has been considered more crucial today especially when the plantation has to extend its areas for cultivation of more and more Cinchona plants. The 1951 Act, provides weather protection facilities to the workers. Every worker has been provided a blanket costing Rs. 200/- at an interval of two years. Besides this, every worker is given Rs. 115/- as Winter Allowance in every year. The workers who have been working in factories are provided with liveries costing about Rs. 200/- every year to purchase gloves, shoes, eye glass etc.

The Act of 1951, provides a worker 14 days casual leaves in a year. They are not entitled to enjoy any earn leave. But every worker is also entitled to obtain sickness allowance for 14 days in a year and sick leave (Labour Department: 1978:20).

In Mungpoo Cinchona plantation, no creche has been provided to the workers' children although the 1951 Act prescribes for the same. Alternatively everyday a temporary tent is arranged near the work place where children under the age of 6 years are looked by a person called Dhai. A Dhudhwala (Milk Supplier) is appointed to supply milk and biscuits to the kids of the tents. A Chiawala (tea supplier) supplies tea and snacks. Further, a Dabaiwala (Medicine supplier) with first aid box is also appointed for the plantation workers.

Till 1989, the plantation workers were paid only ex-gratia payment of Rs. 100/- (approximately). But since 1989, they have been paid an amount equivalent to that of 25 days of work. It is known as Ad hoc Bonus which is mainly paid to the workers at the time of Dashara (Dasai) festival (Sept. - Oct.) every year as Puja Bonus.

Every year, each worker is given one or two pieces of trees from the forests of the plantation in free of cost. Recently, the workers are paid firewood allowance of Rs. 200/- to Rs. 300/- per year.

In the light of the provisions of the 1951 Act, the plantation has provided a labour welfare centre where cultural programmes are organised every year especially during Bhanu Jayanti, Dashara and Tiwar festivals. By the side of the labour welfare centre, there is a hall having Table Tennis Board, small library and a knitting centre for women. Besides these, a play ground is there in front of Director's office (Mungpoo) where Foot ball tournament

and annual athletic meet are organised every year. But the facilities seem to be inadequate.

The state government (now the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council) has been running eight free primary and a secondary schools in the plantation.

The scheme of Provident Fund was implemented by deducting Rs. 58/- from the wages of a worker per month. Recently in March, 1991, the rate of contributions towards the Provident Fund is increased to Rs. 60/- per worker per month. But the management has not been able to implement provisions as per the rules.

All the plantation workers along with the monthly rated workers are given Gratuity at the time of their retirement at 58 years.

Promotion Facilities of Male and Females

Among the establishment staff, both male and female are treated equally in so far as the promotion in the higher categories is concerned. However, the promotion prospect among the females who are working as daily rated plantation workers is found to be almost nil. Among the plantation workers, most of the daily rated workers of female sex are illiterates and hence they join as workers and retire in the same post. Only a few males from the daily rated plantation workers having basic educational background have been promoted to the supervisory cadres. The provision for thirty percent promotion scope is generally enjoyed by the establishment cadres only while the plantation workers, who form the bulk of the labour

force, are automatically excluded from this opportunity due to lack of formal education.

Nature of duties of the workers

As per the provision of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, a daily rated plantation worker has to work for 54 hours in a week and 8 hours a day. By "Plantation Work", we mean here any work related to the plantation such as forest clearance, land preparation for planting Cinchona plants, farm maintenance, road construction, Dhura repair and construction, extension of plantation or any other works assigned by the managerial staff. Normally, at 6.30 A.M., all the plantation workers report to the Fieldmen and the Gangmen in the field. By 7 A.M., all the works start and continue upto 11.30 A.M., and by 11.30 A.M. lunch hour starts and continues upto 12.30 P.M. After 12.30 P.M. again their works start and continue till 4 P.M.

There is no separate schedule of work for male and female as of other industries. However, the males do heavier works which involves greater physical strength. The felling of trees, preparation of land by clearing bushes, trenching and terracing of land with stones and preparation of land by staking, levelling and putting cow dung in the soil, lossening soil, breaking soil clods and preparing nursery sheds etc. are done by the male workers only (Watt : 1894:307, Chatterjee:1990:21). Sowing of Cinchona seeds in the nursery beds, replanting of seedlings in another separate nursery beds, transplanting of seedlings and finally

planting of seedlings in the permanent plots etc, are done by female and child workers. All barking operations which require thorough care and adequate patience are done by the female workers only.

The drying and heating operations of Cinchona barks in the Bark Godowns are done by male and child workers. After the drying process is over, the workers carry the Cinchona barks to the Quinine factory for the extraction of alkaloids (Thakuri:1973:20, Thapa: 1984:56).

Before the barking operations are done by the female workers, the Cinchona trees are uprooted. The uprootings are done by the male workers only as it involves heavy physical strength. But the extraction of barks from the branches of the Cinchona plants are exclusively done by the female workers. It is believed that females do better extraction of barks than the males.

In other works such as road construction, Dhura repair and construction, nursery maintenance, collecting manures for Cinchona seedlings, carrying Cinchona barks from the field to Godowns, clearing wild grasses in the Cinchona bushes, afforestation, cultivation of commercial crops like Cardamum, Ginger, Orchard etc are done by both the sexes. The manufacturing works in the factories are done by the monthly rated workers who have to work for 48 hours in a week as per the Factories Act, 1948.

The works are generally done in groups formed by the Gangmen and Fieldmen who allot specific work to each group. Since specific work is not allotted to any group for a long time, specialisation

on a particular work by a particular group doesnot develop. Each group is known as a Gang and such a Gang is made in such a way that required number of males and females are engaged for a particular work to be done in a day. While the factory workers are divided into six groups having permanent members and specialised work for each group.

There is a system of selling of works (Hazira). This is known as Hazira Bikri system by an employed worker of the plantation to a person who is not formally an employee of the plantation. The person who purchases the Hazira becomes the legal owner of the job and his name is written in the Muster in place of the employee who sells out his job. Generally, a single Hazira is sold in Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 10,000.

CINCHONA CULTIVATION

The Cinchona seed is harvested during February and March, and at once sown in prepared beds. When half an inch height, the seedlings are replanted in other beds an inch apart and later when they attained a height of 3 to 4 inches, they are again transplanted to other thatched nurseries. Then they are planted in the permanent plots.

The barking operation begins when they attain four years of age and the operation is done throughout the year. The trees are also uprooted after 16 years and the bark is completely scrapped off with blunt knives which is dried in open air sheds or in a heated godown during the wet seasons. The bark is then taken to

the Quinine factory at Mungpoō for extraction of alkaloids (Thakuri:1973:20, Thapa:1984:56).

