

**GIRL CHILD AMONG ADIBASI
PLANTATION LABOURERS
OF NORTH BENGAL
(A Study of their Social Situation)**

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR Ph.D. (ARTS) DEGREE
IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

BY
SUKANYA GHOSH (HAZRA)

North Bengal University
Library
Daha Rameswari

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND
SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

University of North Bengal
Dt. Darjeeling : Pin - 734430

2000

STOCK TAKING-2011

140408
16 MAR 2011

*The work is done under the supervision of
Dr. S. R. Mondal, earlier Reader in the
Department of Sociology and Social
Anthropology and now Professor and
Director in the Centre for Himalayan Studies,
University of North Bengal,
Dist Darjeeling.*

Preface

Anthropological and Sociological researches on Adibasi Girl Child in India, particularly in West Bengal are very scanty. There are a few studies on Girl Child of urban area and also of rural area, but very little is known about the dynamics of their social position in adibasi society.

India has the largest adibasi population in the world approximately 67.6 million as per 1991 census. Adibasis constitute 8.08 percent of Indian population and half of it is adibasi women as in any other social group. They are in different stages of socioeconomic development. The socioeconomic and educational backwardness of the adibasis are well known. They are still at the midst of ignorance, innocence, illiteracy, dire poverty and immense backwardness. The adibasi society has learnt to live with minimum substance and after thousands of years of exploitation are complacent to live as their parents had lived. They virtually have no economic ambition. With the spread of education this trend must go. Any society should think and learn to develop its economy if it has to survive during the development process. The girl child are generally the worse sufferer of economic disorder and is always at the shrinking end of population, poverty and environment spiral. We have to create environment in which she may be guided to adopt the right course so that she may get herself out of the shackles of ignorance, illiteracy, innocence and poverty to join the main stream of development and enjoy the fruits of well built democratic society.

The present study is an attempt to analyse the sociocultural aspects of girl child in adibasi society. The social situation of adibasi girl child has been examined on the basis of their status and role. The gardens that are investigated are Matigara Tea Estate of Terai Darjeeling and Soongachi Tea Estate of Doars, Jalpaiguri. In this dissertation these two gardens shall also be referred to as Terai and Doars garden respectively.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude to my respected supervisor Prof. Sekh Rabim Mondal earlier Reader in the Dept. of Sociology and Social

Anthropology and now Professor and the Director in the Centre for Himalayan Studies, University of North Bengal for his generous guidance and valuable suggestions through out the course of this study. Without his sincere supervision the work might not be completed. I am also grateful to Dr. S. Roy, Head of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, North Bengal University, Prof. R. K. Bhadra and Dr. Mita Bhadra and other teachers, Dr. (Mrs) N. Chowdhury, Dr. R. S. Mukherjee, Dr. Mrs. S. Biswas and P. Deb Barman of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology of North Bengal University, Dr. Mrs. Rokaiya Begum, ICSSR Fellow, Dr. S. E. Kabir, Co-ordinator of PG Diploma of Tea Management, North Bengal University for their valuable suggestion and support along with Mr. S. Maitra, Manager of Matigara Tea Estate, Mr. R. S. Agarwal and Mr. U. Chandra, Manager and Dy. Manager of Soongachi Tea Estate.

I am indebted to my Parents and my Husband for their unfailing support and entering help from the commencement to the completion of this research work with a special thank to my four years old son, Soham, for his co-operation.

I'm also grateful to the adibasi labourers of Matigara and Soongachi Tea Estates who received me with great warmth, for their whole hearted co-operation during the time of field work.

*Sukanya Ghosh (Hazra)
Sukanya Ghosh (Hazra)*

*Department of Sociology
and Social Anthropology
University of North Bengal
Dist. Darjeeling-734430.*

Contents

Preface.....	i-ii
List of Tables.....	iii-v
Map of Tea Growing Areas of Terai and Doars of North Bengal.....	vi
1. Introduction	1-20
Background	
Review of the Literature	
Significance of the Study	
Aims and Objective of the Study	
Methodology :	
Research Design,	
The Venue of the Study,	
Field work,	
Selection of the Informants	
Tools and Techniques of Data Collection	
Data Processing Analysis and Presentation	
Chapterization	
The Problems and Limitations	
2. Girl Child in India : A Profile	21-38
The Child	
The Girl Child	
Traditional Notion Regarding Girl Child in Indian Society	
Gender - A Social Distinction	
Patriarchy and Gender Bias	
Gender Bias -A View Point	
Girl Child in Indian Society - A Present Scenario	
Health Status of Girl Child	
Girl Child Marriage	
Educational Status of Girl Child	
Girl Child and Employment	
Socialization of Girl Child	
Girl Child Abuse in India	
Measures Taken for Improvement of Girl Child in India	
Status of Tribal Girl Child in India	
Observation	

3.	History of Tea Plantation in India	39-59
	Tea Cultivation	
	A Brief History of Tea Plantation in India	
	Tea Plantation in Assam	
	Tea Plantation in West Bengal (with special reference to North Bengal)	
	Tea Plantation in North Bengal ~	
	Darjeeling District	
	Jalpaiguri District	
	Tea Plantation in Tripura and Other North Eastern States	
	Tea Plantation in Northern States	
	Tea Plantation in South India	
	Observation	
4.	A Note on Tea Plantation Labourers	60-79
	Origin and Migration	
	Traditional Occupation of the Adibasi Labourers	
	Bureaucracy in Tea Plantation	
	Labour Recruitment	
	Types of Works, System of Works and Working Hours	
	Wage and Remuneration of the Labourers and other Job Facilities	
	Social Environment of the Plantation Labourers	
	Modesia	
	Settlement Pattern	
	Language	
	Social Structure and Social Stratification	
	Family Authority and Kinship	
	Marriage	
	Social Control	
	Employment	
	Political Consciousness	
	Religion	
	Status of Women	
	Observation	
5.	Research Setting — The Garden and the Labourers...	80-112
	Garden No. 1 — Matigara Tea Estate	
	Population	
	Housing, Sanitation and Drinking Water Facilities	
	Household	
	Mother Tongue	
	Migration	
	Marriage	
	Social Control	
	Literacy	
	Economic Participation	

Political Participation
Religion
Social Interaction
Interaction of Plantation labourers with the World
outside and their outlook
Garden and the Women

Garden No. 2 — Soongachi Tea Estate

Population
Housing, Sanitation and Drinking Water Facilities
Household
Mother Tongue
Migration
Marriage
Social Control
Literacy
Economic Participation
Political Participation
Religion
Social Interaction
Interaction of Plantation labourers with the World outside
and their outlook
Garden and the Women

6. Adibasi Girl Child in Tea Plantation : Field Studies.... 113-146

Value of Children Among Adibasi Plantation Labourers
Adibasi Children : Their Age and Sexwise Distribution
Migration, Mother Tongue, Marital Status
Family Background
Child Rearing and Socialization
Health Status
Educational Status
Economic Participation and Domestic Activities
Life cycle Rituals and Religious Participation
Games, Sports and Leisure
Interpersonal Relations
Girl Child Abuse and its Impact
Girl Child Discrimination and its Impact
Changing Scene

Implementation of the Different Measures taken by the
Government of India for the Improvement of Girl Child in
Plantation Labour Society - A Critical Analysis

Status of Boys in Adibasi Plantation Society :
A Comparative Study
Observation

7. Profile of Girl Child in Tea Plantation : Some Case Studies	147-166
Case Studies 1 to 10 : Matigara Tea Estate (Terai)	
Case Studies 11 to 20 : Soongachi Tea Estate (Doars)	
Observation	
8. General Observation, Discussion, Conclusion.....	167-185
References	186-189
Appendix - I.....	190
Appendix - II.....	191
Appendix - III	192
Appendix - IV.....	197
Appendix - V	200
Appendix - VI	201

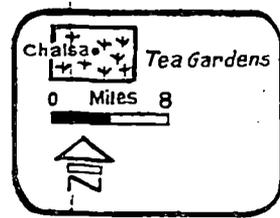
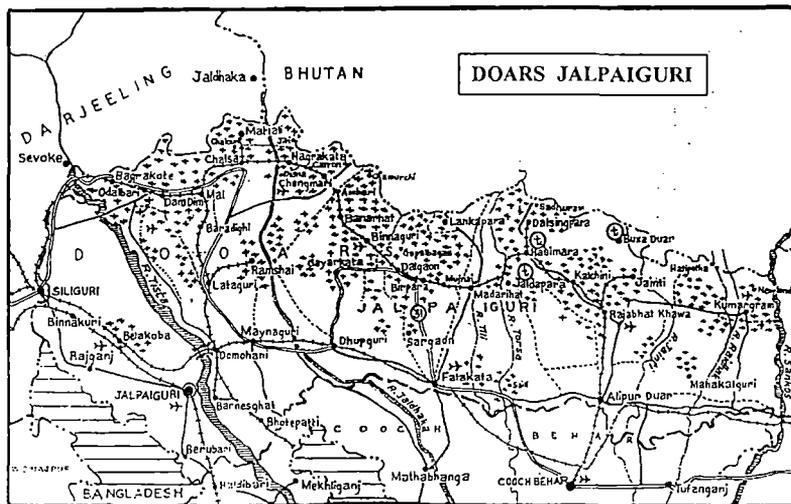
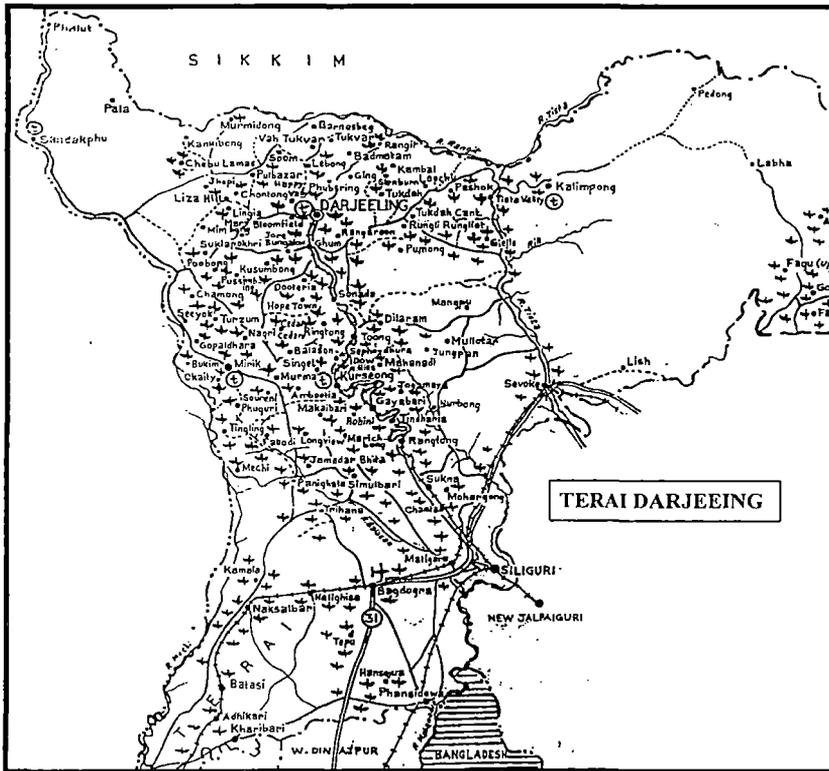
List of Tables

2.1	The Girl Child Population in Different Age Groups in India (1951-1981).....	25
2.2	Sex Ratio by Age Group in India (1951-1991).....	26
2.3	Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) by Sex - All India (1971-1988).....	27
2.4	Age and Sex specific Death Rate All India (1978-1988).....	28
2.5	Proportion of Married (10-14 years), Mean Age at Marriage (MAM) of Female in India (1951-1981).....	29
2.6	Age at Marriage (Rural and Urban) 1961-1981 (in percentage)..	29
2.7	The School Enrolment by Stages/Classes for Boys and Girls (1960-1991).....	30
2.8	Age specific Literacy Rate by Sex (1961-1991).....	30
2.9	Percentage of Children attending School by Age Group (1981)..	30
2.10	Work Participation Rate for Main Workers (10-14years) by sex (1971-1981).....	31
2.11	Literacy Rate of the Tribals (1961-1991).....	36
2.12	Enrolment of ST Boys and Girls (1981-1991).....	36
3.1	Tea Plantation in India (1885-1995).....	42
3.2	Area under Tea (in hectares), Production of Tea (in Kgs) Yield per hectare (in kgs) : A all India Picture 1995.....	43
3.3	Number of Tea Estates in India (As on 31.12.94).....	43
3.4	Progress of Tea Plantation in North East India (1874-1890) in early days.....	46
3.5	Tea Plantation in Assam (1955-1995).....	46
3.6	Tea Plantation in West Bengal (1955-1995).....	46
3.7	Tea Plantation in Darjeeling District in Early Days (1861-1951)..	48
3.8	The Number and size of Tea Gardens in Darjeeling District (1994).....	49
3.9	Area under Tea, Production of Tea and Yield per Hectare in Darjeeling Hills and Terai (1955-1995)	49
3.10	Tea Plantation in Jalpaiguri District in Early Days (1876-1907)..	52
3.11	Yearwise Establishment of Tea Estates in Jalpaiguri District.....	52
3.12	The Number and size of Tea Gardens in Jalpaiguri District (1994).....	54

3.13	Area under Tea, Production and Yield per Hectare in Doars (1995-1996).....	55
3.14	Monthly Production of Tea in Doars, Darjeeling Hills and Terai (1995-1996).....	55
3.15	Tea Plantation in North and North Eastern States (except Assam and West Bengal), (1955-1990).....	57
3.16	Tea Plantation in South India (1955-1995).....	58
4.1	The Immigrant Population of Jalpaiguri District (1891-1941).....	63
4.2	Decline of Plantation Labour Force in India and West Bengal (1950-1980).....	64
4.3	Sexwise Classification of Plantation work.....	68
4.4	Wage Chart of the Labours (1969-1978).....	69
4.5	The Rate of Daily Wage for Tea Plantation Labourers.....	70
5.1A	Age and Sexwise Distribution of Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Sub staff) Poulation : Matigara Tea Estate.....	82
5.2	Distribution of Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Residences in the different Lines : Matigara Tea Estate.....	84
5.3A	Household Distribution among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate.....	86
5.4A	Mother Tongue of the Ethnic Groups : Matigara Tea Estate...	87
5.5	Migration Among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate.....	88
5.6A	Marital Status of the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate.....	89
5.6B	List of Inter Tribal and Intra Tribal marriage occurred in Matigara Tea Estate.....	90
5.7A	Literacy among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate.....	92
5.8	Occupation of the Different Ethnic Groups (Labour and Substaff) : Matigara Tea Estate.....	93
5.9	Bureaucratic Structure of Work Organisation in Matigara Tea Estate.....	94
5.10A	Religion of the Ethnic Groups (Labour and Substaff) Population: Matigara Tea Estate.....	95
5.1B	Age and Sexwise Distribution of Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Sub staff) Poulation : Soongachi Tea Estate.....	100

5.3B Household Distribution among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.....	102
5.4B Mother Tongue of the Ethnic Groups : Soongachi Tea Estate..	103
5.6C Marital Status of the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.....	105
5.7B Literacy among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.....	107
5.10B Religion of the Ethnic Groups (Labour and Substaff) Population: Soongachi Tea Estate.....	108
6.1A Age and Sexwise Distribution of Adibasi Child Population : Matigara Tea Estate.....	116
6.1B Age and Sexwise Distribution of Adibasi Child Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.....	117
6.2A Education among the Adibasi Children : Matigara Tea Estate....	125
6.2B Education among the Adibasi Children : Soongachi Tea Estate....	127
6.3A Economic Participation among Adibasi Children : Matigara Tea Estate.....	130
6.3B Economic Participation among Adibasi Children :Soongachi Tea Estate.....	131
6.4 Comparison between Boy and Girl Child.....	143
7 The Profile of Girl Child in Tea Plantation.....	161

MAP OF TEA GROWING AREAS OF TERAI AND DOARS OF NORTH BENGAL



Introduction

Background

The tea is recognised as the most popular and the cheapest beverage in India. Tea industry in India is one of the oldest and well organised industries and plays an important role in the national economy. It is traditionally an important foreign exchange earner with negligible import content and makes a significant contribution to the state and central exchanges.