The cultivation and uprootings are done throughout the year. Each year separate blocks are prepared for plantation. The altitude required for the cultivation of the plant is 2,000 to 5,000 feet above the sea level (Rai : 1972:66). There are more than twenty types of alkaloids among which Quinine and Quinidine are popular medicines (Chatterjee:1990:16, Nandi:1991:3).

The production of quinine is done in the factories, where the modern scientific methods are applied to match the requisite demands in both the national and international markets.

Method of manufacture

First, Cinchona bark is mixed up with slaked lime and converted into fine powder. It is then moistened and tipped into vats containing dilute caustic soda solution which is heated by a steam coil of the vat and allow to stir up continually. The powder is now converted into oil which is then run to the homogeneous mixture for two hours and then the oil is separated completely from the bark sludge. The oil layers are run off from the top of the exhausted bark and another vat are stirred with water and sulphuric acid which extracts the Quinine from the processed barks. By then, the oil is again separated for further use. The excess of acids in the aqueous Quinine solution is neutralised and crude sulphates out as a crystalline powder. It is then purified from the other Cinchona alkaloids by recrystallization from water and from which

Quinine sulphate has been obtained and are still saturated with it and also contain all the other alkaloids from the barks. They are mixed to give a product of definite composition, colouring matter is removed and then all the alkaloids are precipitated together by addition of caustic soda. The mixture of alkaloids after washing, drying and powdering constitutes Cinchona products (O'Malley:1947:127). The products are Quinine powder and tablets etc. Sources of the products are further converted into Quinine Hydrochloride. In fact, following are the major type of Cinchona products: (1) Quinine, (2) Quinidine, (3) Cinchonine, (4) Cinchonitine, (5) Quinicine, (6) Epiginidine, (7) Cincholine, (8) Hydrocluenonidine, (9) Hydroquinine, (10) Paracine, (11) Dicinchonine, (12) Dieoquinine, (13) Javanine, (14) Aricine, (15) Cuscomine, (16) Cuseonidine, (17) Quinine Sulphate, (18) Cuscaminidine, (19) Quidine-Hydrochloride and (20) Quinine-Hydrochloride wet (Nandi:1991:2).

Workers' Attitudes towards plantation work

Studying "Women Workers of Tea Plantations in India", Bhadra (1992:100) stated "An analysis of the plantation women workers' attitude towards their work and objective situation will remain incomplete unless the real reasons of taking up wage work in the tea plantation are understood properly". In this context, the Cinchona plantation workers being the second and third generational migrants from Nepal and Sikkim, have been found to be unconnected to their place of origins (Sharma:1991:18). Moreover, with the emergence of trade unionism in the Cinchona plantation and

the passing of Plantation Labour Act, 1951, the workers have been found to be more and more secured of their livings. It has also been found that most of the workers want to get job for their family members. However, the nature and extent of such motivation for the plantation works varies between the sexes of different educational levels. The attitude towards the plantation work is observed differently between the plantation and factory workers. Again, the attitude also varies among the supervisory staff and non-supervisory cadres.

Most of the workers hail from the Matwali group who were agricultural labourers in Nepal. To them, plantation works are easily acceptable as the only source of income. Whatever they earn from other sources are secondary ones. Mainly such incomes are utilised for buying consumer goods, clothings, enjoying in Cinema and Video shows in order to avoid unnecessary loneliness in the plantation. The earnings of female workers are considered to be the integral part of the household income. Indeed females are found as the principal earners in many families.

Attitudes of the workers in the five areas have been examined. These are : their attitudes towards work and the management, attitudes towards pay and other facilities, attitudes towards their supervisory staff and attitudes towards modernisation of Cinchona plantation industry in the late eighties etc. Variation in attitudes among the various groups of organisational hierarchy is markedly noticed. Variations are also found on the basis of sex, age, marital status and family dependence. In most of the cases,

the uneducated old workers largely prefer the plantation work as it does not require any knowledge and technical skill. To the plantation workers, the works assigned to them are simple and do not carry much responsibilities. Thus, such type of plantation works have been more suited to them due to their earlier agrarian social background. While to the young workers having primary education, the plantation work seems to be the stepping stone for higher posts in the plantation. They possess aspiration to rise up in the organisational hierarchy of the plantation. But such attitude towards the plantation work is quite less among the women workers whose expectation and aspiration are found to be limited due to high illiteracy and burden of household work. In addition to that they also spend some time for agricultural work in their own Khetland. In spite of that they seem to be more committed to the plantation work than their male counterpart.

The male plantation workers feel that they are treated as agricultural labourers though they are daily rated regular workers under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. But they are again treated as on "No Work NO Pay" basis. To them, the prospect of promotion to the technical posts in the Quinine and Emetine factories are quite bleak as they are illiterates and without any technical training. Such attitudes are not found among the women workers. They do not prefer factory work of the plantation as it requires more physical strength.

However, in general, the workers prefer plantation work because they are provided with many benefits and above all the

provision for free residential accommodation on the basis of caste is most important. They feel works in plantation are very light ranging from six to eight hours a day which are done on the basis of Thicca system. The Thicca means a piece of work is to be done within a specific hour. The Hazira system is less preferred by them.

Since 1980, the Minimum Wages Board is regularly revising the wages of the workers in every five years. This has significantly made the workers satisfied.

On the whole, the facilities like free quarter, firewood or firewood allowance, ration at the subsidised rates, Khetland, bonus, winter allowances, free medical benefits, treatment of T.B. in Kurseong T.B. Sanatorium, education allowances for children, free supply of summer/winter coat, shoes, gloves etc, make the plantation workers satisfied with the management. They know that such facilities are not available in any other industry. Provident Fund, Sick pay, Maternity benefits, gratuity etc. are also very easily extended to them. In this respect, only 115 (9.8%) out of 1232 plantation workers said that the plantation work was not an interesting job. Out of 1232 workers only 50 (4.3%) said that they would go back to Nepal or Sikkim after their retirement. These workers are either childless or their sons and daughters are working in Nepal and Sikkim.

They feel that their promotion is almost closed due to the lack of education and they do not have any other way except to

stick to the present work in the plantation. But employment of their sons and daughters are more or less assured here.

The level of expectation varies among the Tagadharis and the Matwalis. It is noticed that being dominant group, the Matwalis expect more than the Tagadharis in regard to the employment of their children. Moreover, they have high ambition for better jobs in the plantation.

In so far as the active participation in trade unions is concerned, the concept of working class is slowly emerging among the workers.

The plantation workers express their unhappiness as they are to communicate their grievances through Daffadars, Gangmen, and horticultural overseers (Divisional Officers). However, the behaviours of their Gangmen, Fieldmen and Divisional Officers are not bad.

Most of the workers said that in spite of reorganisation of the plantation in the modern sense of the term, nothing has changed in the process of cultivation of Cinchona and other medicinal plants. The previous system is still being continued.

Caste and Traditional Occupations

Cinchona plantation is an agro-based industry in which the characteristics of agriculture and industry persist. They had no experience about the industrial occupation. As the industry is agro-based, the workers with their rural background are expected

to have well-adapted with the working environment of the plantation. Though the plantation industry varies from other industries, the plantation workers occupy a status which is far superior to the agricultural workers of the region in terms of their wages, employment security and other benefits. Thus, the plantation workers are better off in terms of their socio-economic life than the neighbouring agricultural workers. But they are socially isolated and known as Kamanees in the views of the village and urban dwellers of the region. These together with the preponderance of diverse caste and tribal traditions, mainly the Tagadhari and the Matwali, have given rise to a special character of the plantation workers which are not found in other industries. Migration to the plantation has tremendously affected the occupational structure of the workers belonging to various castes and tribes.

Traditionally, Bahuns were mainly family priests and occupied higher positions in government services (Bista:1976:9). They were patronized by the Kings of Nepal even upto 1950. Next to Bahuns, Chhetris had services mainly in Royal army and other government services as their professions. The Thakuris were the ruling caste of Nepal and even till today they are more or less continuing the legacy in so far as their occupation is concerned. Stating the caste and occupation of the three castes, Pradhan (1991:182) has very rightly pointed out that they were Tagadhari castes who were considered to be priests and bureaucrats of Nepal. Simultaneously, they were however the owners of the cultivable lands in western and eastern Nepal.

Discussing the traditional occupation of Rai, Bista (1976:31-37) has very succinctly described that it was cultivating caste, besides they used to do other menial works. Shifting cultivation was also practised by the Rai farmers. Both male and female could participate in the field to cultivate crops both for their household consumptions and markets. The Rais were mainly concentrated in eastern Nepal (Magh-Kirat) right upto the river Arun and Tamar near Dharan (Pradhan:1991:52-53) and bordering the Indian subcontinent which helped themselves to be enrolled in the services in British and Indian Gorkha regiments (Northey and Morris:1976).

The most dominant caste in eastern Nepal was Limbu who were mainly concentrated in easternmost areas (Pallo-Kirat) which was also known as Limbuan (Bista:1976:44-45; Sharma:1982:301; Pradhan:1991:50). Their main occupation was agriculture under the system of Kipat (communal ownership of land) land tenure (Sharma:1982:304) in which a plot of land could be used exclusively by one individual as a member of the Limbu tribe but could not claim private ownership. Then the person had no individual right to dispose the land as it belonged to the tribe or the community as a whole (Pradhan:1991:57). Besides farming as their basic profession, quite a good many Limbus went out to join the British and Indian Gorkha regiments both in Nepal and British India (Bista:1976:46). A few other Limbus came to India mainly in Darjeeling, Assam and Deharadun for manual work in tea garden, roads etc. for a few months in a year (Ibid). In agricultural works, both the male and the female used to take part equally

in sowing and harvesting seasons.

Another important caste in Nepal was the Newars who were mainly concentrated in Kathmandu valley (Hermanns:1954:18, Pradhan:1991:15). Prior to 1769, the Newars had their own system of stratification having various castes belonging to both Hindu and Buddhist religions but after 1769, they had amalgamated into two broad divisions, viz., Vaisya and Shudras. The former were given the occupational status of businessmen and later were sweepers, agriculturists, etc (Nepali:1965:150,148). But Rosser (1966:85-86) has classified the Newar caste into twenty-six sub-divisions with more than twenty six occupational groups in Nepal. While Bista (1976:29) has stated that 'the unique feature of Newar socio-economic organisation is the presence of a great number of Guthis, a kind of common trust, mainly cultivable lands as assets. The lands in the beginning were the endowments of one or several families, but in course of time they have become the property of the entire Guthi members. Most members were of a common descent group, but there were a few layers'. The system was prevalent only among the Jaypus (untouchable Newar castes) as the rest of the Newars used to lease out their lands to the tenants who were obliged to pay their rent to a specially appointed Guthi member (Ibid).

The traditional occupation of Mangars was agriculture and some skilled works such as craftsmen in masonry, carpentry, stone-cutting, quarrying etc. From western Nepal, they migrated to other parts of the country and also across the border in

Darjeeling and Sikkim (Bista:1976:63). The works on mines and state quarries are still found to have been done by the Mangars in the villages of eastern Nepal today. The Mangars had also pastoral economy (Ibid).

Gurungs were mainly found in west and central Nepal (Pradhan:1991:36). Traditionally, they were chiefly the pastoral community of the high Himalayas (Bista:1976:76).

The Bhujels were traditionally slaves (Hermonns:1954:25). They were mostly found in western Nepal and Kathmandu valley. They were employed both as household slaves of big Zamindars and bureaucrats of Nepal.

The Thamis had found working as porters and carriers in Nepal and outside (Pradhan:1991:60). They had their settlements in Dolakha District in western Nepal. Only the male folks had been working outside their homes and females were mainly engaged in household occupations.

Sunuwars had their settlements in eastern Nepal. Agriculture had their occupation. Many Sunuwars were recruited into Gorkha regiments of the British and Indian armies and later on into the Royal Nepal army (Bista:1976:69). They had Kipat landholding rights from the Rana government. Both males and females could freely participate in the cultivation of crops in the fields.

Another important caste was known as Tamangs or Murmis. They were found around the Nepal valley and east of it (Pradhan:1991:58) and even in Sikkim and Darjeeling. The traditional

occupation of Tamangs or Murmis is hewings of woods and drawers of water, coolies and other manual occupations (O'Malley:1947:36, 189; Bista:1976:52-53).

One of the most dominant tribes of Nepal was the Sherpas of extreme North-East Nepal (Hermanns:1954:23; Haimendorf:1975:134, 181; Bista:1976:160; Sharma:1982:350; Pradhan:1991:61). Pradhan (1991) stated that the traditional occupation of the Sherpas was trans-Himalayan traders. They were also agriculturists and reared animals. The tillers turns traders in winter when for half of the year they remain at home. Hermanns (1954:24) is of the view that the Sherpas are selected as the porters for the Everest expeditions in the Himalayan mountains as they are the outstanding mountain climbers. All the female folks were engaged in household occupations only.

The traditional occupation of the Lepcha tribe in Nepal, Darjeeling and Sikkim was shifting cultivation which was substantiated by huntings and gathering (Hermanns:1954:28-35).