Tea Plantation in India has been started in 1821 with the discovery of wild tea plant in Assam under the patronage of the then British rulers. Soon it spread to the other areas of North East India. The appearance of West Bengal in the tea plantation map of the country is quite late. The first tea estate in West Bengal was started in 1866. In this state tea plantation is located mainly in the hills and foot hills (Terai) of Darjeeling district and Doars of Jalpaiguri district. Since 1856-1857 tea industry in Darjeeling took off in commercial basis. Before this it was existed here in experimental forms. The industry flourished in this district very rapidly between 1866-1874. Tea plantation in Terai region started in 1862. In Doars of Jalpaiguri tea industry took commercial shape in 1874-1875. Its growth was very rapid in the 1880's. (Bhadra :1997). Tea Industry in North Bengal experienced several ups and downs with the march of time. At present the number of Tea estates in Darjeeling District is 147 of which 82 is in 'Terai', 'Doars' of Jalpaiguri can be proud of its 163 tea gardens. (Tea Board Statistics 1992-93).

As the industry in North Bengal flourished since 1860's onward huge labour force was needed to carry out the operation of this labour intensive industry at its different levels. The then scanty and disperse population of North Bengal failed to meet the demand of the enormous supply of cheap labour. As a result and also as a part of colonial rule semi aboriginal people were imported from outside the state to serve the industry. These people were from different tribal groups viz. Oraon, Munda, Santal, Bhumiji, Kharia, Lohar, Asur, Turi, Barik etc. of Chotonagpur plateau of Bihar and its adjoining region of Madhyapradesh and Orissa. Traditionally these people were of agricultural or atrisan background. In Indian context these people are known

as 'adibasi'. The literal meaning of the word 'adivasi' is autochthone or aborigine implying that these people are the original non Aryan inhabitants of the land. (Edward J. Jay : 1978).

Immigration, adoption to new socio-cultural setting, occupation mobility from traditional agriculture to industrial bureaucratic organisation of plantation changes almost all the aspects of life of the adibasi labourers which is of a great sociological importance.

Children are equally valuable in all societies all over the world. Traditionally Indian Society idolizes sons who are considered ritually and economically desirable and ensure the continuation of lineage and family name. On the other hand girls are looking upon more of a burden and liability and is likely to be given a meagre share of family affection and resource out of the belief that the investment made on them bring no return instead when they get married a sizable dowry has to be given to them which is considered to be a draining of family resources. The girl child in poverty sicken rural and tribal households is twice disadvantaged. Children depend entirely upon adults for the access to resources which are all denied in relative terms more often than not. The girl child contends with not merely deprivation due to poverty but also discrimination on the basis of gender. Her survival is threatened right from conception. Female foeticide and infanticide continue to be widely prevalent. Girls are given food of lower caloric value and smaller amount while the rich foods are preserved for boys. They are also weaned earlier. Girls are severely malnourished as compared to boys. They suffer from iron deficiency, infections more than the boys and receive significantly less response to illness in terms of hospital care and medicines and have higher death rate too. 25 percent of the girls born do not survive till 15th year. 1/3rd of the death take place in the first year. The higher the birth order of the girl child, the more likely she is to suffer from all these discriminatory factors. The factors are compounded by greater work burden upon the girl child due to additional domestic responsibilities as well as low waged casual work in unorganised sector, greater lack of education and awareness and low social status and self esteem.

At present our country identify the 'Girl Child' as the focus of attention for improving the social and economic status of women. Several measures have been taken by the Government to improve the condition of girl child through the enactment of several acts and policies like Parental Diagnostic

Techniques (R&P) Act 1994, The Child Marriage Restraint Act, National Policy of Education 1986, The National Policy on Child Labour 1986, ICDS Schemes. But a big question mark stands on how far these are reached in the remote rural and tribal society.

Empirical studies on girl child in our country as well as in West Bengal are few; it is fewer among tribal society. Though it is, an urgent need both for the society and for the nation's development as today's girls are the mother of future citizen.

Review of the Literature

Works on tea plantation labourers as well as the works on child are not numerous in our country. In this section I shall review some of the relevant literatures on the plantation labourers and on the child.

Bhadra and Bhadra (1997) edit a book on plantation labours of North East India which is an unique collection of twenty papers on the various sociological perspectives of tribal labourers engage in plantation. The first section of this book contains papers on social explanation of economic dimension of plantation. The second section deals with the socio-cultural aspects of the tribal labourers in some papers while the third section discusses the changing health culture of the tribal labourers. All these papers have valuable information based on intensive and in depth research work.

Bhadra (1997) studies the persistent behaviour of the tribal labourers interms of health and informs that though there is an inclination among these tribal people to their traditional health culture often they take the opportunity of free modern medical facilities in plantation. It is not the traditional culture but the high economic cost and unavailability of modern medical service that act as the barrier in their acceptance of modern health culture. The author opines that the need now is to improve the organisational structure of modern health service alongwith keeping in mind the social medicine in order to made modern health service acceptable to the people.

Bhadra (1992) studies women participation in tea plantation. The author discusses various factors of women inclination towards plantation industry, their nature of work, recruitment pattern, wage structure, their commitment to the work and various other aspects of women plantation labours. Discussion is made on how the women adjust to their family life to their work, their role in the industry as well as in their family, in society, in several decision making

process as well as their authority. The author critically evaluates the status of tribal women in their society with her economic participation in plantation as wage earner.

Bhadra (1991) analyses the ethnicity and inequality among the plantation workers in West Bengal. The paper deals with the pattern of boundary maintenance, ethnic interaction social stratification and existing social inequalities and the caste like principles existing in plantation society. The author concludes that the heterogeneous work force of plantation with racial, cultural, ethnic as well as economic differences presents an unique social life. Its industrial organisation, pattern of interaction, institutions comprises a single Universe. The paper presents the mutual appropriateness of ethnicity in plantation society, the work and social life of the workers and describes the ways and means by which each affects and is affected by the others.

Bhowmik (1981) tries to probe into the different aspects of class formation among tea plantation labourers in North Bengal. He analyses the social life social institutions and social relations of the labourers where a process of transformation takes place particularly in the relationship between employers and the labourers. To him these changes are not a mechanical consequence of the immigration and adoption of new living and working environment as well as new production relations they have entered into but different other forces viz. the growth of various trade unions and co-operatives, the enactment of various laws after Independence are responsible for this. The different tribal barriers are gradually given way to a greater unity to social life and the different social forces have break down the isolation of the tribal workers, bring them in contact to a wider social system and lead consequent change in plantation society.

Chaurasia, (1998) in "Leading the exploitation of girl's labour focuses on the way girl children are put to in unacceptable circumstance. The author gives particular attention to the domestic service which to him is the worse form of exploitation, both commercial as well as sexual. Finally he concludes how the new ILO convention can help these unfortunate girls.

Chattaraj and Saxana (1990) highlighted on the child victimization and child abuse. Reasons of victimization with the special emphasis on Indian context is given. They have pointed out the areas and forms of child victimization and mentioned various acts which protect the children from

abuse and victimization. Finally the views and thoughts of the international organization about this is given.

Deol (1990) explains about the causes of Juvenile Delinquency in India. Through some tables he shows the rate of delinquencies among the children.

Desai (1995) presents the family and the socio-environmental context of the deprivations faced by the girl child in India. Discussion is made on the need to empower the families in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills to enrich family interaction and relationships and strengthen family's interaction with its environment. Such as over all approach to family life enrichment, that will go a long way in enriching the development of all especially the most vulnerable group of the girl child. Family life enrichment programme may be incorporated in the developmental schemes of the Government as well as of the non Governmental organisations and the corporate sector.

Dashora (1995) analyses the status of tribal girls where she points out that the status of tribal girl is better than her non tribal counterpart who is well come in the society since birth and do not face so much customary differentiation as the caste Hindus. The tribal society love and respect the girls but the only possible differentiation is seen when she grows up and assists her mother in domestic work. Due to poor economic condition she does not get proper nutritional diet health care or education though the condition is not same to all of them and their condition is improving in modern times.

Gopalan and Bhaskar (1998) make a detail discussion about the response of the Government to the problems of the girl child labour, child marriage, girl child postitution, and steps taken for the girl child's education, to develop their health status and so on.

Ghosh (1995) discusses about the integrated health of the girl child in India. He points out the discrimination against the girl child begins even before the birth. Foeticide is wide spread in the country. Infanticide too is increasingly reported from some areas. The death rate of females is higher upto age 35 years i.e. till the end of reproductive years. Their access to health care is inadequate even though their morbidity rate is higher. Early marriage and uncontrolled fertility is detrimental for both to her health and the health of the new born baby. Low literacy rate seems to compound the problem as low literacy rate, early marriage high birth rate and high infant

mortality rate are interrelated. Programmes to enhance the status and self image of the girl will go long way in improving her situation.

Gopaldas and Gujral (1995) consider that the environment in which the girl child lives has its impact on her health, nutrition and growth. The environmental factors consider both physical and social environments. Girl children in rural and slum areas live in unhealthy and insanitary environment with deleterious effect on her health. Nutrition and growth as the health parameters of a girl child keep on diverging from the standard level as well as her male counterparts and ultimately becoming an unhealthy mother with serious implications for the health of the future generation.

Gendrade (1995) studies the girl child and their social development he concludes that it is true that India is far behind in its effort to achieve goals of survival, protection and development of girls as enunciated in the SAARC Decade of Girl Child (1991-2000) still the position of girl child is fast changing for their better because all measures of social development, like literacy and life expectancy have improved greatly. He points out that bringing changes in the status of the girl child requires rebuilding the entire social world. A limited change or reform in economic institutions can not be brought about by economic instrumentalists. The effective change must be accompanied by changes in social structure, motivational patterns and social relationships. Social development is a very comprehensive concept of which economy is an important factor. To the author Education as an element of social development is the key factor in alleviating the plight of girl child.

Jain (1990) has covered some specific areas concerning the girl child through the help of two concrete case studies which relate to their (girl child's) employment, their nature of work and wage earning, the cultural and environmental factors that influence their upbringing, the curriculum and educational aspects and finally the underlying factors against which the people need to formulate their recommendations.

Khan (1997) in a paper delineates some of the spheres and levels of interactions related to the main economic pursuits of the plantation labourers as wage labourers and agriculturists. He informed that economically the tea garden labourers are in some sort of security and their job save them from the hands of money lenders. This economic reason is also responsible to draw the tribal people to plantation. Tea plantation provide them an environment where they live as a compact community with diverse role and

occupation in garden and factory, in agricultural and non agricultural sphere.

Kumari (1995) deals with the circumstances of adolescent girls, focusing on such aspects as deprivation in the health, nutritional and educational sphere, delinquency, child labour, violence against girl child, early marriage.

Kar (1984-85) studies the work organisation in tea plantation, in Assam, which, he considers, holds a distinct and important position within the social structure and exerts enormous influence in every day life of persons directly and indirectly depended on it. The paper informs that the plantation has a three tiered hierarchical structure of formal organisation from manager to staff and workers with definite work schedule, wage pattern, work groupings, leave rule and employment benefit. Management does not make any distinction on ethnic condition while dealing with the labours and does not penetrate into the life of the workers. Different trade unions and co-operatives are at work. Yet, to him plantation does not have a complete industrial structure.

Kapur 1995 presents her article 'Girl child Abuse' based on in depth survey and empirical studies it is found that the girl child are deprived, underfed, rejected, over worked and denied natural access to education and health care, discriminated, exploited. Child abuse are becoming increasingly and widely recognised significant socio-psychosocietal and ethical problem. The paper confines itself mainly to the situation in India and discusses how the various kinds of abuse and exploitation of girl child are in reality, restriction or denial and violation of her fundamental rights of survival protection, participation, development and equality. These start from the violation of her very right to be born and go to her right to lead an integratedly developed life. The paper also suggests some strategies to deal with this significant problem.

Kiran (1995) examines the status of girl child in the socioeconomic set up with special reference to the girl child in rural areas. In rural areas not only the perception of the parents are biased against the girl child who treat the daughters as the liabilities while the son are treated as the assets. The girl child faces severe discriminations in respect of nutrition, health care, education. But in actual position the girl child in rural areas are not only the wage earners but the parents have more control over the income of the daughters than that of the sons. So the daughters are economically more important. The importance of girl child is being recognised gradually but this

is restricted in the urban areas only. This paper suggests some strategies to improve that status of rural girl child.

Lewis (1968) in 'The Children of Sanchez' points out the whole socio-economic life of the children of a particular slum environment. Through his study he develops the concept of culture of poverty.

Mukherjee (1994) presents the social background of child labour in Siliguri town, Darjeeling district, West Bengal. This paper attempts to single out the distribution of child labour on the basis of occupation. He mentions the age, sex, religion, caste, year of migration, birth place and also considers the education. He discusses about the family background of the child labour. Here the economic condition of the family is very important with the educational background of the child labour. This paper also suggests some strategies to prevent the child from economic participation and every parents should try to give attention on the child's education, keep them aloof from exploitation and pollution.

Narang (1998) discusses about the sexual abuse on the child with some case studies. She defines the definition of the abuse, its probable cause, the impact of abuse on the child and the role of the NGOs to deal with the problem.

Pal (1998) discusses about the rights of the girl child as human right. He tries to focus on the subject with a view to urging on activities to create a new society in which a human being as well as the girl child should be treated as person.

Prasad (1998) discusses about the health and nutrition status of the girl child, its linkages and consequences. She opines that in an unfair world girls' survival is threatened right from her conception where she does not get proper diet, nutritious food, health care and nourishment, moreover she has to bear great work burden both in and out home. Greater lack of education awareness regarding health and nutrition, lead her to live with low status and low self esteem finally she grows as an unhealthy woman and mother and give birth to unhealthy handicapped babies.

Paul Chowdhury (1995) points out the gender discrimination against the girl child in relation to health, nutrition, education, work participation and adolescence. The rural urban differences have been indicated and finally the author suggests some measures to improve the status of the girl child.

Punalekar (1995) attempts to identify and document macro and micro economic and cultural aspects of gender negligence and marginalisation. He tries to focus on strategic segment of female population called 'girl child' and her predicament in modern society. Focus is given on ideas and practices governing the life style and life chances of the girl children in urban and rural India in general and about the exasperating conditions they have to encounter from the state of infancy to adulthood outside the household.

Roy (1990) discusses the rights of the child under the constitution of India. This paper covers the rights against Exploitation, against Child Labour below the age of 14 years, for Health and Free and Compulsory Education below the age of 14 years. Several acts enacted time to time have been discussed such as : Indian Ports Act, Employment of Children Act., Mines Act, Factories Act, Several supreme court discussions protecting the right of children has also been discussed.

Singh (1990) mentions that the health and education are the two most important inputs to Human Resource Development. This has been acknowledged by the Government of India in its National Policy for children and UN. Draft Convention on the Right of the Children. Unfortunately during the last four decades, in the post Independence period a majority of the Indian children are deprived from the minimum health and education facilities. This put a disturbing question mark on India's claim of being a civilized human society.

Singh (1998) criticises the 83rd Constitution Amendment Bill 1997 which was introduced in Rajya Sabha in 1997 with the intention of making the right to free and elementary education as a fundamental right. The article professes that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all citizen between the age group of 6-14 years. To the author it is 'a slap in the face on the girl child' upto the age of 6 years whose fundamental rights are snatched from them.

Sharma (1995) discusses the discrimination against girl child and suggests strategies for intervention. He concludes that rights can be declared and policies can be formulated to express our collective literal and humanistic concern but unless the real life of the girl child in her family and community is touched by tangible efforts and actions nothing can be achieved. A climate has to be created in which she can exercise her rights freely and fearlessly. Transformation of those social and cultural values that shackle and constrict

the girl child and mould her in stereotype roles in imperative. Effective implementation of laws to protect their rights'd be needed as well awareness s'd be grown with positive actions.

Sharma and Vasudevan (1995) conclude that the portrayal of Girl Child should have been discussed in medias. Women organisations should be identified at national and state level and they should be entrusted with the task of sensitizing media personal liaising with all type of media and perform the role of Ombudsman of the media in issues relating to girl child and women..

Seth (1995) concludes that high ideals of gender justice enshrined in the constitution of India and routinely repeated in public pronouncements but these don't reflect the stark social realities. Several articles of the constitution and personal and family legislation protect the girl and women but in reality the girl remains prone to special risks through out her life beginning from the pre-natal stage.

Tandon (1995) points out the barriers to education of girls in India viz. social attitude, poverty fear of violence, exploitation and early marriage. To him, education is an essential pre-condition for the development of the personality of the girl child as it is for the male child. He thinks that community initiative in encouraging girl child is necessary supplement with governmental system.

Unisa (1995) examines the demographic and socio-economic status of girl child since 1951 and covers the themes of size and proportion, sex composition, infant and child mortality, child marriage, girl child labour, their literacy and educational status, Beside this statistics in relation to sex ratio, mean age at marriage have been indicated. The strategies for future to improve the condition have been discussed in this paper.

Review of the literature suggests that the studies on child is very meagre even in the present days, especially the studies on the girl child is negligible. Under such a context examining the status of girl child among adibasi plantation labourers is very much needed.

Significance of the Study

The review of the studies on Child in India clearly suggests that the studies on child is very few in our country. Whatever the studies are available

that are mostly conducted among the child of rural and urban areas of southern and central part of India. Studies on child in West Bengal are negligible. Again the studies based on child are mostly based on secondary sources. Therefore empirical studies on the problem is necessary. In India the social condition of the children are not same in various communities. Since we have a very little knowledge on child research it is necessary for us to study the child of various communities of our country. This is necessary both for future generation and the development of the country.

Girl children are valuable assets of a nation. They are the unit of reproduction and family; so their welfare strengthens socio-economic development of a nation. Today's women and tomorrow's mothers are yesterday's girl child^{ren} and that is their^{ren} around healthy development, viz. socio-economical, physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, will determine not only the status of today's girl child^{ren} and tomorrow's women and mothers^{ren} but also quality of life, of families and also of generations to come. In India, identification of girl child as a special group and need for devising specific strategies to deal with its problem are relatively recent effort.

Study on Child, especially on the Girl Child^{ren} who are the very much neglected portion of the country's population, their various problems in social life is an important area of Sociological and Anthropological study. It is also helpful for the development of the nation as the girl child^{ren} for the would be mother of the nation and for the total development of the country their development is needed at first hand.

Aims and Objective of the Study

For going a serious study one must be clear of some of the objectives of undertaking this study. Without this point^s of concentration the very purpose of the study will be meaning less. As far as the objectives of this study is concerned it is to pinpoint the status, role and the problems of personality development of Girl child in plantation society of North Bengal. In this context some features of the respective society should also be discussed. The following can be highlighted as the aim of this study :

- (i) To find out the features of social structure, social institutions, social interactions, economic participation, religious practices as well the newly growing political awareness among the adibasi tea plantation labourers of North Bengal and the status of women in this society.

- (ii) To see the position of children in adibasi plantation society.
- (iii) To find out the base of the traditional concept that lead to sonpreference and a negative attitude towards girl child.
- (iv) To see the attitude of the society as well as the parents towards the girl child since birth.
- (v) To evaluate the health, nutrition, education and employment status of the girl child in plantation society as well as their socialization process.
- (vii) To probe into the features of girl child labour and incidents of girl child abuse in the respective society.
- (viii) To find out the areas of discrimination and impact of discrimination on the physical and mental set up of the girl child and their personality development.
- (ix) To examine how far the different measures taken by the Government of our country for the improvement of the girl child have been implemented in plantation society.
- (x) To find out the changing status of the girl child in plantation society.

Research Questions

On the basis of above observation following questions can be formulated for the present study. Through out the study effort will be made to find out the answers of the following questions through the analysis of data.

- (i) What kind of change came to the social structure social institutions, interpersonal relation as well as religious life and economic participation of the adibasi labourers as they came to the plantation society and what are the factors responsible to bring about these changes?
- (ii) How do the tribal people look at their children?
- (iii) How does the traditional concept lead to the negative attitude towards the girl child in society?
- (iv) How do the plantation society as well parents of the girl child look at her ?
- (v) What is the actual health status, nutrition status of the girl child in plantation society along with their educational status?

- (vi) What are the distinctive features of the discrimination of the girl child in plantation society?
- (vii) What are the distinctive features of girl child labour in plantation society with special reference to their nature of work, wage structure, recruitment pattern etc. How do the society look at the incidence of girl child abuse?
- (viii) How does the discrimination of the girl child in the plantation society affects her mental and physical set up as well as her personality development?
- (ix) How far the different measures taken by the Government of India for the improvement of girl child has been implemented in plantation society?
- (x) Is there really any change in the status of girls in plantation society in the present days with their economic participation as wage earner in and outside the plantation, and / or, as a result of the enactment of different laws in favour of them and the different improvement measures taken by the Government for their upliftment?

The purpose of this study is three fold. **Firstly** the investigation of girl child in adivasi society will help us to understand their position as well as activities in the society and so also their various problems in social life. **Secondly**, it will throw some light to identify the various factors that are acting as barriers towards the status upliftment of the girl child. **Finally**, the result of the study will give some ideas to formulate a way through which the emancipation of the adibasi girl children by way of their status upliftment can be achieved.

In the present research it is intended to examine the social situation of adibasi girl children of tea garden labours of North Bengal. The study is confined among the adibasi girl child of West Bengal only.

Methodology

(i) Research Design

The design of this study has been formulated on the basis of the nature of this study. The study area, the people i.e. the informants or the respondents of the study and the tools and techniques for data collection has been chosen

as per the aims and objectives of the study. The main objective of the study is to gain insight and experience on the problem. This research has been carried out on the basis of structural functional approach. It is purely an exploratory study with diagnostic outlook in some cases. The approach of the study is purely descriptive with an analytical base wherever necessary. The comparative method both synchronic as well as diachronic over space and time have been adopted for understanding the present situation of adibasi girl child and the change there in. The data for this research have been gathered both from primary as well as secondary sources. The facts on girl child in Indian Society, tea history, the ideal condition of the plantation labours and their social environment have been gathered through analysing the textual materials while the empirical facts are collected through intensive field investigation in the two gardens of Terai and Doars of North Bengal among the adibasi plantation labourers. For data collection field study was conducted. Both extensive and intensive methods are adopted for field study. Primary and secondary data pertaining to various aspects of adibasi girl child were collected.

(ii) The Venue of the Study

The study grown out of field work in two tea gardens situated in the two adjunct districts in North Bengal. Since it is a partial representative study. The name of the gardens studied are Matigara Tea Estate and Soongachi Tea Estate. Matigara is a tea garden in the Terai region of Darjeeling district while Soongachi is a garden of Doars region of Jalpaiguri district. In terms of location Matigara is a garden located in the fringe of Siliguri one of the large town of West Bengal while Soongachi is a interior garden of Doars. It is at about 3kms from Malbazar township while the labourlines are at more interior parts and the garden is typically rural in character. So far the gardens are concerned, these are selected perpasively, especially taking into consideration the size of the population, presence of various adibasi groups. Here one thing should be maintained clearly that Matigara Tea Estate being a smaller one with household of about 200 studied thoroughly but Soongachi Tea Estate is a larger garden with more than 1100 households. It is tough to study the whole garden. Partial study of this garden is made selecting some of its tribal sudded lines. Another thing is that, while chosing the gardens it is seen that the Doars garden is not only larger one but it is more organised, more well equipped with some special facilities for the labourers which are

totally absent in the Terai garden. These differences help to get the differential social position of the adibasi girls. Though ultimately the adibasi population is the criterion, yet it can not be said that the selected gardens are only habited by the adibasis. While selecting the gardens certain adjacent hamlets are also included for the shake of this study. In addition to this social demographic and infrastructural characteristics, the physical and locational features of the gardens are also taken into consideration. Soongachi being situated in the interior part of Doars is the remote garden while Matigara Tea Estate being adjunct to Siliguri is the fringe garden having the influence of urban area. In this research emphasis on the study of adibasi society with village like characteristics is given because village is the most important unit of anthropological investigation.

(iii) Field Work

The duration of field work was of about 10 months. I have started this work since the end of 1997. During November and December 1997 I made a basic enquiry in the gardens to get some preliminary information of the people. The census and interview schedule was prepared. The first intensive field work was conducted from January 1998. From January to March 1998 I did field work in Matigara Tea Estate and from April to June 1998 field work done in Soongachi Tea Estate. The gardens were revisited for some subsidiary information and also for verification of some data in August and September. During the period of enquiry I observed the daily life of the adibasi girls. They gradually took me as a well wisher or an elder sister. All these helped me to collect more data and experience the field situation closely.

(iv) Selection of the Informants

It was decided to conduct an empirical and holistic study on every household of the two gardens. Information on adibasi households of selected gardens were obtained from the garden officials i.e. the members of the garden management and from the knowledgeable senior persons of the gardens. In most of the case information given by the two categories of people did not tally. To gather basic information the census was conducted in the two gardens. Thus the data were gathered from every adibasi labour household of the Terai garden and the selected part of the Doars garden. There were various adibasi groups in both the gardens. The study was

140408

16 MAR 2001

[15]

Central Board of Secondary Education
Library
New Delhi

primarily focused on the girl child as a whole living in the two gardens. All the labour households of both the gardens were interviewed from where bulk of the data gathered. Out of the total labour households of the two gardens a sample of fifty were selected for intensive study. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select the households as well as the informants to represent the every section of garden population with particular reference to their ethnicity and socio-economic strata in the plantation society. The sample were drawn through categorisation of the households on the basis of employed permanently or temporarily employed, both of the couple are employed or not etc. Further in of categorization the employment status of the mother, number of the children, educational status of the children, their sexwise discrimination etc. were also taken into account.

The objectivity was maintained while selecting the households and the informants. During the house to house census interview, the head of the household was taken as informant in most of the cases. In a few cases in the absence of the head the next person in rank of the family were chosen. In this context the help of senior women of the household were also taken into account. Beside selecting the household head the parents and the girl children were also selected to collect necessary information form them.

To obtain the relevant information both male and female informants were selected from both ^{of} the gardens. The informants were selected on the basis of stratified sampling technique to represent every section of the adibasi community with particular reference to their ethnicity and socio-economic strata in the society. To select the informants it was decided to depend on their sincerity and reliability for giving correct information fair appreciation regarding questions they were asked to answer and their capability to serve proper and correct information. Informants were selected from every section of the garden labour population. They were of two groups viz. key informants and the occasional helpers. The key informants were asked to furnish most of the data on the basis of set questions framed for this research while the occasional helpers were mostly used for checking and verification of the collected data.

(v) Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

To collect primary data a long term field work was conducted. The data was collected through conventional anthropological tools and techniques viz.

census survey, interview, case study, group discussion and observation. To obtain preliminary and comprehensive data standard census and interview schedule were prepared. The interviews were with the head of the family and the senior women of the households. The required data also obtained from the parents of the girl child through interview with the help of close and open end questions. The girl children were mainly interviewed with open questions and through formal group discussion also. Information were also obtained through informal discussion with women and girls who voluntarily took part in discussion in several occasions. The techniques of case study were also used for the collection of data. The data collected through various techniques were supplemented by observation. At the initial stage bulk of the quantitative data on the demographic and socio-economic life of the people were obtained through census survey. At the second stage data were collected through intensive study by interview schedule and case study. The case study on daily life of some girls have been taken into consideration. A total of fifty case studies covering various aspects of girl's life were conducted. In this context unique and un-usual cases were also taken into account. Bulk of data on economic activities, behaviour pattern, social relations, cultural expressions were collected through observational techniques.

(vi) Data Processing, Analysis and Presentation

The data collected from the field were processed after necessary checking and editing. To process the data the completeness and accuracy of the fact were looked carefully. Tabulation was done manually. The data were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Simple statistical method consisting mostly of percentage were calculated. The analysis of qualitative data were made through systematic but analytically description of facts. In course of analysis method of comparison has been used. The data were finally presented in eight chapters.

Chapterization

The dissertation contains eight chapters based on in-depth research on adibasi plantation society.

The first chapter is the introductory one where a brief discussion is made on the background of tea plantation in India, the immigrant adibasi

labourers and their girl child. Review of some relevant literature is made. The significance of the study, its aims and objective and purpose is stated clearly along with the methodology of the study, its problems and limitations.

In the second chapter a profile on girl child in India is given where in the first few paragraphs discussion is made on the child, the girl child, gender and gender bias, patriarchy etc. Traditional notion regarding girl child in Indian society is given briefly along with a discussion on the status of girl child in present Indian society and their counter part in adibasi society. Finally discussion is made on the abuse of girl child in India and the different measures taken by the government of India for the improvement of the girl child. The chapter is totally based on the data collected from the different published and unpublished materials.

The third chapter contains the history of tea plantation in India. The introductory paragraphs of this chapter contain some information regarding tea cultivation while the forgoing discussion includes the history of tea plantation in India as a whole and also in the different tea producing zones of the country namely Assam, Tripura and other north-eastern states, northern states, and West Bengal with special reference to its main tea producing zone North Bengal.

In the fourth chapter a note on tea plantation labourers of North Bengal is given where discussion is made on their origin and migration, traditional occupation, bureaucratic structure in tea plantation, recruitment of labourers, types of works, system of works and working hours, wage, remuneration and other job facilities and the social environment of the plantation labourers. This chapter is also based on the different published materials from which a general view point is given.

The fifth chapter contains a discussion on the research setting - the gardens and the labourers. Here discussion is made separately on the two gardens studied namely Matigara Tea Estate of Terai and Soonagachi Tea Estate of Doars and their labourers. Population distribution, residence, household pattern, mothertongue, religion, migration, marriage, education, economic and political participation, social control, social interaction of the adibasi labourers are discussed vividly.

The sixth chapter is one of the most important chapter of my study

where a thorough discussion is made on the girl child among adibasi plantation labourers. The discussion is totally made on the information collected from the two gardens studied. I have discussed the value of children in the society I have studied; the age sex wise distribution of children in this society; migration, mothertongue, maritalstatus, family back ground and socialization of adibasi children; health status, educational status, economic participation and domestic activities of the girl child, her religious participation, interpersonal relation. Girl child abuse and its impact on her is discussed alongwith a discussion on identifying the definite areas of girl child discrimination. Finally I have tried to find out the changing status of girl child in the present generation and examined how far the different measures, initiated by the government of India for the improvement of girl child, have been implemented in this society. A brief discussion is made on the status of boy child in this society to get a comparative picture.

In the seventh chapter a profile of girl child is given through twenty case studies ten from each garden.

The eighth chapter is the final one where general observation is made along with discussions. Some conclusions have been drawn and some recommendations made for the improvement of the girl child in this society.

The Problems and Limitations

At the beginning of field study I encountered some difficulties. The main difficulty which I faced was to convince the people about the purpose of the research. To tackle the problem I had to convince the people by stating the fact that the data obtained from them will not be disclosed to any body and their secrecy shall strictly be maintained. They were also convinced the objectives of this study were not to submit any report to Government or political bodies but for the purpose of my academic interest. With these assurances the people's resistance was diluted to a considerable extent and whole hearted co-operation was received from them. Though often some obstructions were created by the drunk labourers who very often refused to talk by themselves and did not allow their wife and children to talk with. In the first instant it was very tough to get information from the shaky and shy adibasi girl children who in course of time became communicable and often more talkative as they able to accepted me as their well wisher.

The study has certain major limitations since the empirical studies on adibasi girl child is negligible. So benefits of earlier research studies were not much available. Hence as an initial study it has its own limitations. Secondly the study was under taken in two gardens of two districts of West Bengal. Hence the observation gains from this study can not be generalised too far covering the whole of the state even though the study provides broad clues about the condition of adibasi girl child in the state and the country as well.

Girl Child in India : A Profile

The Child

According to Indian Constitution Child is a person who has not complete his / her 15 years of age (Legislation of India 1979). According to child labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 1986 Child means a person who has completed his 14 years of age. The concept of Child relegated by United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) seems to be informed inspired and permeated with human model of the concept of 'Man'; The Child has been recognised as a person. Indian National Policy for Children (1974) declared children as the 'Supremely important assets' of a nation. By 1901 World population was about 4500 million of which 1500 million were aged below 14 years. By the year 2000 this will expected to be 500 million more. In each year about 120 million infants are born, the great majority of whom live in developing countries. 1981 census of Indian numbered 265 million population below the age of 15 years which is estimated to grow by 15 million in 1991. About 37 percent of Indian population is consisting of children (year book 1997).