The other castes such as Kami, Damai and Sarki had their own traditional occupations. For instance, Kamis had occupation of blacksmithy, Damais were tailors and musicians and Sarkis were cobblers. They were given the most degraded occupations in Nepal (Sharma:1982:65).

Prior to 1769, there was no caste based occupations except among the Newars. There were some tribes having their own occupations. Scholars believed that migration of Hindus to Nepal resulted into the introduction of caste system among the indigenous tribes and the traditional Newari caste system was also

modified within the framework of Varna model. The criteria for ranking the social groupings among the Newars were followed on the basis of hereditary occupations (Nepali:1965:146-47). This lasted upto 1769 after which the main occupation of the Newars was considered to be trade and commerce.

Table 18
Caste and Traditional Occupation

Sl. No.	Caste	Traditional Occupation
1.	Bahun	Priests
2.	Chhetri	Warriors
3.	Thakuri	Aristocrats
4.	Newars	Businessmen
5.	Rai, Limbu, Yakha, Mangar, Thami, Sunuwar	Agriculturists
6.	Gurungs	Shepherds
7.	Tamangs	Horse traders
8.	Bhujels	Beaten rice makers/ Planquin Makers.
9.	Jogis	Ascetics
10.	Yolmus	Paper Makers
11.	Sherpas	Pastoralists
12.	Sunwar	Goldsmiths
13.	Kamis	Ironsmiths
14.	Sarkis	Cobblers
15.	Damai/Darjis	Tailors/Musicians

Source : Haimendorf: 1966:18.

The above table No. 18 indicates that the whole Nepali society was divided into two main groupings, viz., Tagadharis (those who wear sacred threads and abstain from drinking wine) and Matwalis (those who drink wine and do not wear sacred threads). The former group was given less menial works as their occupations than the later. In other words, the Tagadharis were given respectable occupations and the Matwalis were given menial and inferior works. Haimendorf (1966:18) states that 'until the abolishment of slavery in 1926, the members of Matwali castes were liable to be made slaves, either by being sold in childhood or by being deprived of their freedom as punishment for a crime, whereas no Bahun, Thakuri or Chhetri could be made a slave unless he had been expelled from his caste on account of a grave offence resulting in permanent pollution'. Further, he states that there was no Nepali speaking caste of true middle occupational status. Bahuns, Chhetris and Thakuris, were the twice borns among the Parbatias (hills) who ranked high above all other communities. The artisan castes such as Sarkis, Damais and Kamis occupied the bottom position in the social scale. But the Newar peasants (Jyapus) along with other Matwali castes observed no restriction on occupational hierarchy (Ibid:22). It was because of the fact that the concept of untouchability was not accepted among the Matwali groups. This has a direct impact in the Nepalese society of the plantation as it is mainly consisting of migrant Matwali (tribal) groups of eastern Nepal who do not at all bother about the question of untouchability. Secondly, the so called artisan

castes also form an integral part of Matwali society in the region under study as they do not wear sacred threads and use wine as a compulsory ritual food items (See Chapter IV). Thirdly, the artisan castes of Nepal are being found in better socio-economic position than the other castes due to their prior privileges in getting various facilities from the government in the plantation. Due to these reasons, they have been slowly assimilating into the group of Matwalis or Matwali way of life. To other Matwalis, Kamis, Daiais and Sarkis are not as lower as the Tagadhari castes. Thus, the artisan castes, the creation of orthodox Hindus of Nepal, have been found to be freely absorbed in the tribal dominated Matwali caste structure of the plantation industry.

Caste and Present Occupation

There are 6354 persons in the plantation of which 3774 (59.4%) are employed in various occupations including the plantation labour and 2580 (40.1%) are dependents (see table No. 19). There are only 1232 (19.4%) persons working as labourers in Mungpoo Cinchona plantation, 403 (6.3%) are government service holders (other than Cinchona) and 34 (0.5%) petty businessmen.

Interestingly, it transpires from the Table No. 19 that 2105 (33.1%) of the total population are engaged in agriculture on Khetland and individual owned land situated in neighbouring villages. Whatever is produced in the Khetland is sold in the market for earning which help in accumulation of money in their hands. The Khetland agriculture is different from the traditional

peasant agriculture which they practised in Nepal. Another interesting feature is that 825 (39.2%) males and 1280 (60.8%) females are in the occupational category of agriculture.

The Table No. 19 shows that the percentage of the plantation workers is more or less same among all the castes. Of 802 Bahuns, 128 (16.0%) are working as plantation workers of whom males are 80 (10.0%) and females are 48 (6.0%). Similarly, the percentage of government service holders (other than Cinchona) is quite high 343 (85.1%) among the males than the females 60 (14.9%). Quite interestingly, there is no Bahun who does priestly work as primary occupation. Rather 239 (29.8%) among the Bahuns are agriculturists. Among 768 Chhetris, 83 (10.8%) male and 54 (7.1%) female are plantation workers. While 45 (5.9%) male and 7 (1.0%) female are government service holders. Among the Chhetris there are 160 (20.8%) female and 111 (14.5%) male agriculturist. Among the Thakuris, the occupational structure is more or less same as of Bahuns and Chhetris.

Of 248 Newars, 19 (7.7%) males and 8 (3.2%) females are working as plantation workers while 18 (7.3%) males and 7 (2.8%) females are working in other government services. Similarly, among the Newars there are 24 (9.7%) male and 45 (18.1%) female agriculturists. The traditional trading occupation of the Newars has declined significantly being 2 (0.8%) only.

Among the Mangars, 27 (26.0%) males and 24 (23.1%) females are plantation workers, 4 (3.8%) males and 1 (1.0%) females are government employees and 14 (13.5%) males and 15 (14.4%) females are agriculturists.

Among the Gurungs, 15 (15.3%) males and 6 (6.1%) females are working as plantation workers, while 12 (12.2%) males and 4 (4.1%) females among them are government service holders. About 7 (7.1%) males and 17 (17.3%) females among them are agriculturists.

There are 287 (14.1%) males and 108 (5.6%) females of the Rais as plantation workers, while 65 (3.4%) males and 18 (1.0%) females respectively are government service holders and 5 (0.3%) males and 2 (0.1%) females are businessmen. Again, 262 (13.8%) males and 408 (21.4%) females are engaged in agricultural pursuits.

Among the Limbus, 82 (11.4%) are male and 19 (2.6%) are female plantation workers, 34 (4.7%) males and 4 (0.1%) females are government service holders and 112 (15.6%) males and 142 (19.8%) females are agriculturists among them.

The occupational structure of the Bhujel, Thami and Sunuwar castes are more or less same with other Matwali castes (see table 19). The same is true of caste like Sarki, Damai and Kami.