The Girl Child

Under the United Nation Convention a Child means every human being below the age of 18 years. The Girl Child means the Child having female sex. In case of girl: after birth childhood continues upto 5 years, her school age continues from 6 years and adolescence from 13 to 18 years. According to Family Law and Child Marriage Resistant Act 1929 Child means a person who is a male has not completed 21 years of age and if a female, has not completed 18 years of age.

Because of environmental and cultural reasons in our country girls attain puberty much before 18 years. In many societies there is a system of early marriage. The early marriage is followed by early pregnancy, loss of childhood, withdrawal from school, mental tension and anxiety. Thus inspite of she being a child with full growth, she gives birth to children, remains busy in child rearing and home / family managing before attaining 18 years.

Therefore in many legislation the identifying age of a girl child is kept at or below 14 years. (Sour : 1994)

Early childhood is an important and delicate period for an individual growth. Development deficiencies during this stage lead to permanent reterdation in physical and mental growth. Gender discrimination is one of the most all pervading forms of institutionalised deprivation. Like many other Asian countries, in India girls are under the grip of such discrimination.

Traditional Notion Regarding Girl Child in Indian Society

The Gender bias is deep-rooted in our culture because of political, historical, religious, social, psychological and economic factors (Chowdhury 1995). Being based on our religious scriptures, early poetry and sayings it is so deep rooted in our ancient culture that it is very difficult to remove this biasness. Traditionally Indian Society idolizes son, an obsession that cut across all differences. Sons are considered ritually and economically desirable and ensure the continuation of the lineage and the family name. They are essential not only to light the funeral pyres of their parents in order to release their soul from the bondage of the bodies but also become the economic support of the parents in their old age. On the other hand, from the day of their birth the girls are looking upon more of a burden and liability and is likely to be given a meager share of family affection and resources out of the belief that the investment make on her brings no return instead, when she gets married a sizeable dowry has to be given to her which is considered to be a draining of family resources. The discrimination is manifested in denial or ignoring her educational, health, nutritional and recreational needs. She gets rather a different treatment by her own family. Family structures and social values function in such a way that girls grew up looking upon themselves inferior and subservient entitled too much less of every thing than sons. Girls are socialized from the very beginning to accept the situation and the ideology of male supremacy which makes them prey to a whole range of discriminating practice. Customs, rituals and traditional practices frequently makes a girl the 'lesser child' who is denied optimal opportunities and means required for growth and development during various stages of childhood. The duality of values that operates in the patriarchal family is internalized at an early age as a natural inevitable part of life. Infact a girl of 10 years espouses and propagates cultural values which initiate against the interest of the female gender make her 'a prisoner of her gender'. In the earlier part of this decade

gender bias was reflected in female infanticide, gloom over girl baby's birth, lack of health, nutritional, educational and recreational facilities for girls. The modern medical science has played havoc with the status of girl child by detecting the sex of a foetus by ultrasonography and abortion of the foetus if its sex is not the spouses' choice which is in most of the cases a female foetus. 'Sati' and 'Devdasi' system are also part of this malady.

Gender - A Social Distinction

In any society role, responsibility, interaction and distribution of resources are made on the basis of decisions which are embedded in the cultural values. Gender distinctions thus manifest complex interaction of economic, social, cultural, ideological and historical circumstances. There is a difference between 'Sex' and 'Gender'. 'Sex' being a physical and biological distinction while gender is social and cultural distinction. Gender is an analytic category and is created social structure, and is a system of relationship rather than a set of attributes which distinguish male and female (Krishna 1990, Sharma 1995).

Gender is a socio-culturally determined identity of male (man) and female (woman). It is a process of acquisition of quality, attribute, behaviour pattern roles through sociolization by which biocategory (identification) of man and woman is done. The Gender and Patriarchy, to be seen in totality in understanding and analysing girl child's and woman's subordination. (PRIA : 1993).

Patriarchy and Gender Bias

The term 'Patriarchy' essentially means the rule of father or the patriarch (a male member of the household or society). The patriarchal control expressed through control over women's' productive power, control over women's' reproduction and sexuality, control over economic and material resources and control over decision making in all aspects of women's' living. The patriarchal kinship system has lead to the concentration of decision making power on the hands of male. Oppression of female gender are highly prevalent in such societies. Where as where kinship patterns are Matriarchal the position of girls and women are found to be much better than the previous one. (PRIA : 1993).

Gender Bias - A View Point

In a traditional patriarchal society a girl's birth is generally not well come. One could see a glumface in the arrival of a female baby. There are several factors responsible for this which has been historical too. Gender marginalization is now accepted not only as theoretical concern but enough empirical evidence are available to substantiate a strong presence of gender discrimination, oppression and subordination in all societies whether developed or developing or underdeveloped. There are three view points to explain such universal tendencies.

The first position is known after a Historical Materialistic School (Marxian). It attributes changes in desirable direction in the condition of women (and also men), if the relation of production are in favour of the labouring masses i.e. a proletarian class. Implicit in this notion are the ideas of power, dominance and also egalitarian mode of ownership and distribution of the material resources. It is believed that if that happens the gender issue will get automatically resolved. Their strategies for alterations in the gender situation are mainly oriented towards organisation of toiling masses on class lines for class struggle for a change in the system of property relations.

The second position is known as a collective product of Cultural School (Structural) and their adherents are known as Culturologists. This school put heavy premium on the ideals or ideational parameters while explaining existence of gender bias. Questions of patriarchy and sexism is generally occupy a centre stage in their mode of analysis. This school of thought consider that some aspects of culture i.e. carriers of ideas and social practices are injurious to the interest of women and girl child in the society. They usually argue in favour of attack on the ideological heritages which they consider responsible perpetuating gender abuse and subordination.

The third position is known after the contribution of the Feminist Scholarship. Girl Child as a special cognative and empirical category has emerged on the scene only recently i.e. during last two decades. This has arise after some exploration and struggle around gender issues. Credit for this out come particularly go to feminist intellectuals and feminist movements which has helped to provoke and also promote a generalized consciousness on about girl's and woman's social status in contemporary world. (Punaleker: 1995).

Girl Child in Indian Society - The Present Scenario

One quarter of Indian population approximately comprises girls upto the age of 19 years. The total number of teen population (girls) 0-19 yrs. of age are 190.8 million (1981) in India.

Table 2.1:The Girl Child Population in different Age Groups in India(1951-1981).

(Fig. in 1000)

Census/Age Gr. Year	0-4	5-9	10-14	0-14 Years
1951	23706	22350	19511	65617
	13.66a	12.88	11.27	37.81
	6.64b	6.26	5.48	18.39
1961	32875	31555	22992	87422
	15.47	14.85	10.82	41.14
	7.50	7.19	5.24	19.94
1971	38686	39791	31891	110368
	14.65	15.07	12.07	41.17
	7.05	7.25	5.81	20.13
1981	41346	45382	40488	127216
	12.87	14.12	12.59	39.58
	6.21	6.82	6.08	19.12
1991	77119	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	17.87			
	8.6			

Source : Census of India 1981.

Note : a % of total female population,
b % of total population.
N.A not available.

The Girl child population aged 0-4, 5-9 and 10-14 years has increased from 27.7 million to 41.3 million, from 22.3 million to 45.4 million and from 29.5 million to 40.4 million respectively from 1951 to 1981. In 1991, the girl child population of the age group 0-4 is approximately between 52-55 million. Absolute population of girl child at the age group almost become double. The girls below the age group 14 year constitute 40 percent of all women and 19 percent of total population.

Sex ratio, i.e. the number of males per 1000 females in the relevant population, is a basic measure used in the study of sex composition.

Table 2.2.: Sex Ratio by Age Group in India (1951-1991)

Year	Sex Ratio by Age group				
	0-4	5-9	10-14	0-14 yrs	All age group
1951	1008	1033	1100	1045	1057
1961	1008	1047	1141	1057	1063
1971	1022	1061	1131	1067	1075
1981	1044	1061	1097	1066	1071
1991	1063	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source : Census of India 1981

N.A..Not Available.

The level of sex ratio shown in the table indicates that at every stage of childhood the boys outnumber the girls. These ratios show a continuing increase with the increase in age and this is true for almost all the census years. Also in the age group 10-14 years the sex ratio has been highly unfavourable for female in all the years. Male predominance at birth is one of the reasons for excess of male over female in all the age groups. Reduction of mortality rates has not been same for both the sexes which has been reduced more in males than females. A steep decline in the sex ratio of the age group 0-6 yrs. is seen in recent years. It has been that the sex ratio is declining even after birth.

It is expected that the improving health care system in our country should contribute to a more favourable condition for girl child. The only factor of the negative situation is the bias in favour of the male child. Every year about 15 million girls are born in our country. Despite of being biologically stronger than boys almost 1/4th of them do not see their 15th birthday. A long standing custom of some of the Asian countries along with India of allowing girl child to die soon after birth either by neglect or by outright infanticide appears to be common in recent years with the help of some crude methods or with the help of the advanced technology of parental testing allow the spouses to abort the foetus if its sex is not of their liking.

Children depend entirely upon the adults for access to resources such as food, health care, and education. Child survival is intimately linked factors like maternal education, maternal age at birth expenditure on health education so on and so forth. In an unfair world, the girl child in poverty stricken household

is twice disadvantaged. She contents with not merely deprivation due to poverty but also discrimination on the basis of gender. Her survival is threatened right from conception on wards in our country where female foeticide and infanticide continue to be widely prevalent.

Health Status of Girl Child

Discriminatory feeding practices for girls start early in life. Studies show that girls child is likely to be breast fed less and shorter period than boys due to the anxiety of giving birth of boy child soon after the girl. Girls are also given food of lower calorie values and in smaller in amounts while rich foods are preserved for boys. 13-15 years old girls consume less than 2/3rd of the recommended calorie intake. They are also weaned earlier. Many more girls are severely malnourished as compared to boys. As far as health is concerned, girls have significantly higher rate of acute respiratory infection, iron deficiencies as compared to their male counterpart. They also receive significantly less response to illness interms of hospital care and medicines or attain immunization. Almost 300,000 more girls die annually. It has been estimated that every sixth female death is specifically due to gender discrimination. Every year 12 million girls are born in India. 25 percent girls born do not survive till 15 years being biologically stronger than the boys. Of this 1/3rd death takes place in the first year.

Death rate percent^{age} of males in 0-4 years is 22.7 while it is 24.8 in case of their female counterpart. In 5-14 years percentage of death rate is 1.6 in males and 2.0 in females. (Ghosh 1995).

Table 2.3.: Infant Mortality Rates (IMR) by Sex - All India (1971-1988)

Year	Male	Female
1971	129	129
1972	132	148
1977	126	135
1979	119	121
1981	110	111
1983	105	105
1985	96	98
1987	95	96
1988	95	93

Source : Govt. of India, Family Welfare Year Book 1990-91.

Table 2.4.: Age Sex specific Death Rate - All India (1978-1988)

Age/ Year Gr.	1978		1988	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0-4	44.7	52.1	31.8	34.9
5-9	3.7	4.7	3.0	3.4
10-14	2.0	2.0	1.4	1.7

Source : Registrar Gen. of India, Sample Regt. System, Govt. of India.

The IMR has been improved in India since 1971 onwards due to provision of public health facilities. In 1971 Male and Female IMR was same while the female IMR is higher from 1972-1987. From the age specific child mortality rate it is also clear that the IMR among the female was higher but now coming close. It is 92:90 in 1981. Age specific death rate for girl child upto 14 years came down from 12.7 to 10.1. The poor situation prevails due to the inferior status accord to Indian women at home and in society.

Malnutrition in young girls trigger a vicious cycle of undernutrition which spans into adulthood and passes into the next generation. An unhealthy girl child grows up as an unhealthy mother who gives birth to unhealthy babies. Her own poor health and stunted growth results in greater chances of pregnancy related complication that often cause death. Maternal mortality rate in India is also high. All these contribute to growing population of underprivileged people caught in vicious cycle of less than optimal growth, ill health and poverty.

Girl Child Marriage

Child marriage can be defined as those marriage which are solemnized below the age of 14 years.

The sociocultural milliea of India has a long favoured universality of marriage for women. Girls failed to full growth potential get married early, run considerable risk of obstetric complications and give birth to low weight babies. 60 percent of Indian girls get married after attending puberty. An average 10-17 percent of the Indian mothers are of the age group of 15-19 years. 13 percent of female death before the age of 24 years are due to complications of pregnancy and child birth.

Table 2.5.: Proportion of Married (10-14 years). Adjusted Mean Age at Marriage (MAM) of Female in India (1951-1981).

Year	Proportion of Ever married	MAM
1951	17.3	15.59
1961	19.5	15.86
1971	11.6	17.16
1981	6.7	18.32

Source : Social Change June-Sept 25, 1995.

In the recent years the rate of early marriage is decreased. The following table give a picture which shows some sign of hope. The mean age at marriage has also been raised from 15.59 (1961) to 18.32 years (1981) to 19.5 year (1991).

Table 2.6.: Age at Marriage (Rural and Urban) 1961-1981 (in percentage)

Year	Age Group			
	10-14		15-19	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
1961	22	6.8	73.7	51.6
1981	7.7	2.4	48.8	28.1

Source : Census of India 1981.

Educational Status of Girl Child

Educational backwardness of the women and girls has been both the cause and result of their low status and subjected position in the society. Educational status of the girl child in India are very low and enrolment in school especially in secondary and higher level is very few. In rural areas fewer girls are attending school than their urban counterpart. Incidents of drop out and stragnation is nearly twice among the girls than the boys. This rate is higher among the rural girls. The main reasons for girls non enrolment in school or premature discontinuation of education are their early assumption of domestic responsibilities, conservative cultural rules, fears of their security etc.

Table 2.7.: The School Enrolment by Stages/Classes for Boys and Girls (1960-1991).

Year	Primary (I-V)			Middle (VI-VIII)			High/Higher Secondary (IX-XII)		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girl	Total
1960-61	23.6	11.4	35.0	5.1	1.6	6.7	2.7	0.7	3.4
1970-71	35.7	21.3	57.0	9.4	3.9	13.3	4.9	1.7	6.6
1980-81	45.3	28.5	73.8	13.8	6.8	20.7	7.6	3.2	10.8
1990-91	51.1	41.0	99.1	20.9	12.4	33.3	14.0	6.9	20.9

Source : Selected Educational Statistics, M/O H.R.D.

The growth rate of girls enrolment is higher than that of the boys which is indeed a good sign but disparities still remain which should be overcome.

Table 2.8: Age specific Literacy Rate by Sex (1961-1991).

Year	Age Group					
	5-9		10-14		All yrs.	
	Male	Female	Male	Femal	Male	Female
1961	24.8	14.2	54.4	28.3	-	-
1971	27.8	18.9	60.1	38.2	-	-
1981	35.1	25.8	66.9	44.8	56.37	29.75
1991	-	-	-	-	63.36	39.42

Source : Census of India 1991; Provisional Population Total office Registrar General, Govt. of India.
- Not Available

Table 2.9.: Percentages of Children Attending School by Age Group (1981).

Age Group	Male	Female
5-9	44.33	32.21
10-14	62.07	37.41

Source : Census of India 1981; Office of Registrar Gen. GOI.

From the tables it is observed that the literacy rate of both the male and female has increased during 1961-1981. The emerging feature of the recent census is that gap between male & female literacy level is narrowing down mainly due to the growth in female literacy is relatively faster than the growth rate of male literacy rate and this is a good sign indeed. Among the age

groups 10-14 years it has been found that 62.07 percent boys attend school while only 37.47 percent girls can continue their education in 10-14 years of age group. According to 1991 census girls literacy rate was 39.42 as against 63.66 percent of boys.

The factors that contribute against the girl's education are the traditional concept against it, unfavourable learning condition, absence of trained female teacher, lack of community awareness about girl's education, burden of domestic works on her, early marriage, irrelevant curriculum for income generation etc. Even in nonformal educational centres girls form only 1/3rd of the total enrolment.

Girl Child and Employment

Girls work in large number and for long hours both at home and outside the household. But their work is unacknowledged.

Table 2.10.: Work Participation Rate for Main Workers (10-14^{yrs}) by Sex (1971-1981).

Year	Male	Female
1971	6.65	2.63
1981	5.48	3.95

Source : Census of India 1981.

The work of girls is usually 'invisible' because it is located in the domestic sphere in household in home industry and as a rule household tasks defy quantification and monetary valuation. They also work in a variety of low wage and low status occupations and casual works mostly in unorganised sectors. Child labour is a social evil in India where 13.6 million child (1981 census) are engaged as labour in various fields. Between 1971 to 1981 the percentage of employed girls increased while overall that for boys declined. On the whole 20 percent of the female workers are under 20 years of age. There is a link between high female work participation in an early age and high rates in dropout of girls from school which is also related to high rate (84 percent) of illiteracy of female workers resulted to their concentration in low paid unskilled jobs. In spite of their increased contribution to work their efforts on joint front i.e. home and outside are not duly recognised even by the parents who are reported apathetic to the demand of girl child. Thus

situation of girl child labour is quite discouraging which further reduces the educational and development opportunities for girls.

Socialization of Girl Child

Gender discrimination of the girl child since birth heightened with the advent of puberty. The young girl suddenly become vulnerable, numerous restrictions are imposed on her as far as her movement and behaviour are concerned. There is an intense preparation in the socialization process for her to take roles as the wife and the mother.

Girl Child Abuse in India

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment act PC 94-247, 1974 defines child abuse as 'the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment of a child under circumstances which indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or threatened there by.' These abuse will include not only the physical violence and exploitation but will also include verbal, psychological, emotional, mental, social, economic and sexual abuse, exploitation and ill-treatment, deprivation and neglect of the girl child. The deprivation include depriving her of the love and care concern.

Abuse in the form of female foeticide is a very common phenomena in modern times, which abuses the girl child's right to take birth by using the latest advance modern medical tests like ultrasonography for the detection of the sex of the foetus and abort it if its sex is not of the parent's choice. Female infanticide is another heinous practice, mainly seen in the poverty sicken villages, often having ritualistic camouflaged, where killing of a child under one year of age is done by her parents or others, on whom her care is entrusted.

Girls right education is violated and abused by discriminatory treatment mainly in poverty sicken villages. Very often she is not allowed to attend school while her brothers attend school with less intelligency. The girl child's very right to be a child and to enjoy her childhood is denied to her with the burden of too much household activities and sibling care. Apart from this in some poverty sicken families she is to work in fields, factories in construction works in hazardous occupations, and often as full-time or part-time domestic help. She is exploited at her work place often sexually abused by her employer. All these deny her participation in games, leisures which are essential for her healthy development.

Marriage at the tender age is another form of girl child abuse when a girl being physically and psychologically ill prepared has to undergo the various kinds of strains and obligations after marriage. This increase the risk of early motherhood with various complication, even their life risk along with the risk of child widow and all its resultant agonies.

By the negligence of a girl's health care and nutritional needs her right to continue her life properly is violated. Sexual abuse, rape or pushing the girl child into prostitution are the other forms of abuse which violates her right to protection.

The abuse of any kind impairs the health and integrated development of the girl child.

Measures taken for Improvement of Girl Child in India

At present identify the girl child as the focus of attention for improving the social and economic status of women. World summit on children held in 1990 stressed on survival, protection and development of the children including the girl child. A number of major initiative on behalf of the girl child are under way. SAARC declared 1990, "The year of the Girl Child" and 1991-2000 as the "Decade of the Girl Child". During this period programmes are proposed to increase public awareness of the value of the girl child, reach girls with basic services for there survival and development; ensure their participation in programmes of child development, health nutrition and education, increase the age of marriage; and create positive environment to allow girls to develop into productive and confident young women.

A National Plan of Action for the girl child for 1991-2000 A.D. has been drawn up by the Government. The plan of Action for the Girl Child has three major goals viz. survival, protection and development. The emphasis would also be laid on meeting gender specific needs of adolescent girls. The Plan recognises the rights of the girl child to equal opportunity, to be free from hunger, illiteracy ignorance and exploitation.

For the prevention of female foeticide and infanticide the Central Government enacted the Pre-Natal diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act 1994 and ban the amniocentesis for sex discrimination.

To provide free and compulsory education to all children below 14 years

India at present has the largest network of elementary school. The target group of the endeavour to achieve Education for All in India constitute about 1924 million of children in the age group of 6-14 years of whom 60 percent are girls. The National Policy of Education (NPE) 1986 directly addresses the question of setting right the traditional gender imbalances in education. It makes a strong commitment in favour of education for women's equality. It has taken into account the lower enrolment and high drop out among girls. A number of measures are taken to correct the situation and bring more girls to school. NPE 1992 has identified the following three areas of special attention viz. review of school curriculum and text books to remove sexist bias and promote values of equality among sexes; reorientation of teachers to promote gender equality through the teaching; increasing the coverage of gender issues in research and training activities; systematic programmes of non formal school for children including young girls who cannot attend full day school due to household responsibilities. The efforts towards universalisation of primary education have resulted in increased enrolment of girls even in the remotest part of the country. Under the scheme of non-formal education the Nonformal Educational Centres exclusively meant for girls have been increased from 25 percent to 40 percent. The launching of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Mahila Samakhya Programme are the bold steps in this direction. Kasturba Gandhi Sikhsha Yojana (1997) Balika Samridhi Yojana are the schemes for over all development of the girl's education mainly among the SC, ST and weaker section and those live below poverty level by providing them scholarship free text books uniforms etc.

Health and Nutrition are the major components of interventions for improvement in the growth and development of children. The initiatives in this direction are multifarious. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is the largest of its kind in the world. It covers 80 percent of the blocks in this country and provides inter-alia, health check-up, referral services and health and nutrition education to pregnant and lactating mothers and to children in the age group 0-6 years.

Other initiatives include the Adolescent Girls Scheme, a sub scheme of the ICDS, the Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme. The Universal Immunization programme, Special Health Check-up Schemes for primary school children etc.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act makes marriage of a girl under 18 years of age illegal and punishable. The mean age of marriage is now about 19.3 years compared to about 13 years at the beginning of 19th century. Beside acts, multimedia campaign have also been conducted against the child marriage.

The labour of the girl child at home and outside is dis-proportionately high and denies her opportunities for development. Government evolving innovative programmes to free the girl child from her traditional fetters. Strategies like raising awareness of parents and society, non formal education, open school, creche service, coverage of adolescent girls in ICDS programme and vocational training have contributed to their educational development. National Policity on Child Labour (1986), Child Labour (Prohibitaion & Regulation) Act 1986, Factories Acts, Mines Act, National Authority for Elimination of Child Labour 1994 all are fromed to save the child as well as the girl child from exploitation.

The Indian Penal Code and Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act make offences of child trafficking, prostitution of children and sexually abuse them liable to higher punishment than those against adults. A committee on Prostitution, Child Prostitutes and Children of prostitutes was constituted to look after their problems and to form strategies for their development.

It is imperative to mobilize political, religious, cultural, administrative and community resources to create and ethos of care and value for the girl child. Such ethos only can eliminate gender disparities. Several multimedia campaigns is to be needed in removing gender bias and developing a positive image of the girl child is society.

Status of Tribal Girl Child in India

India has the largest tribal population in the world approximately 67.6 million as per 1991 census. Tribals constitute 8.08 percent of Indian population and half of its tribal women as in any other social group. They are in different stages of socioeconomic as well as socio-cultural development which may be called a bit backward. Indian constitution have several measures for their protection and development. Children are considered as assets in all societies but in some societies girl children are the victims of gender discrimination and enjoy lower status from the very beginning of their childhood. To probe into the status of girl child in Indian tribal society some criteria like education, health and nutrition, employment etc. should be considered.

Education status may be considered as the first parameter to analyse the status of girl child in tribal society.

Table 2.11.: Literacy Rate of the Tribals (1981-1991)

Year	1961	1971	1981	1991
Total Male	13.04	17.09	24.52	32.50
Total Female	2.89	4.58	8.04	14.50
Total Tribal	7.99	10.89	23.63	23.63

Source : Census Abstract for ST 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991.

Table 2.12.: Enrolment of ST boys and girls (1981-1991)

Year	Boys	ST Boys	Percentage	Girls	ST Grils	Percentage
1981	44576	3133	7.03	28112	1527	5.43
1991	59218	4951	8.36	42359	3982	7.28
1981	13278	537	4.04	6568	205	3.12
1991	21449	1214	5.66	12997	580	4.47
1981	3061	53	1.73	1077	10	0.92
1991	4205	150	3.57	1994	52	2.61

Source : Selected Educational Statistics 1993, M/O. H.R.D.

The literacy among the adibasi girls are very low. Though the table shows a slight increase to admit the tribal girl child to school in recent years but the majority of enrolled girl children are withdrawn within the first 5 years. About 95 percent of the enrolled girl students drop out till they reach secondary level. The reasons can be enlisted the following : lack of awareness of parents, lack of institutional support, school curriculum has no relevance to their normal social life, medium of instruction differ from their colonial dialect and soon.

A tribal child is prone to disease since conception. The immunisation of pregnant women is at very low level in tribal society. The mother is subjected to very hard work during pregnancy and 90 percent of deliveries take place by crude methods causing damage to mother and child on occasions. Those who escape death does not get proper medical attention, immunisation and vitamin, protein and nutritional diet in sufficient quantity due to poverty, lack of awareness and lack of resources. In most of the cases she remains unattended without adequate mother care who has to work outside mostly.

Due to inadequate food intake and hardwork child takes diseases very easily. At the tender age of 7 or 8 she is subjected to job involving physical labour and exertions which may affect her health permanently. Damages caused in post puberty age often lead to complications during maternity. They are often as a child made to play in dusty environment which may lead to several types of skin diseases.

Tribal woman is rated as an economic entity in tribal society. The payment of 'Birde Price' at the time of marriage is the price the parents recover for the transfer of this working entity. A girl child in this society had to be much more hard working compared to her male counterpart. Right from her infancy, she is being asked to attain to her younger sibs at home. When the mother goes out to earn she has to stay at home to look after the home and domestic pets. She also become the helper of her mother in domestic activities and soon she goes out of home to earn money through the laborious jobs.

The girl child is generally the worse sufferer of economic disorders in tribal society and is always at the shrinking end of population poverty and environment spiral (Dashora 1995).

OBSERVATION

United Nation Convention define 'child' as the human being below the age groups of 18 years. The girl child is the child of female sex. Due to certain environmental and cultural reasons girls attain puberty much before 18 years and very often loss child hood due to early marriage and pregnancy. So in many legislation the identifying age of a girl child is kept at or below 14 years. Early childhood is a vital period of one's life and development but the girls since this time become the victims of gender discrimination, the most all pervading forms of institutionalised discrimination deep-rooted in our culture mainly because of some socio-cultural, historical, religious and economic factors. The patriarchal dominance lead to son preference on the other hand encourage the discrimination of female child from her birth and make her 'a lesser child', and a 'prisoner of her gender'. 'Gender' is the socio-culturally determined identity of male and female differ from 'sex' which is only a physical and biological distinction. There are three view points to explain the universal tendencies of gender biasness namely Marxist, Cultural and Feminist.

One quarter of Indian population approximately comprises girls upto the age of 19 years. The total number of the population (of girls) are 190.8 million (1997-Year book). The child sex ratio shows at every stage of childhood the boys outnumbered the girls which also increase with ages. Female foeticide infanticide and death of girls child due to negligence is prevalent all over the country. Girls are lessnourished, given food with lesser calories and getting health care when their condition get worsen. Age specific death rate is high among them. Marriage of girls in an early age is another bad thing which may creates child widow, weak child, sick mother and even the death of physically immatured mother. Education status of Indian girls are very low and enrolment in school especially in secondary and higher secondary level is very low specially among the rural areas. The girls are with drawn from school to work in the households and also outside as wage earner. The socialization of girl child from her very childhood is done in such a manner with so pronounced discrimination that she grows up as a lesser child with a great degree of submission, low self confidence and low self esteem. Child abuse, especially the abuse of girl child is a common phenomena now a days despite of the several laws enacted to prevent them from abuse. Any kind of abuse, may be physical, sexual, psychological, violates the right of the victims healthy and integrated development which is harmful for her and for the society too. Government of India have initiated several plans and programmes for the overall development of the status of the girl child though the actual condition has been changed very little. The Status of tribal girl child is quite better than that of their non tribal counterpart. She does not see gloom face at the time of birth but discrimination occurs since she becomes her mother's helper at home. Her health and nutritional status and educational status is very low since her childhood she has to work outside as bread earner. The system of 'bride price' indicate her superior status in their society to some extent.

History of Tea Plantation in India

Tea Cultivation

Tea seems to have been known from very old days. It was consumed as a beverage for many centuries in China. Tea was primarily a luxury drink of the aristocracy. It was introduced in the Western market in early part of the 17th century. Then almost the entire supply came from China. The position remained unaltered for two centuries.

The story of tea in India started two centuries ago when the East India Company started searching for an alternative source of supply to Chinese tea. In the early part of 1820-23 in course of colonial effort of the exploitation of the natural resources of Assam, Major R. Bruce discovered some indigenous tea plants growing wild in upper Assam. Indian tea was first introduced in World market by the British proletariat who developed a habit of strong Indian tea.

Tea is made from the young leaves and unopened leaf buds of the tea plant 'camellia sinensis. It grows almost every where it is wet and warm. It is generally assumed that a minimum of 45" rainfall per annum is necessary to grow tea. A tea estate run on modern time with amenities given to settled labour force and only where the climate is such, big yield are possible. Tea is a permanent crop of a tea bush which has an economic life span varying from 50 to 80 years approximately with a great variation of location and soil type of the plants and a large number of factors. The most basic factor of production is land, which has a peculiarity of its own, conditioned by natural environment which is not substitutable by any other primary or secondary factor of production non capable of being humanly manipulated. The commercial end product is the processed leaf of tea plant dependent upon a large scale supply of the green leaf which in its turn depends on land. Tea bush is allowed to grow to a height of three feet. Left to itself a tea bush can grow to a height of about 18 feet or more but it is kept stunted at three feet because the bush spread out best at that height, give the maximum number of plucking points. Since the plucking is done by hand it is convenient to

pluck at that height. A bush is generally covered with large dark green coloured leaves of which light green coloured leaves are chosen and plucked to make tea leaves. These leaves comprise two leaves in either side and a bud in between. These leaves grow some of the branches of the bush known as 'plucking points'. About four or five kilograms of these leaves would result in one kilogram of made tea after being processed in the factory.

The plucking season begins with the early rain in May and ends in late November or early December. It reaches its peak i.e. highest yield during the month of July and August when rainfall is heavy. The first crop of leaves known as 'the first flush' in the early monsoons showers is supposed to produce the best quality of tea.

After the plucking season is over the bushes are pruned by 6 inches to 15 inches. Pruning of bush is a very important task as the yielding of the on coming season largely depends on how the bushes are pruned.

Factories are necessary for the gardens because the green leaves plucked should be processed within 24 hours or their quality decays. Small gardens do not have the factories or they can not afford them. They have their leaves to be sent to near by gardens for processing. The leaves generally sold to these gardens. Most of the smaller gardens are part of a company which owns other gardens with factory.

The legal definition of a 'Plantation' is laid down in the Plantation Labour Act 1951. According to the act plantation means any land used for growing tea, coffee, rubber or cinchona which covers an area of 25 acres or more and on which 30 persons are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months. In this respect almost all the tea gardens of Terai and Doars fall in this perview.

A Brief History of Tea Plantation in India

The experimental cultivation of tea in India was undertaken by the then British Government in 1834. Tea makers and artisans from China was introduced in 1837. Lord Bentinck, the then Governor General, appointed a tea committee in February 1834 which issued a circular to the local officials and calling for information regarding the initiation and provisional prosperity of tea plantation in their respective areas. At the end of 1834 the tea committee reported to the Government about the wild indigenous tea plant in Assam

and about its possible success. By this time, after a prolonged search and experimentation, it was certain that tea could grow in India. But a difficulty arose before the Government as the experts were divided as to the best site experimentation. Finally the British Government of India wisely decided to try all the areas and despatched seeds to all the centres. The experiment in sub-Himalayan region was successful with Assam as the most satisfactory result. The experiment in south was initially unsuccessful. Several plants were started by 1837 on an experimental basis. They were roughly grouped as North-Eastern plantation, Kumaun plantation, Garhwal plantation, Deyrahdhun plantation, Punjab plantation and southern plantation. With the direct encouragement of the Government tea was sought to be commercially exploited in India. Encouraged by the Government, private and foreign capital hastened the course of development of the tea plantation which came to be localized in Assam and Bengal mainly and also in parts of U.P., Punjab and in some South Indian states.