Some of the people are engaged as seasonal labourers for 87 days in a year. A permanent employment as worker is available only on the Badli system. When a worker retires or leaves the job, one of his or her family members is considered to be appointed under the Badli system.

A study of the workers of tea plantation reveals that the occupational hierarchy continues parallelly with the caste hierarchy, for generally the higher castes are found in the higher positions of the plantation work hierarchy. This has ensured an amount of continuity of traditional caste hierarchy (Jayaraman: 1975:98). The present study does not find any continuity of

Table 19
Caste/Tribe and Present Occupations of the Workers

Sl. No.	Caste, Tribe/ Total Population	Cinchona Labour		Govt. Service (other than Cinchona)		Business		Agriculture	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1.	Bahun=802	80 (10.0%)	48 (6.0%)	48 (6.0%)	8 (1.0%)	2 (2.0%)	-	84 (10.5%)	155 (19.3%)
2.	Chhetri=768	83 (10.8%)	54 (7.1%)	45 (5.9%)	7 (1.0%)	3 (0.4%)	-	111 (14.5%)	160 (20.8%)
3.	Thakuri=16	4 (25.0%)	5 (31.3%)	2 (12.5%)	-	-	-	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)
4.	Bihari=12	6 (50.0%)	3 (25.0%)	-	-	-	1 (8.3%)	-	2 (16.7%)
5.	Newar=248	19 (7.7%)	8 (3.2%)	18 (7.3%)	7 (2.8%)	2 (0.8%)	-	24 (9.7%)	45 (18.1%)
6.	Mangar=104	27 (26.0%)	24 (23.1%)	4 (3.8%)	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.0%)	-	14 (13.5%)	15 (14.4%)
7.	Gurung=98	15 (15.3%)	6 (6.1%)	12 (12.2%)	4 (4.1%)	3 (3.1%)	-	7 (7.1%)	17 (17.3%)
8.	Rai=1904	267 (14.1%)	108 (5.6%)	65 (3.4%)	18 (1.4%)	5 (0.3%)	2 (0.1%)	262 (13.8%)	408 (21.4%)
9.	Limbu=717	82 (11.4%)	19 (2.6%)	34 (4.7%)	4 (0.6%)	4 (0.6%)	-	112 (15.6%)	142 (19.8%)

Contd..

Table 19 (Contd..)

10.	Bhujel=40	5 (12.5%)	4 (10.0%)	2 (5.0%)	-	-	-	4 (1.0%)	9 (23.5%)
11.	Thami=19	3 (15.8%)	3 (15.8%)	1 (5.3%)	-	-	-	2 (10.5%)	2 (10.5%)
12.	Sunuwar=11	2 (18.2%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (9.1%)	-	-	-	2 (18.2%)	3 (27.3%)
13.	Tamang=521	76 (14.6%)	38 (7.3%)	22 (4.2%)	2 (0.4%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	96 (18.4%)	118 (22.6%)
14.	Sherpa=186	28 (15.1%)	16 (8.6%)	14 (7.5%)	4 (2.2%)	3 (1.6%)	1 (0.5%)	17 (9.1%)	35 (18.8%)
15.	Lepcha=500	62 (12.4%)	36 (7.2%)	48 (9.6%)	2 (0.4%)	1 (0.2%)	-	39 (7.8%)	91 (18.2%)
16.	Dukpa=106	17 (16.1%)	6 (5.7%)	2 (1.9%)	-	-	-	21 (19.8%)	13 (12.3%)
17.	Kami=224	40 (17.9%)	17 (7.6%)	16 (7.1%)	3 (1.3%)	-	-	21 (9.4%)	46 (20.05%)
18.	Damai=71	10 (14.1%)	7 (9.9%)	8 (11.3%)	-	3 (4.2%)	1 (1.4%)	7 (9.9%)	17 (23.9%)
19.	Sarki=7	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)	-	-	-	1 (14.3%)	1 (14.3%)
Total =6354		828 (13.1%)	404 (6.4%)	343 (5.4%)	60 (0.9%)	28 (0.4%)	6 (0.1%)	825 (13.3%)	1280 (20.1%)

traditional occupational hierarchy in the Cinchona plantation. Even among the Bahuns, the traditional priestly occupation is not found to have been done as a primary occupation. Another reason for not having the correlation between traditional and modern hierarchy in the plantation is due to the arguments put forwarded by R.K. Jain in discussing Indian Malayesians in rubber estates (1970:341-352). The reasons are : (i) They are usually the co-residents in a single estate community of people having widely different regional jati network in India, the result being that wide areas of ambiguity concerned the hierarchical positions of the various groups occur; (ii) almost no Brahmins have ever migrated to work in Malaysian estates, the result being that the organisation of castes in any particular setting has always been cut off from the highest Varna (the most socially "pure" and ritually significant) lends of the system and (iii) such things as wider economic opportunities, the breakdown of relatively permanent locality identifications and payments in cash rather than 'kind' have resulted in a degree of mobility that has rendered impossible for many of the patterned relationships between higher and lower caste groups and persons (jajmani relationships, for example) that can be found in at least most non-metropolitan Indian settings even today. Following the arguments of R.K. Jain, Bahuns and Chhetris are the recent migrants to the plantation and hence have been put off to the stratum of Sukumbasis* while the early migrants

*Recent migrants who have been treated socio-economically inferiors.

(Matwalis) did not have much importance for Varna system based on occupational hierarchy of Nepal. Rather the Matwalis had anti-Brahmanical ethos which included occupational hierarchy of various castes.

Caste and Land Holding

In the traditional society castes had direct relationship with the landholding. In the plantation the migrant castes do not have the continuity of the traditional pattern of landholding system. The Cinchona plantation distribute Khetland among the workers. The workers do not have any ownership right over the land, but are allowed to cultivate during his or her service period in the plantation. In addition to that a worker can purchase, depending on his financial strength, paddy or dry land in the locality. Each worker used to get one acre of Khetland while a manager gets two acres and the Director and Deputy Director four acres each for cultivating vegetables and fruits in the plantation. Such Khetland was known as Ko-The-Ba-Rie (Kitchen garden). The history behind the allocation of Khetland was that the plantation was located in an inaccessible area where goods and materials of daily consumption were not available at hand. Secondly, the area had vast uncultivated forest tracts which could be easily given for cultivation. Thirdly, the then planters through their Sardars and Gallawalas could lure the workers for their permanent settlement by offering cultivable land (Khetland). Fourthly, the forest land which is given as Khetland can be reoccupied by the plantation for extension of the area once it is cleared by the workers.