In 1839 a small lot of Indian tea was for the first time auctioned publicly in London. In 1873 only about 13 percent of the tea reaching the British market emanated from India. By 1904 Indian tea exports overtook China's and came at the supreme position as the world's largest tea exporter which has remained unchanged till recently. The early growth of this industry was slow due to the heavy duty clamped on it which was as much as 100 percent of the import price. However with the move towards free trade consumption rose and Indian Tea scored over its Chinese rival as it became exceedingly popular among the British Working class because of its thicker brew.

The development of tea industry in India was closely associated with the growth of Western market for tea and the colonial era which encouraged and supported the tea plantation with foreign capital and enterprise. The dimensional change of industrial development created an increasing market for Indian tea not only in Great Britain but also in the other young industrial nations of Europe. Imports of Chinese tea declined yielding place to black Indian tea and London became a biggest importer for Indian tea. George Williamson is credited with developing modern technology for tea production in India as opposed to the method practiced in China. The development of the tea plantation sector in India took place with the development of Global economy and improvement in the means of transport and communication that widened the scope of international trade.

Indian tea plantation met the first crisis in 1865 which was a result of unscrupulous investments by the speculators accompanied by indiscriminate land grant, aggravated by a financial crisis in London money market during 1867. This crisis was over by 1868. It has a drastic effect on the Indian tea industry. It provide new lease of life to the industry. After this many former companies died out while financially sounder Agency Houses stepped into the field. The plantation investment was given a solid foundation by 1870.

Table 3.1. : Tea Plantation in India (1885-1995)

Year	No. of tea Estates	Area under tea (in hectares)	Production in Tonnes	Yield per hec. (in tonnes)
1885	"	114900	32444	282
1895	"	168234	65049	387
1900	"	211443	89567	424
1905	5696	213675	100567	471
1915	4437	256951	168829	657
1925	4330	294474	164886	560
1935	5134	336572	178912	532
1945	6685	308922	229038	741
1955	6840	320238	307704	961
1965	10823	341762	366374	1072
1975	13166	363303	487137	1341
1985	13537	398966	656162	1641
1995	"	421913	753922	1787
1996	"	"	780034	"

*Source : J. Thomas Tea Statistics 1996.
(" Data not available)*

From 1870 onward the trend of plantation investment was the conversion of small proprietorship estates into large stock companies through amalgamation. Crisis also revealed in managerial inefficiency. To remedy the direct managing agency system was rapidly introduced in the plantation sector. These agents acted as promoters, financiers and controller of marketing channels.

Tea was previously a very much labour intensive industry with totally manual processing system. The demand of tea was increasingly rapid after 1870. The area under cultivation was also growing speedily. Then the scarcity of labour was the prime constrain. The manual process of tea manufacturing was too slow to cope with increasing demand of finished tea and the supply

of green leaves. Machines were introduced for the processing of tea by 1880's and towards the end of this century tea manufacturing became a factory industry.

Table 3.2. : Area under Tea (in hectares) Production of Tea (in kgs) Yield per Hectare (in kgs) : A all India Picture 1995.

Region	Area under tea (in hectares)	Production of tea(in kgs)	Yield per hectare (in kgs)
1. West Bengal	100650	160305	1593
2. Assam	234580	399133	1701
3. Other Northern & North Eastern States	345788	567976	1643
4. South Indian States	76125	185949	2443
5. All India	421913	753922	1787

Source : Tea Board Statistics. J. Thomas 1996

Table 3.3. : Number of Tea Estates in India (As on 31.12.94).

Region	Upto 8 hec.	8-50 hec.	50-100 hec.	100-200 hec.	200-400 hec.	Above 400 hec.	Total
1. West Bengal	39	14	19	54	114	104	348
2. Assam	236	99	96	141	203	237	1012
3. Other Northern & North Eastern States	1962	150	140	217	326	346	1781
4. South Indian States	31534	200	43	54	105	39	31975
5. All India	33496	350	183	271	431	385	33756

Source : Tea Board Statistic J. Thomas 1996.

In 1900 about 2.12 lakh hectares were under tea cultivation with an output of 90 kgs. an average yield of 424 kgs. The comparable figure of 1950 were 3.15 lakh hectares, 275 million kgs. and an average yield of 873 kgs. Production of tea in the country has grown steadily from a level of 561 million kgs in 1982-83 to 723 million kgs in 1992-93. Domestic demand for tea has risen at a faster pace, hereby creating a pressure on the exportable surplus which is close to about 200 million kgs. Steps have been taken by the Government to stimulate production so as to meet the growing domestic demand for tea. Tea board has drawn up a perspective plan for achieving a production target of 1000 million kgs by 2000 AD. In 1992-93, 177.9 million

kgs valued at Rs. 393.4 crore was exported. In 1993-94 exports declined to 161.2 million kgs valued at Rs. 1080.1 crore (Year book 1998).

The Indian tea industry has been facing a stormy era ever since the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The Soviet Union were the biggest buyer of Indian tea. It imported more than one lakh tonnes of tea from India. This figure fell to 50000 tonnes in 1994. Iran, another good customer of Indian tea has also been facing problems. The redeeming feature has been the ever rising domestic demand.

India continues to be the World's largest tea producer, consumer, and exporter of black tea. It is the only producer which manufactures both CTC and Orthodox tea in substantial quantities. For 1994-95 production target of 770 million kgs. and export target of 210 million kgs has been fixed. Up to August 1994, production was 465.9 million kgs as against 454.1 millions kgs during the corresponding period of the last year. Similarly exports up to August 1994 were 53.5 million kgs valued at Rs. 408.1 crore during the corresponding period of the previous year. The country consumes over 70 crore cups of tea every day resulting in a per capita consumption of about 640 grams. The area under tea cultivation has increase at less than one percent per annum and currently around 4.2 lakh hectares of land is under tea cultivation. The average productivity has also been improving. It increasing from 1174 kilograms per hectare in 1970 at the rate of 2 percent per annum. (Year book 1997).

The quality of tea produced by other countries is not as good as that grown in India. Tea provides the highest employment per hectare of cultivated land. Plantation afford direct employment to over 10 lakhs people. Many more are employed indirectly in tea machinery, packing, ware house operation, tea trade, transportation etc.

The tea board formulated two schemes for promotion of the Indian tea under the planned budget namely the Brand promotion Fund (interest free) Loan scheme and the sophisticated Tea Packaging Arrangement Scheme. The first is meant to provide loans to exports to undertake brand promotion on sustained basis in overseas markets and the second to give loans to enable exporters to set up modern packaging machinery for export purposes. Tea production in 1995-96 was 762.35m ton about 34 percent higher than the proceeding years out put 737.4m tonnes. Export was worth Rs. 11.91 billion i.e. 163.65m tonnes. (Tea Board Statistics 1996).

In the following paragraphs area wise production of tea is discussed with a brief tea history of the respective region.

Tea Plantation in Assam

Tea plantation in Assam started in 1828 under the patronage of the then colonial British rulers. Here this industry has passed through the different phases of boom and slump period to reach at the present stage. The first plantation started here experimentally in 1835 by the then Government at Lakhimpur in Upper Assam but failed. Private enterprise took the field with the formation of Assam Tea Company in 1839 entirely by the private Britishers and was the first tea company in India, still one of the biggest. After the failure of tea plantation in Lakhimpur items transferred to Sibsagar district. The garden later on was sold to the Assam Tea Company. During 1840's the company ran into trouble due to managerial inefficiency and financial mismanagement. This depression phase was over by early 1850's. The success of the Assam Tea Company paved the way for the spread of tea plantation in North East India and within 1860's upper Assam, Cachar, Sylhet and Darjeeling district appeared in the tea map of India. During the later part, mainly in the last three decade of 19th century tea plantation in Assam has enjoyed continuous prosperity and growth and expand rapidly and occupied almost one seventh of the settled area of Assam plain.

An 1850 the actual acreage under tea cultivation was 1876 that increased slowly to 7599 acres in 1859. In 1869 the actual area under tea cultivation was 25174 acres. About 0.7 million acres of land has been settled with planters in 1871 but the area under tea was only the 8 percent of the total land held. Since the later part of 19th century and early part of 20th century there was a rapid and continuous growth of plantations which shows plantation industry's prosperity. In 1880 about 566277 acres of land were occupied by the planters where as in 1893 the acreage increased upto 1045334 acres. During the period from 1901 to 1911 the growth of the industry remarkably flow down in Assam. In 1947, 30 percent of 1.5 millions of acres of land was occupied by the planters in this state.

Table : 3.4.: Progress of Tea Plantation in North East India (1874-1890) in Early Days.

No.	Area	Acerage under cultivation		
		Year	1874	1890
1.	Assam & Brahmaputra Valley		22910	131280
2.	Surma Valley		26751	99758
3.	Bengal Darjeeling Jalpaiguri		14603	85573

Source : Duars Plantation Economy : Mukherjee.

Table 3.5. : Tea Plantation in Assam (1955-1995)

Year	Area under Tea (in hec)	Production in kgs.	Yield (per hec)
1955	156749	166640	1063
1960	162367	157500	970
1970	182325	212027	1163
1980	200569	300700	1499
1990	230363	388181	1643
1995	234580	399133	1701

Source : Tea Statistics J. Thomas 1996.

The 1995 Tea board Statistics records the area, of this state, under tea was 234580 hectares yield per hectare was 1701 kgs. and total production was 399133 kgs. which increased to 424864 kgs. in 1996.

Tea Plantation in West Bengal (with special reference to North Bengal) :

West Bengal is the second largest tea producing state in India with the concentration of tea production in the hills and plains (Terai) of Darjeeling district and Doars of Jalpaiguri district, along with Cooch Behar and West Dinajpur District in a small scale. The following table shows the production of tea in the past few decades in West Bengal.

Table 3.6.: Tea Plantation in West Bengal (1955-1995).

Year	Area under Tea (in hec)	Production in kgs.	Yield per hec (in kgs)
1955	79234	74433	939
1960	82705	81523	986
1970	88499	101197	1143
1980	93497	133185	1424
1990	101170	149753	1540
1995	100650	160305	1593

Source : Tea Statistics, J. Thomas 1996.

Tea Plantation in North Bengal

Tea in North Bengal grows mainly in hills and plains (Terai) of Darjeeling district and Doars of Jalpaiguri. Besides little quantity of tea is produced in parts of Cooch Behar and West Dinajpur. The economy of North Bengal districts is even at present highly underdeveloped while the tea gardens are the pocket of prosperity. In the following paragraphs the tea history of North Bengal will be discussed in nut shell.

Darjeeling District

Tea plantation takes place in hills and foothills i.e. Terai of Darjeeling district. The history of plantation in this district is quite old. The East India Company acquired the nucleus of Darjeeling from the Raja of Sikkim in 1835 and started developing Darjeeling as hill resort. Around 1850 Terai was attached to Darjeeling. Previously it was attached to Bihar. Due to the reluctance of its inhabitants it was further attached to Darjeeling district. Hunter records that the discovery of tea in this district dated back to 1826, where the plants grew indigenously. The first trial plant started here experimentally in 1841 and it was quite successful.

Since 1856-57 the tea industry in Darjeeling district took off in commercial basis. Before this it was existed here but in experimental form. In 1853 two or three gardens were existed here of which one was 'Marfins Plantation' at Pankhabari and the other two were of Karseong and Darjeeling Tea Company and D.L. Mortgage Bank. These two gardens were at Aluabari and Labong Mineral spring (O Marley 1907). Dr. Broughame started the Dhutarils Tea Garden in 1859. Between 1860-64 four gardens were established in Ging, Ambutia, Takdah and Phubsering by Darjeeling tea Company, the largest tea company in this district. The head quarter of this company was at London, its local management was vested upon the hands of local European superintend^{ent}. The other two gardens were at Takver and Badmatam, owned by Lebong Tea Company. Before 1864 the other tea plantation started here at Makaibari, Pandum, Steintal tea estate (West Bengal Gagetier). The labourers were recruited from the Nepali immigrants and Lepcha, Bhutias and tribes men from plain. These people were encouraged to settle down in the gardens permanently by assigning to them small plots of land unsuitable for tea, for the cultivation of cereals.

During the four years following 1870 the tea industry in Darjeeling district

continued to develop in an even greater pace than before. The industry flourished with a rapid growth in this district in between 1866-1874. In 1866 the number of plantation was 39 with 103922 acres of land under cultivation which increased to 56 in 1870 and 133 in 1874 while the acreage under cultivation goes up to 18,8888 acres. The outrun of 1874 was 3927911 ILBs as against 2956710 ILBs of 1873. From 1866-1874 the number of tea garden was trebled and the area under cultivation increased to 82 percent. In 1891 there was 177 tea estates. The time onward Darjeeling tea estates were more and more organised under big limited concern. So that although the area under tea cultivation increased the number of gardens decreased. The total area under tea cultivation was more or less constant since 1921. During the period 1905 to 1935 the number of plantation remained same but the statistic of 1940 show decrease in plantation number which came down to 142. The acreage under cultivation increased to 63059. The tea record of 1960 shows the number of tea gardens in Darjeeling district was 139 which was decreased to 119 in 1971.

The tea plantation of Terai region of Darjeeling district was started in 1862. The first tea garden started here was at Chmapta near Khaprail by James White (Dash 1947 Hunter 1907). The other tea gardens of this area are established by 1866. The following table shows the growth of the tea industry in Darjeeling district since the initial state of this industry here.

Table 3.7. : Tea Industry in Darjeeling District in Early Days (1861-1951).

Year	No. of Gardens	Total Area under tea (in acares)	Production (in kgs.)
1861	22	3251	42600
1871	-	-	-
1881	155	28367	5160316
1891	177	45585	10910487
1901	170	51724	13535537
1911	156	51488	14250615
1921	148	59005	14030946
1931	169	61178	2049648
1941	136	63173	24815216
1951	138	62580	29283499

Source : Compiled from Census District Hand Book Darjeeling 1951.

Tea industry flourished in the hills and foothills (Terai) of Darjeeling district at a faster rate till recent times. Tea board statistic 1994 reports the

number of tea gardens in hills and Terai of Darjeeling district are 88 and 92 respectively. They all are not equal in size. Here a size wise break down of the gardens of this district is given in the following table.

Table 3.8.: The Number and Size of Tea Gardens in Darjeeling District(1994)

Region	Upto 8 hec.	8-50 hec.	50-100 hec.	100-200 hec.	200-400 hec.	Above 400 hec.	Total
Darjeeling Hills	-	3	8	30	39	8	88
Terai	30	5	5	10	29	13	92
Total	30	8	13	40	68	21	180

Source : J Thomas Tea Statistics 1996.

In Darjeeling district the size of the gardens are generally in between the size of 200 hectares to 400 hectares. In hills the number of garden of this range is maximum 44.31 percent and in Terai it is 31.52 percent. While above 400 hectares i.e. too large gardens are only 9 percent and 14 percent in hills and Terai of Darjeeling district respectively. There are few gardens with the area of 100-200 hectares(34 percent in hills) But in Terai 32 percent of the gardens are upto 8 hectares. The gardens range between 8 hectares to hundred hectares are very few both in Terai and Darjeeling hills. The following table shows the area under tea in Darjeeling and Terai, production of tea and yield per hector from 1955.

Table 3.9.: Area under Tea, (in hectares) Production of Tea (in kgs.) and Yield per hectare in Darjeeling hills and Terai (1955-1995)

Year	Area under Tea (in hec)		Production in kgs.		Yield per hec (in kgs)	
	Hills	Terai	Hills	Terai	Hills	Terai
1955	25133	-	7202	6685	553	-
1960	18605	9344	10123	8118	544	861
1970	18245	19769	10058	11970	551	1112
1975	17958	11040	10689	13148	595	1191
1980	19241	11474	12689	15872	659	1383
1985	19804	12395	12921	22494	652	1815
1990	20065	13345	14499	21130	615	1876
1995	19100	13850	10403	25594	545	1848

Source : The Board Statistics 1996 J. Thomes.

The table shows that the area under tea more or less increased during 1955 to 1995. Production increased remarkably from that of the earlier times as well as the yield per hectare increased but the production of tea of Darjeeling decreased in 1990-1995 than that of 1985-1990.

Jalpaiguri District

Jalpaiguri district has an old and prestigious ethnic history. Prior to 1947 Jalpaiguri was a larger district containing 16 police stations. Of which five, namely Tetrelia, Boda, Pochagarh, Debiganj and Pathgram was transferred to east Pakistan i.e. present Bangladesh. At present the district has 12 police stations of which 11 existed earlier and a new police station was set up at Nagrakata. The present district of Jalpaiguri was born on 1st January 1869 by the amalgamation of Western Doars (also known as Bhutan Doars) districts and Jalpaiguri subdivision of Rangpur District. Doars was annexed from Bhutan in 1865. 'Duars' literally means duars i.e. gateway. The area is actually the gateway of Bhutan. Doars i.e. the tea growing area of Jalpaiguri district, at present comprises that area run along the foot of Bhutan hills bounded by Teesta in the west and Sankos in the east. Doars was a most unhealthy district with malaria and black fever. Its climate was very much suitable for tea cultivation.

In Doars of Jalpaiguri tea industry took commercial shape in 1874-75. J.R. Haughton opened the first tea estate at Gajoldoba in Western Doars. In these years two tea estates at Phulbari and in Bagrakota was established. (Mukherjee 1978). Since 1874-78 in Mal sector 13 tea estates were established namely Gazaldoba (1874), Phulbari (1875), Dalimkota (1876) Bagrakot (1876), Kumlai (1877), Dumdim (1877), Washabari (1877), Ellenbari (1877), Money hope (1878), Patabari (1878), Ranicherra (1878). The following police stations are the major tea producing areas of Jalpaiguri district of which Mal, Maliali, Nagrakata have the highest concentration with Dhupguri, Madarihat, Kalchini. Doars land with low revenue attracted the planters mostly.

In the course of development of tea plantation in Jalpaiguri district important feature is the conscious and bold attempt by Indians, mainly the Bengalees to establish tea estate in this district inspite of the unfair competition of the Europeans. The first few such attempts were failed. In some cases the tea garden started by Indian venture but finally transferred to the Europeans. The first Indian tea estate started in this district was of

Munsi Raham Bukhs in 1879. A few Bengalees of this district joined their hands to form the first Indian tea company viz. The Jalpaiguri Tea Company Limited which was registered as a joint stock company. This company owned a garden called Mugalkata established in 1879 (Mukherjee.1978), other sprung later.

The growth of tea industry in Jalpaiguri district was very rapid during the 1880's. In 1881 the number of tea plantation was 55 and area under tea was 6230 acres. This number was increased to 182 in 1892 with a turn out of 18 million pounds. The acreage under cultivation was increased to six times to that of in 1881. This expansion continued till 1901 when the number of tea gardens were 235 and the acreage under cultivation were 76403 acres. The acreage under tea was nearly doubled between 1892-1901. The production of tea since 1901 was due mainly to young tea bushes coming into bearing and to a gradual extension on existing grants. It has been seen that after 1880 the cultivation of tea extended rapidly in the tract between Teesta and Diana river but after this period there was a check as the country towards the east to Diana was believed to be devoid of water. After 1901 the expansion of the industry checked and the number of plantation came down to 180. The area under cultivation was increased by mere 4935 acres. 1961 census reports the number of tea garden in this district was 155 while 1975 records the number as 187. Till 1960 the British owned companies known as 'Sterling Company' were the majority. After 60's they started rapidly selling their individual companies to the Indians and also the shares. In the initial stage the Indian planters faced certain problems. They could not get the tea grant land as their British counterpart and had to start in 'jota' lands whose terms were not as favourable of the tea grant lands. They also faced difficulties in getting trained and experienced management personnel as they could not afford to pay them as much as the British concerns. However by 1910 there were 10 Indian owned gardens with an acreage of 7000 which rose to 31 with an acreage of 40,000 by 1918. (Griffiths-1972). By 1881 Indian Tea Association (ITA) was form to deal with the labour problem and keep the interest of the planters. But this association mainly represented the interest of the British planters. The subsequently Indian Tea Planters Association (TIPA) was formed by the Indian Planters with its born in Doars.

Table 3.10.: Tea Plantation in Jalpaiguri District in Early Days (1876-1907)

Year	No. of tea Garden	Acreage under tea	Production of Tea (lb)
1876	13	818	39520
1881	55	6230	1027117
1882	182	38583	18278628
1901	235	76403	31087537
1907	180	81338	45196894

Source : Gazetteer of Jalpaiguri.

Table : 3.11. : Yearwise Establishment of Tea Estates in Jalpaiguri District

Sl. No.	Year	Tea Garden
1.	1875	1. Gajoldoba
2.	1876	1. Fulbari 4. Gandhabheel
		2. Rangatee 5. Dalingkote
3.	1877	1. Jaldhaka 4. Ellenbarrie 6. Wassabari.
		2. Praintbari 4. Damdim
		3. Bamandanga 5. Kumlai
4.	1878	1. Kalabari 4. Manihope 7. Altadanga
		2. Goodhope (Sisubari) 5. Manabari 8. Chael
		3. Bamandanga 6. Ballabari 9. Patabari
5.	1879	1. Magulkata 4. Nagarkata
		2. Rupee
		3. Songachi
6.	1880	Nill
7.	1881	1. Hataipatta 4. Mogalkata
		2. Godlabari 5. Bytagool
		3. Neora Nuddy
8.	1882	1. Needum
9.	1883	1. Toonbari
10.	1884	1. Yongtong 4. Ingo 7. Aibheel 10. Metelli 13. Alston 16. Meenglass 19. Ranikhola
		2. Chalouni 5. Zurrantee 8. Kilcott 11. Chulse 14. Banks 17. Chengli 20. Sathkhaya.
		3. Idong 6. Moortee 9. Nedum 12. Sundree 15. Sylee 18. Bhuttabari
11.	1885	1. Baitaguri 4. Changmari 7. Indong
		2. Rangakottee 5. Kurti 8. Chupaguri
		3. Danguajhor 6. Nakhati

Sl. No.	Year	Tea Garden		
12.	1886	1. Springfield 4. Tondoo 7. Rangatee 10. Ghatia 13. Foresthill	2. Suknabares 5. Jitee 8. Gurjonjhora 11. Bhogotpur 14. Chalanni	3. Hope 6. Malnuddy 9. Nagarkata 12. Looksan
13.	1887	1. Glencoe	3. Puthurjhora	
14.	1888	1. Kujih	2. Huldibari	
15.	1889	1. Chengamari	2. Grammore	3. Sangaon
16.	1890	1. Telipara	2. Gaikatta	3. Mujnai
17.	1891	1. Maktapara	2. Hantupara	
18.	1892	1. Bandapani 4. Totppara	2. Lankapara	3. Chamurchi
19.	1894	1. Chumabati 4. Doodoomari	2. Hartalguri 5. Gandrapara	3. Newlands 6. Chauapara
20.	1895	1. Nakhai 4. Toorsa 7. Karbala	2. Rangamattee 5. Kathalguri 8. Jointee	3. Chanapara 6. Banarhat
21.	1896	1. Huldibari 4. Durlah 7. Hashimara 10. Birpara	2. Chuniajhora 5. Guabari 8. Kalchini	3. Barodighi 6. Palashbari 9. Rohimbud
22.	1897	1. Garganda 4. Lakhipara 7. Hashimara 10. Birpara.	2. Muktijhora 5. Reti 8. Kalchini	3. Mateejhora 6. Shyamjhora 9. Rohimbud
23.	1898	1. Binaguri 4. Ababari	2. Debpara 5. Phaskawa	3. Lankapara
24.	1899	1. Galupara	2. 4 Grants of Meheods	
25.	1900	1. Gandrapara 4. Dalsingpara	2. Chuarpar 5. Rangatee	3. Rangamattee
26.	1901	Nill		
27.	1902	1. Nagrakata 4. Baradighi 7. Kalchini	2. Dimdima 5. Gandabheel 8. Natipota	3. Baintbari 6. Chuniajhora 9. Dhoala
28.	1903	1. Teshati 4. Kumlai	2. Dalmoni	3. Bhatkhawa
29.	1904	1. Emerarad	2. Rupai	3. Atiabari
30.	1906	1. Baitayol		
31.	1907	1. Damchipara		
32.	1908	1. Ambari		
33.	1909	1. Dimaa	2. Dalmore	3. Ranijhora

Sl. No.	Year	Tea Garden		
34.	1910	1. Turturi	2. Rubhat	
35.	1911	1. Dumdim	2. Debpara	3. Daina
36.	1912	1. Lakhipara		
37.	1913	1. Gopalpur	2. Hossainabad	3. Jaybirpara
		4. Dheklapara	5. Nimtijhora	6. Palasbari
		7. Reheabari	8. Radharani	
38.	1915	1. Palkapara	2. Dhowlajhora	3. Kohinoor
39.	1917	1. Saraswatipur		
40.	1918	1. Sunayavalley	2. Karalavally	3. Sikarpur
		4. Bhandarpur		
41.	1919	1. Mejerdabari	2. Satali	3. Mathura
		4. Bitri	5. Barron	6. Moraghat
42.	1922	1. Redbank		
43.	1923	1. Nangdata		
44.	1924	1. Ellenbari	2. Hartalguri	
45.	1926	1. Batabari	2. Jadabpur	
46.	1927	1. Malhati	2. Anandapur	3. Sreenathpur
47.	1928	1. Kadambini		
48.	1929	1. Madhu	2. Lakhitanta	3. Rahimpur
49.	1930	1. Sandamini	2. Gopimohon	
50.	1933	1. Nepuchapur		
51.	1934-1962	1. Surendranagar		

Source : T. K. Ghosh-Tea Gardens of West Bengal 1987.

The number of tea estates in Doars according to Tea Board Statistic 1992-93 is 168. The size of the gardens varies. The following table gives a break down of the size of the tea gardens of Dooars.

Table 3.12.: The Number and Size of Tea Gardens in Jalpaiguri District (1994).

Size	No
Upto 8 hec.	9
8-50 hec.	6
50-100 hec.	6
100-200 hec.	14
200-400 hec.	46
Above 400 hec.	87

Source : Tea Board Statistics 1996, J. Thomas

Here the size of gardens are bigger than that of the Terai and Darjeeling hills. About 52 percent gardens are above 400 hectares followed by 27 percent

in between 200-400 hectare. Gardens range between 100-200 hectares are 8 percent while the gardens range between 8 hectares to 100 hectares are very few. The following table gives a picture of tea producing acreage the production of tea as well as yield per hectares from 1955 to 1995.

Table 3.13.: Area under Tea (in hectares) Production (in kgs) and Yield per Hectare (in kgs) in Doars (1955-1995)

Year	Area under tea (in hec)	Production (in kgs)	Yield per hectare (in kgs)
1955	54101	60546	1119
1960	54756	63282	1156
1970	59485	79169	1331
1975	59801	88025	1472
1980	62782	104624	1666
1985	65816	121956	1853
1990	191170	114124	1744
1995	100650	124308	1836

Source : Tea Board Statistics 1996, J. Thomas.

It is clearly seen that the land under tea in Doars increased simultaneously. Since 1950 the production increased remarkably as well as the yield per hectare but the picture from 1985 to 1995 shows a slight decrease from the period of 1980-1985. Though production during the period 1990-95 increased than that of the previous years.

Tea production do not remain same though out the year. The following table shows the monthly production of tea.

Table 3.14.: Monthly Production of Tea in Doars, Darjeeling Hills and Terai (1995-96).

Month	Year	Production (in Tonnes)		
		Doars	Darjeeling Hills	Terai
March	1996	760	1020	1354
	1995	4353	468	702
April	1996	9224	938	1247
	1995	10472	1169	1688
May	1996	10841	751	863
	1995	6801	521	354
June	1996	14927	1436	2664
	1995	14253	1203	2316

Month	Year	Production (in Tonnes)		
		Doars	Darjeeling Hills	Terai
July	1996	14246	1486	4072
	1995	15428	1561	4323
August	1996	18633	1747	4667
	1995	16933	1526	4156
September	1996	20640	1395	1558
	1995	22421	1495	1664
October	1996	9718	1040	4936
	1995	8400	931	4288
November	1996	9718	1040	4936
	1995	12962	651	4255
December	1996	19194	824	478
	1995	10544	743	391
Upto December	1996	127993	11288	26094
	1995	124308	10403	25594

(N.B. : Break down of Data of Tea Production of January & February is not available so all are included in March fig.)

Source : *Tea Board Statistic 1996, J. Thomas.*

Besides the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri there are one each garden is situated in Cooch Behar and West Dinajpur namely Cooch Behar Tea Tstate and Debijhora Tea Estate.

The total acerage under tea or the number of tea gardens have remained unaltered for the last fifty years or so. Because the valuable forest cover will be demolished for the purpose of tea which is on the other hand undesirable. During the early 1980s the approximate number of tea estates in West Bengal was 360 of which 147 was in Darjeeling district and 187 in Jalpaiguri district (T.K. Ghosh 1987). The number of Tea estates was 147 in Darjeeling District, (including 82 in Terai) and 163 in Jalpaiguri district in early 1990's (Tea Board Statistics 1992-93 report).

With the march of time the tea plantation of North Bengal faces several ups and downs. While each of the garden tells its own story of success and woe.

Tea Plantation in Tripura and other North Eastern States

Besides Assam, in North East, Tripura is an important tea grower where tea plantation was introduced in 1916 by the then Maharaja Birendra Kishor. In 1931 there was 50 tea gardens with an area of 8386 acres. There was 7668

acre area under plantation in 1954. By 1980s the number of tea gardens in Tripura was 50 which increased to 57 in 1994. The total area under tea of Tripura in 1995 was 156 hectares with the production of 6118 kgs. and yield per hectares was 995 kgs. Production in 1996 was increased to 6570kgs.

Along with Assam and Tripura Tea Plantation also exists in some other states of North East. In 1994 there were 20 tea plantations in Arunachal Pradesh, 8 in Nagaland and 5 in Monipur. Tea Board Statistics 1994 reports only one tea garden in Sikkim.

Tea Plantation in Northern States

Tea production is very negligible in some Northern States. The tea statistics of 1994 reports the number of tea plantation in Bihar is 17, Orissa 2, U.P. 11 and Himachal Pradesh 1660. In the following table shows the positions of tea plantation of Northern and North Eastern States including Tripura, Monipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Bihar, Orissa, U.P. and H.P. is given.

Table 3.15. : Tea Plantation in North and North Eastern States (except Assam and West Bengal) (1955-1990).

Year	Area under tea in (hec)	Production (in kgs.)	Yield per hec
1955	249411	246267	387
1960	256928	243302	347
1970	282729	317348	1122
1980	307844	438455	1429
1990	341004	545106	1643

Source : Tea Statistics J. Thomas 1996.

Tea Plantation in South India

Tea Plantation in southern states were initially unsuccessful but later on tea plantation on the elevated area of Malabar coast and Nilgiri region flourished quite rapidly. Here the major tea producing states are Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka. By 1950's the total area of south India under tea was 71177 hectares. Total production was 61437kgs. with the yield per hectare was 836kgs. By 1960's the area under tea increased to 74301 hectares, production increased to 77775 kgs. with the yield per hectare was 1047 kgs. By 1970's the total area under tea was 73787 hectares which includes 9 percent of Tamilnadu and Kerala each and 1 percent of Karnataka. The production increased to 101169kgs. with the yield per hectare of 1371kgs. By

1980's total number of tea gardens in South India was 534 of which 252 was in Tamilnadu 209 in Kerala and 73 in Mysore. The total area under tea was 75047 hectares with the production of 131095kgs. and yield per hectare was 1747kgs. By 1990 the total area of South India under tea increased a little. It was 75265 hectares, total production was 175232 kgs and yield per hectare was 2255kgs. Tea Board statistics 1994 records the number of tea gardens was 25807 in Tamilnadu, 6131 in Kerala and 37 in Karnataka. In 1995 the area of this region under tea was 76125 hectares with a production of 185949kgs. and yield per hectars 2443kgs. The production was 180408 kgs in 1996.