Table 20
Caste and Land Holding

Sl. No.	Caste	Land in PL. (in Acre) (Khetland)	Land outside PL. (in acre)	Total Land (in Acre)	Land per Household (in Acre)
1.	Bahun (N=127)	68.30 (12.7%)	67.00 (12.8%)	135.30	11.7
2.	Chhetri (N=123)	51.10 (9.5%)	47.00 (9.0%)	98.10	8.5
3.	Thakuri (N=2)	1.25 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)	3.25	0.3
4.	Bihari (N=2)	0.50 (0.1%)	4 (0.8%)	4.50	0.4
5.	Newar (N=45)	23.25 (4.3%)	49.00 (9.4%)	72.25	6.3
6.	Mangar (N=21)	11.00 (2.0%)	10.00 (1.9%)	21.00	1.8
7.	Gurung (N=17)	9.10 (1.7%)	28.00 (5.4%)	37.10	3.2
8.	Rai (N=312)	160.50 (29.8%)	109.00 (20.9%)	269.50	23.4
9.	Limbu (N=132)	59.90 (11.1%)	62.00 (11.9%)	121.90	10.6
10.	Bhujel (N=8)	2.75 (0.5%)	4.00 (0.8%)	6.75	0.6
11.	Sunuwar (N=3)	1.00 (0.2%)	1.00 (0.2%)	2.00	0.2
12.	Tamang (N=88)	47.20 (8.8%)	22.00 (4.2%)	69.20	6.0
13.	Thami (N=3)	2.50 (0.5%)	1.00 (0.2%)	3.50	0.3
14.	Sherpa (N=33)	11.30 (2.1%)	26.00 (5.0%)	37.30	3.2
15.	Lepcha (N=82)	53.40 (9.9%)	56.00 (10.7%)	109.40	9.5

Contd..

Table 20 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Caste	Land in PL. (in Acre) (Khetland)	Land outside PL. (in acre)	Total Land (in Acre)	Land per Household (in Acre)
16.	Dukpa (N=18)	5.25 (1.0%)	5.00 (1.0%)	10.25	0.9
17.	Kami (N=38)	22.20 (4.1%)	20.00 (3.8%)	42.20	3.7
18.	Damai (N=16)	7.75 (1.4%)	9.00 (1.7%)	16.75	1.5
19	Sarki (N=1)	0.25 (0.1%)	-	0.25	0.1
Total N=1071		538.50 (100%)	522 (100%)	1151.50	

N indicates total households

The table No. 20 shows that the percentage of landholding among the Tagadharis is only 22.5% and the remaining 77.5% is possessed by the Matwalis. Similarly, the percentage of land holding outside the plantation is very high (77.0%) among the Matwalis whereas it is only 23.0% in case of the Tagadharis.

The castes like Bahun, Chhetri and Thakuri have their lands either in Kalimpong or in Bijanbari areas of Darjeeling hills where generally rice is cultivated. The land is given on share-cropping basis according to which each crop besides rice is shared equally between the land owners and the share-croppers. But Matwalis have purchased dry lands in neighbouring villages.

Caste and livestock

It is observed from the table No. 21 that among the cattle stocks, cows (38.5%) and goats (61.5%) are the main domestic animals of the Bahuns. Similarly, Chhetris domesticate cows (41.6%) and goats (51.9%). Thakuris rear cows (15.4%) and goats (30.8%) and Biharis domesticate cows (100.0%) only. Among the Tagadharis, only Chhetris and Thakuris domesticate hens having the percentage of 6.5% among the Chhetris and 53.8% among the Thakuris respectively. It shows that Thimaha Tagadharis (Chhetris and Thakuris) also use chicken in their rituals and other ceremonies.

Interestingly, pigs are the common livestock that are domesticated among all the Matwali castes. The percentage of pigs among Kalo Matwalis is very high. For instance, 8.2% of Kami, 9.2% of Damai and 6.2% of Sarki households have been found domesticating pigs. The domestication of pigs is not at all found among the Tagadharis. It indicates that pork eating as taboo has been still persisting among the Tagadharis though a few Tagadharis (Chhetris and Thakuris) have been rearing up hens in their houses for religious sacrifice and income.

Caste and Indebtedness

The indebtedness is closely connected with a whole range of questions why workers borrow and what are the terms of repayment? Plantation workers generally borrow money from the Kstriya Gramin Bank, local money-lenders, friends and relatives in times of need. Loan is taken by the workers generally in the occasion like death, marriage, illness of family members,

Table 21
Caste and Livestock Possession

Sl. No.	Total House-holds	Cow	%	Goat	%	Pig	%	Hen	%	Total	%
1.	Bahun=127	112	38.5	179	61.5	-	-	-	-	291	4.9
2.	Chhetri=123	129	41.6	161	51.9	-	-	20	6.5	310	5.2
3.	Thakuri=2	2	15.4	4	30.8	-	-	7	53.8	13	0.2
4.	Bihari=2	2	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0.1
5.	Newar=45	26	10.9	17	7.1	13	5.4	183	76.6	239	4.0
6.	Mangar=21	18	10.8	11	6.6	12	7.2	126	75.4	167	2.8
7.	Gurung=17	23	13.9	13	7.9	4	2.4	125	75.8	165	2.8
8.	Rai=312	204	8.5	57	2.4	158	6.6	1990	82.6	2409	40.3
9.	Limbu=132	116	12.6	25	2.7	77	8.4	704	76.4	922	15.4
10.	Bhujel=8	7	8.0	4	4.5	6	6.8	71	80.7	88	1.5
11.	Sunuwar=3	2	6.2	1	3.1	1	3.1	28	87.5	32	0.5
12.	Tamang=88	73	13.3	50	9.1	34	6.2	393	71.4	550	19.2

Contd..

Table 21 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Total House-holds	Cow	%	Goat	%	Pg	%	Hen	%	Total	%
13.	Thandi=3	2	16.7	2	16.7	2	16.7	6	50.0	12	0.2
14.	Cherna=33	8	8.5	10	10.6	7	7.4	69	73.4	94	1.6
15.	Leocha=82	40	10.8	27	7.3	37	9.9	268	72.0	372	6.2
16.	Dukna=18	2	8.3	1	4.2	1	4.2	20	83.3	24	0.4
17.	Kami=38	12	6.1	7	3.6	16	8.2	161	82.1	196	3.3
18.	Damai=16	9	13.8	2	3.1	6	9.2	48	73.8	65	1.2
19.	Sarki=1	2	12.5	3	18.7	1	6.2	10	62.5	16	0.3
Total=1071		789	13.2	574	9.6	375	6.3	4229	70.9	5967	100.0

purchasing cattles, cultivation of Kheltland etc.

The table No. 22 shows that more or less all castes and tribes are not free from indebtedness nor any caste or caste group has borrowed money from only one particular source. All the castes have borrowed money from GraminKstriya Bank (Resep Bajar), Mungpoo and private sources like relatives, friends and professional money lenders (Marwaris) of Resep Bazar.

The terms of repayment vary according to the sources of loan. The loans borrowed from Kstriya Gramin Bank are charged an interest of 13 per cent per annum. The repayment of loans from private takes place in different forms. If it is from the professional money-lenders, they have to pay Rs. 20 per cent per annum, after mortgaging some gold or silver ornaments value of which should exceed the loan to be borrowed. The loans from other sources are usually not charged any interest.

In the present analysis, I have chosen to show mainly the distribution of the total loans among the workers of the various castes and tribes.

It is transpired from the table No. 22 that the percentage of loans distribution is highest (26.9%) among the Rais. Interestingly, 20 per cent of the total loans are taken from the Kstriya Gramin Bank (Resep Bazar) and only 6.9% of the same are borrowed from relatives and friends. Again, among the Tamangs, 22 per cent of loans are taken from the bank and only 4.2 per cent of loans are borrowed from friends, relatives and Mahajans while among the

Table 22
Caste and Indebtedness, 1991

Sl. No.	Caste	Total households	Amount of Indebtedness (in Rs.)
1.	Bahun	127 (12%)	14,400 (14.4%)
2.	Chhetri	123 (11.6%)	2,250 (2.3%)
3.	Thakuri	2 (0.2%)	1,000 (1.0%)
4.	Newar	45 (4.2%)	250 (0.3%)
5.	Mongar	21 (2.0%)	2,900 (2.9%)
6.	Gurung	17 (1.6%)	350 (0.4%)
7.	Rai	312 (29.4%)	28,200 (28.2%)
8.	Limbu	132 (12.4%)	4,550 (4.6%)
9.	Bhujel	8 (0.8%)	600 (0.6%)
10.	Tamang	88 (8.3%)	27,550 (27.6%)
11.	Sherpa	33 (3.1%)	4,000 (4.0%)
12.	Dukpa	18 (1.7%)	300 (0.3%)
13.	Lepcha	82 (7.2%)	6,200 (6.2%)
14.	Kami	38 (3.6%)	6,900 (6.9%)
15.	Damai	16 (1.5%)	500 (0.5%)
Total		1062	99,950*

*The almost includes all loans taken in 1991.

Bahun, it is seen that 12 per cent of loans are taken from relatives and friends as well as Mahajans or money-lenders and only 1.7 per cent of loans are taken from the Kstria Gramin Bank. Similarly, almost all the Matwalis have borrowed money from the Kstria Gramin Bank. The same is quite opposite in case of the Tagadharis who borrow mainly from relatives, money-lenders and friends.

The most important factor behind borrowing the money from friends and professional money-lenders (Marwaris or Mahajans) by the Tagadharis is that they are Sukumbasis (recent migrants). The Kstriya Bank does not remit any loan to the Tagadharis who in the eye of the bank may go any time to other places in India or Nepal for better jobs. This is also the view of the management which does not guarantee the bank for repayment of the loans with 13 per cent interest from such Tagadharis.

However, it is seen that excepting nine households of the workers, all of them irrespective of caste and tribal background are not free from indebtedness. Yet, mostly the Kstriya Gramin Bank (Resep Bazar, Mungpoo) allows loans for the Matwalis only as they are the Raithaney (permanent residents) in the Cinchona plantation.

Caste and Material Life

The workers possess a large number of modern equipments such as Radio, T.V., Video, Vehicle, Watch, Sofa, Clocks, etc. These articles carry better social status among the workers. There is hardly any labour household which does not have such articles in their houses. The following table No. 23 gives us an idea in regard to the valuable articles possessed by the plantation workers.

Table 23
Caste and Material Life

Sl. No.	Caste	No. of Watch	No. of Clock	No. of Sofa	No. of Radio.	No. of T.V.	No. of Vehicle	No. of Video	Total
1.	Bahun	143	10	17	38	22	-	-	230
2.	Chhetri	224	28	35	55	34	-	-	376
3.	Thakuri	2	-	2	1	1	-	-	6
4.	Bihari	4	-	-	1	1	-	-	6
5.	Newar	103	12	37	14	18	1	-	185
6.	Mangar	33	3	8	12	4	-	-	60
7.	Gurung	40	5	20	9	5	-	-	79
8.	Rai	519	36	113	22	35	6	-	731
9.	Limbu	202	24	40	43	31	-	-	340
10.	Bhujel	9	2	4	3	1	-	-	19
11.	Sunuwar	17	1	3	3	2	-	-	26
12.	Thami	3	1	2	1	1	-	1	8
13.	Tamang	145	19	40	32	22	2	-	261
14.	Sherpa	55	14	15	9	5	1	-	99
15.	Lepcha	137	13	49	16	16	3	-	234

Contd..

Table 23 (Contd..)

Sl. No.	Caste	No. of Watch	No. of Clock	No. of Sofa	No. of Radio	No. of T.V.	No. of Vehicle	No. of Vicoe	Total
16	Dukpa	27	3	4	9	5	1	-	49
17.	Kami	84	6	11	15	9	-	-	125
18.	Damai	15	3	3	3	3	-	1	28
19.	Sarki	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
Total		1763	180	403	287	215	14	2	2864
Percentage		61.6	6.3	14.1	10.0	7.5	0.1	0.5	100.0

From the above table 23 it is clear that the percentage of households having watches is very high (61.6%) than the other articles. Use of wall clock is very low (6.2%) while the articles like Sofa have become very popular, i.e., 14.1% among the plantation workers. Similarly the use of Radio (10.0%) and T.V. (7.5%) is increasing very rapidly. There are two Video halls, one belong to a Damai and another to a Tamang. All the fourteen vehicles are owned by the Matwalis such as Rai (6), Newar (1), Tamang (2), Lepchas (3), Sherpa (1) and Dukpa (1) in the Cinchona plantation at Mungpoo.

But if we compare the possession of valuable articles between the Tagadharis and the Matwalis, it is seen that only 21.6% of the valuable articles are possessed by the Tagadharis and 79.4% are owned by the Matwali castes. Thus, we can generalise that Matwali castes are far better off in availing the valuable articles for their households than the Tagadharis.

Caste and Income

It is very difficult to get the information regarding the family income of the workers since, in the cases, it becomes unreliable. However, for getting the reliable data neighbours and plantation office have also been enquired. In the present analysis, an attempt has been made to assess the monthly income of the plantation workers from all sources. Majority of the households have single earning member.

It is apparent from the table NO. 24 that the percentage of Tagadharis in the income between Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,000 is 30.5% only whereas it is 69.5% in case of Matwali castes. Among the Tagadharis, Bahuns have better economic position (19.2%) than the Chhetris (11.8%) in this income range. Similarly, among the Matwalis, caste like Rai and Limbu have better economic level than other Matwalis. In the second range, i.e., Rs. 2,000 to 3,000, the Chhetris are more better off than the Bahuns. On the whole, Matwalis have better income (74.1%) levels than the Tagadharis, i.e. 25.9%.

The percentage of income among the Tagadharis in the third range, i.e., Rs. 3,000 to 4,000 is 24.9% while it is 75.1% among the Matwalis. Similar is the picture in the range from Rs. 4,000 to 9,000 in the income group.

In the highest income group, i.e., Rs. 10,000 and above, the percentage is much higher (93.3%) among the Matwalis than the Tagadharis (6.7%) (See Table 24).

Again, among the Matwalis, Sherpa (20.0%) and Lepcha (17.3%) are better off than Newar, Mangar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Bhujel, Sunuwar, Tamang, Kami, Damai, Sarki and Thami. The Lepchas and Sherpas are found to be mostly the prosperous castes among the Setho Matwalis and are much ahead in the income level than the Kalo Matwalis like Kami, Damai and Sarki of the plantation. The Kalo Matwalis are earning more as they are getting adequate government facilities. The Sarkis among the Kalo Matwalis are very rich and they are followed by the Damais while Kamis of the Kalo

Matwalis are found to have been sufficiently absorbed in the offices of the plantation. This might be the reason why the Kalo Matwalis are easily accepted by other Matwalis in regard to their day to day socio-economic relations in the plantation.

It is also observed that most of the castes are in the monthly income range of Rs. 1,000 to 2,000. Only two Bihari households have highest income as they have their own business. One has a grocery shop and another a milk dairy. Among the Setho Matwalis, Sherpas and Lepchas have better economic status than other Matwalis. But if we compare the income status of individual castes, Kalo Matwalis are far better off than the Setho Matwalis.

On the whole, the percentage of monthly income of the Tagadharis is only 24.4% compared to the percentage of monthly income among the Matwalis (75.6%) which is three times higher than the percentage of monthly income of the Tagadharis in the Cinchona plantation.

The variation in the low income among the Tagadharis is due to the historical, other socio-economic and cultural reasons. As discussed in the previous chapters, the Bahuns and Chhetris were later immigrants in the Cinchona plantation. Secondly, the various Matwali castes and their associations seemed to have claimed better jobs for their caste members and exerted pressures informally on the management. This has resulted into the apparent effects on the employment and thus accruing higher incomes among the Matwalis than the Tagadhari castes.

Table 24
Caste and Monthly Income (in Rs.)

Sl. NO.	Caste	Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000	Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000	Rs. 3000 to Rs. 4000	Rs. 4000 to Rs. 5000	Rs. 5000 to 6000	Rs. 6000 to 7000	Rs. 7000 to 8000	Rs. 8000 to 9000	Rs. 9000 Above	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.	Bahun (N=127)	102 (19.2%)	10 (7.2%)	5 (5.7%)	2 (3.0%)	2 (4.3%)	1 (2.5%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (3.6%)	2 (5.7%)	1 (1.4%)
2.	Chhetri (N=123)	60 (11.3%)	25 (18.0%)	15 (17.1%)	10 (15.2%)	4 (8.7%)	3 (7.5%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (2.8%)
3.	Thakuri (N=2)	-	1 (.7%)	-	1 (1.5%)	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Bihari (N=2)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (2.8%)
5.	Newar (N=45)	1 (0.2%)	2 (1.4%)	2 (2.3%)	6 (9.1%)	6 (13.0%)	10 (25.0%)	6 (20.7%)	4 (14.3%)	5 (14.3%)	3 (4.3%)
6.	Mangar (N=21)	6 (1.1%)	3 (2.2%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.5%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (5.0%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (2.9%)	2 (2.8%)
7.	Gurung (N=17)	2 (0.4%)	5 (3.6%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.0%)	2 (4.3%)	1 (2.5%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.6%)	-	1 (1.4%)
8.	Rai (N=312)	200 (37.7%)	30 (21.6%)	28 (31.8%)	14 (21.2%)	8 (17.4%)	6 (15.0%)	8 (27.6%)	4 (14.3%)	8 (22.9%)	6 (8.6%)
9.	Limbu (N=132)	62 (11.7%)	21 (15.1%)	10 (11.4%)	12 (18.1%)	8 (17.4%)	8 (20.0%)	1 (3.4%)	2 (7.1%)	3 (8.6%)	5 (7.1%)

Table 24 (Contd..)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10. Bhujel (N=8)			3 (0.6%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (2.3%)	-	1 (2.2%)	-	-	1 (3.6%)	-	-
11. Sunuwar (N=3)			1 (0.2%)	-	1 (1.2%)	-	1 (2.2%)	-	-	-	-	-
12. Tamang (N=88)			43 (8.1%)	16 (11.5%)	8 (9.1%)	3 (4.5%)	3 (6.5%)	1 (2.5%)	1 (3.4%)	2 (7.1%)	2 (5.7%)	9 (12.9%)
13. Thami (N=3)			-	-	1 (1.2%)	-	1 (2.2%)	-	-	1 (3.6%)	-	-
14. Sherpa (N=33)			6 (1.1%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.2%)	4 (6.1%)	-	2 (5.0%)	1 (3.4%)	-	2 (5.7%)	15 (21.4%)
15. Lepcha (N=82)			20 (3.8%)	14 (10.1%)	10 (11.4%)	5 (7.6%)	4 (8.7%)	2 (5.0%)	3 (10.3%)	2 (7.1%)	9 (25.7%)	13 (18.6%)
16. Dukpa (N=18)			5 (0.9%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.0%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (2.6%)	1 (3.4%)	5 (17.6%)	-	-
17. Kami (N=38)			16 (3.0%)	5 (3.6%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.0%)	1 (2.2%)	2 (5.0%)	1 (3.4%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (2.9%)	7 (10.0%)
18. Damai (N=16)			3 (0.6%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.0%)	2 (4.3%)	1 (2.5%)	-	1 (3.6%)	1 (2.9%)	3 (4.3%)
19. Sarki (N=1)			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (4.4%)
Total = 1071			530	139	88	66	46	40	29	28	35	70
Percentage			49.5	13.0	8.2	6.2	4.3	3.7	2.7	2.6	3.3	6.5

N = Total household