Table 3.17. : Tea Plantation in South India (1955-1995)

Year	Area under Tea (in hec)	Production in kgs.	Yield per hec (in kgs)
1955	71177	61437	863
1960	74301	77775	1047
1970	73787	101169	1371
1980	75047	131095	1747
1990	75265	175232	2266
1995	76125	185949	2443

Source : J. Thomas, Tea Statistics 1996.

OBSERVATION

Tea is one of the oldest, cheapest and the most popular beverage in India originally came from China and developed as an organised industry under the patronage of the British rulers who accidentally found some wild tea plants growing in the Assam hills in early 1820-23. Tea is made from the young leaves and unopen buds of the tea plant 'camellia sinensis' in wet (45" per annum) and warm climate and need a huge and settled labour force. Factories are necessary for the tea gardens attached to it because the green leaves plucked should be processed within 24 hours or it decays. Legally 'Plantation' means any land used for growing tea, coffee, rubber or cincona which covers an area of 25 acres or more and on which 30 persons are employed or employed on any day of the preceeding 12 months. Experimental tea cultivation in India was under taken by the then British Government in 1834 with the help of Chinese artisans and tea maker by some crude processes. Tea seeds were sent to the hilly areas with some possibility and several committees were appointed to survey the possibility of successful tea cultivation which found the hills of Assam as the most satisfactory one.

The development of tea plantation sector in India took place with the development of global economy improvement in the means of transport and communication that widen the scope of international trade. This industry in the initial stage have faced several crisis of investment, scarcity of labour and so on which could have been overcome through time and inventions.

Tea plantation in Assam was started under the government patronage but by 1839 a private enterprise, Assam Tea Company enter into this business. Production increased gradually with the increase in the acreage under tea plantation. At present Assam is the largest producer of tea in India. Beside Assam, Tripura of North East also produces some amount of tea with a ineligibile percentage added by Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Monipur of the Northern States small amount of tea is produced by Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa. Tea plantation of southern state was initially unsuccessful but later tea in the elevated area of Malaber coast and Nilgiri flourished quite rapidly. The Tea Board Statistics show in 1995 land area under tea in Assam was 234580 hectares with the yearly production of 399133 kgs. In other Northern and North eastern states it was 345788 hectares of land under tea with the yearly production of 567976 hectares. In southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka the land under tea was 76125 hectares in 1995 with the production of 185949 kgs. per year (J. Thomas 1996). West Bengal is the second largest tea producer in India. The appearance of West Bengal in the tea plantation map of the country is quite late. The first tea estate in West Bengal was started in 1866. In this state tea plantation is located mainly in the hills and foot hills (Terai) of Darjeeling district and Dooars of Jalpaiguri District. Since 1856-57 Tea Industry in Darjeeling took off in commercial basis. Before this it was existed here in experimental forms. The industry flourished in this district very rapidly between 1866-1874. Tea plantation in Terai region started in 1862. In Dooars of Jalpaiguri Tea Industry took commercial shape in 1874-75. Its growth was very rapid in the 1880's. Tea Industry in North Bengal experienced several ups and downs with the march of time. At present according to Tea Board Statistics 1992-93 the number of Tea Estates in Darjeeling District is 147 of which 82 is in 'Terai', 'Doars' of Jalpaiguri can be proud of its 163 tea gardens. In 1995, 13850 hectares of land of Terai was under tea with the yearly production of 25594 kgs. In Darjeeling hills the land was 19100 hectares with the yearly production of 10403 kgs. In Doars 100650 hectares of land was under tea with the yearly production of 124308 kgs.

A Note On Tea Plantation Labourers

It has been seen in the discussion of the earlier chapter that North Bengal is the main producer of tea of West Bengal, the second largest tea growing state of India. The North Bengal districts, mainly the hills and foot hill areas of Darjeeling and Doars of Jalpaiguri is the prime tea producing zone of the state. This region supplies both CTC and orthodox tea of which the tea of Darjeeling hills is world famous for its quality and flavour. On the other hand the tea of Terai and Doars have much thicker brue. The tea plantation of this region has been started under the British patronage in about 1850 onward and gradually took commercial shape. Now all the gardens are owned by the Indians. The economy of North Bengal districts is even at present highly under developed while the tea gardens are the pockets of prosperity. In this chapter a discussion will be made on the adibasi tea plantation labourers of Terai and Doars of North Bengal.

The prime part of the story of tea is the story of the people who built the industry. This part is more interesting with its own rhythm of joy and sorrow. This includes their migration, adoption of this new economic and living environment, their social life - cultural life so on and so forth. But there is a difficulty to get a systematic chronology of the history of these people due to the lack of documentary evidences. This is only available in part in the record of different tea enquiry committees. (Bhowmik 1981)

Origin and Migration

At the early stage of this industry the planters faced two vital problems. Firstly the ideally suited areas for tea were covered with thick unhealthy forest cover which were to be cleared. The second problem was the scarcity of labour. Tea being a very much labour intensive industry need continuous supply of cheap labour to carry on its operation at its different levels. The local people were reluctant to join the industry due to the hazardous condition of work as well as its low wage. The labourers had no fixed hour of work neither any fixed type of work. Their wages was as low as three rupees per month as the planters viewed their work as 'easy and light'. To solve the

problem of labour crisis the planters started the import of labourers from outside the state mainly from Chotonagpur area of Bihar and its adjoining area of Orissa and Madhyapradesh. These people were the aboriginal people of Oraon, Munda, Santhal, Barik, Tulsi, Asur, Lohar, Kheria and others, popularly known in India as 'adibasi'.

The tribal society of Bihar in the 19th century was 'in a state of turmoil'. Since the 17th century the decay of their traditional society started. By this time their tribal King and the royal family got Hinduised and interlinked to the neighbouring Hindu princely family by intermarriage, and started encouraging the Hindu Brahmin and other high caste people, with rudimentary education, to settle down at their place and offered them high administrative posts and land. These people, locally known as Dikus i.e. aliens, started exploiting these innocent tribal people and expropriate them from their land. This problem intensified with the introduction of British rule into this area. The traders and money lenders poured into this area and cornered land through various means. The simple minded innocent people finally burst into unrest and revolt. All the cultivating tribes. Munda, Kharias, Ho, Oraon, jointly fight against the aliens in 'Kol Insurrection' of 1831; 'Santhal Revolt' of 1858 and 'Ulgulan in Mundari' of 1899-1901 are the series of tribal aggression against the Dikus and the Britishers. In addition to the turmoil, the natural hazards like a series of flood and famine (of 1868-69, 1873-74, 1893-94, 1897 the severest, 1918) destroyed the society of the tribals of Chotonagpur. As a result the poor and ill-fated people had ^{but} nothing to leave their place to earn their bread and butter from any where through any type of work. Finally they migrated to the areas of tea plantation and came under the grip of the planters who exploited these uprooted people more easily. Being deprived from the means of their lively hood, turned into the pool of unemployment, these adibasi people became sturdy, hard-working and submissive who could live at an almost subhuman level of existence. Almost all the tea plantation of Terai and Doars are served by the slave or indentured labourers from the tribal people of Chotonagpur.

Since 1853 recruitment of indentured labourers from outside the state stated. Migration of these labourers to the plantation was mainly family based and organised instead of individual man and woman though this type of migration also occurred. The plantation absorb both male and female member of tribal family as labourers. The one of the major operation of plantation is plucking. This requires a huge number of female participation who had a

good reputation to score over the male more in efficiency and quality of leaf plucked. Moreover as the planters wanted cheap labour they encouraged the labourers to settle down permanently in the respective garden by providing them family quarter and a small plot of arable land as share cropper thus make them unable to go to any other sector of employment. The family based immigration cut off the labourers from their place of origin and ensure the planters that these people would never leave the garden. The present tea garden tribal labourers are the third or fourth generation of these early migrants and are totally cut off from their natal place.

In 1835 the time of take over the Darjeeling from the Raja of Sikkim by East India Company its population was 100 (Dash 1947). Its increased to 10000 by 1859. When Terai was annexed to this district its population was not known. The first regular census of 1872 of this district showed its population figure as 94712. In 1881 the population was 155179. The population increased very rapidly by the consecutive years. The population in 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1941 was 249117, 265500, 282748, 319635 and 376369 respectively. This rapid growth of population was mainly due to the very rapid growth of tea industry in hills and foothills of this district and also due to waste land cultivation. Most of the increased population comprises the immigrant tribal labourers from outside the state. The census of 1961 showed the district was inhabited by 624640 persons of which 67,00 was the immigrants from outside the state, primarily from Bihar. The census of 1961 further revealed that 96,444 persons returned themselves as belonging to various scheduled tribes. The Siliguri subdivision had a predominance of scheduled tribes with the Oraon from Chotonagpur being the maximum in number followed by Mundas from Bihar and Santhal from Santhal Pargana. In 1872 the Oraons were 1648 in number which increased to 14433 in 1941. The Mundas was 255 in 1891 and increased to 5993 in 1941. The Santhals was 999 in 1891 and increased to 4045 in 1941 (Bhadra : 1997).

The census of 1858-59 showed the population figure of the settled part of Jalpaiguri district was 189067 (9011961). The subsequent census showed considerable increase in the population. In 1871-72 the population was 327985. This increase of population was mainly due to the rapid growth of tea industry there in which attract the tribal immigrants from outside the state. In 1989 the number of immigrants of this district was 143922 (9011901). The census of 1901 put the number of immigrants as 188223. Bulk of the immigrants were

tribal people from Ranchi, Santhal Pargana of Chotonagpur. The migration statement show that 80436 immigrants were from Ranchi district and 10562 from Santhal Pargana. According to census report of 1911 the number of persons born in Ranchi district who were enumerated in Jalpaiguri district was 126214. The following table shows the immigration to Jalpaiguri since 1891 to 1941. This table includes all types of immigrants, not only those from Chotonagpur to Jalpaiguri.

Table 4.1.: The Immigrant Population of Jalpaiguri District (1891-1941)

Year	Actual Population	Immigrants
1891	433334	44329
1901	544906	95899
1911	661282	152174
1921	694054	163024
1931	739260	158757
1941	845702	156765

Source : A. K. Mitra 1953, Census of India 1951.

The immigration of tea garden labourers in North Bengal were very high since 1860-1881 because a number of tea garden sprung up during this time. Between 1896-1901 tea price fell greatly in Britain. Consequently the gardens reduced their labourforce. During 1901-1911 the plantation population showed a decline in its number. The immigration of tribal labourers from Chotonagpur was stopped by rule in 1950. Since then the planters could employed the labourers from among the surplus ones settle down in the neighbouring villages and plantations.

In 1952 the Plantation Labour Act was passed to protect men and women workers in plantation. Now the feudalistic relation between planters and the labourers changed to a relationship between employers and employees. The plantation labourers were given some legal protection and there was a scope to form their own association . Since the Plantation Labour Act was effective for permanent labourers the planters wanted to reduce the number of the permanent labourers as these would decrease the over head cost. Consequently there was a reduction in the labour force since the passing of the act.

Table 4.2.: Decline of Plantation Labour Force in India and West Bengal (1950-1980).

Year	West Bengal	India
1950	329034	1033090
1955	273163	989656
1959	236674	919405
1960	—	—
1965	191702	806152
1970	200280	759646
1975	200130	774897
1980	228705	912522

Source : Tea Statistics 1957, 1959, 1968-69, 1969-70, 1977-78, 1981-82

Traditional Occupation of the Adibasi Labourers.

The adibasi plantation labourers of North Bengal are generally the immigrant tribals of Chotonagpur and their descendents. These people altogether form a more or less homogeneous group commonly referred to as 'Modesia' by the local people. These poverty sicken, innocent, hard-working people are originally traditional agriculturists though some are of artisan background. Of these, Oraons are agriculturists, Baraiks are weavers of cloth, Mahalis and Turis are basket makers, the Lohers are iron smiths.

Tea plantation being an agro based industry has an agricultural environment in gardens. Besides, these gardens are generally situated in rural area. This condition helps the traditional rural agriculturist tribes to adopt the industry much easily. According to their traditional occupation there exists a kind of social hierarchy within their society, keeping the traditional agriculturist in the upper rank and the artisans in the inferior position. In factory there is a somewhat industrial environment. These people are considered as industrial workers though actually these semi isolated working group does not enjoy the actual status of the industrial workers. This industry does not need any education or previous working experience and here the unit of recruitment is family. Both male and female members of family here get job as labourer along with their children. A kind of strict bureaucratic structure exists in each tea plantation keeping management at the top and labourers at the bottom with a number of intermediaries. But the relationship

between the planters and the labourers are some what feudalistic in nature which has been changed to some extent in modern times with the exposure to the outer world. At present almost 85 percent of the labour force of Terai and Doars consists of the descendants of the immigrants of Chotonagpur. In plantation we get four categories of labourers male, female, adolescents (16-18yrs) and Children (12-16yrs). The last two categories i.e. the child and adolescent labourers are the special feature of plantation industry. The rest 15 percent includes the Nepali, Bihari and Bengali caste groups. Most of the plantation labourers are resident labour and live at scattered labour lines within plantation. The works in plantation start early in the morning and labours^{are} to report much earlier. Moreover the labourers are the immigrants and their descendants, so the authority had to give them the housing facility which was compulsory according to the Plantation Labour Act of 1951. Labour force in tea gardens are of two types (a) workers in the fields (b) workers in the factory. Factory workers are generally male. Female child and adolescents work^{ers} rarely work as factory workers. Factory workers form a fragment of the labour force.

Bureaucracy in Tea Plantation

Every tea plantation has a strict bureaucratic structure of administrative work organisation with a very little chance of promotion or upward occupational mobility. At the top level there is the executive category, includes Manager (Bara Sahib) and a group of assistant Managers (Chotta Shibs) who are the immediate authority of the plantation and look after its overall administration. The next category includes the supervisory staffs - both the garden (Bagan babu) and the factory (Factory Babu) and the clerks (Babu). The third category includes the sub-staffs who mainly carry out orders from the top and keep eyes on the collies. This group has a hierarchy within itself having at the top the Munshi (Field Staff) and Sardar (Factory Staff). Then comes Chaprasii. (peon); Boidar, who keeps the attendance in the field; Defadar, the gang leader of the collies; Chowkidar, the watchman; Paniwala, the man who carry water to the workers and he should be of a higher rank; Davawala the health assistant. The fourth and the last category of this hierarchical organisation is the 'Collie' include all the field and factory workers and daily wage workers directly engage in the process of production. The Collies form the large labourforce in the plantation. These people both male and female do all kinds of manual works in the garden and factory and carry on the flow production process.

Labour Recruitment

At the initial stage of tea industry in North Bengal the disperse and scanty population of this area failed to meet the enormous supply of required labour force for this very much labour intensive industry. Besides, the character of this local labour force was unsatisfactory. As a result labourers were imported from the tribal belt of Chotonagpur. Before 1874 Assam was a part of Bengal and here tea industry has started much earlier than Bengal. In 1859 Tea Planter's Association was formed in Assam to regulate the process of Labour Recruitment through the contractors (Arakatthi) in an organised manner in Assam and also looked after the gardens of Terai and Dooars. However this process proved unsatisfactory by 1863. Besides this process, recruitment was also done by the planters themselves through the garden sardars and also through the recruiting agencies by contract basis. In 1874 Assam was separated from Bengal. The tea gardens of Darjeeling hills faced recruitment problems as these gardens were manned by the poverty sicken Nepali immigrants who were compelled to migrate from over populated Nepal due to its rising economic pressure. For the gardens of Terai and Doars imported labour force were to be needed. Here the planters recruited labourers following the popular policies namely Sardari system, Arakathi system and recruitment through some private agencies. Of these three systems Sardari system is the most successful one. In the first system garden sardar was sent to the recruiting ground with some money in the recruiting season, generally from early October to late February. It was easier for a sarder to collect this native people to induce them to show the advantage of work and the false prospects of ultimate settlement on independent holding. He then collect the willing people and brought them to the respective gardens. The sardars were usually accompanied by one management personnel who keep a vigil on him. In the second one i.e. in the Arakathi system the agents of the planters, generally the members of Gashi, Barik and other non-cultivatory tribes of Chotonagpur, went to the recruiting districts and collected labourers by giving them false promise of prosperity. Under the Amendment Act of 1870 these two system was in vogue till 1952. Since 1952 there has been no recruitment in plantation at least officially though this system. The third system of labour recruitment i.e. recruitment through local agents of some private agencies was done in the recruiting districts. These agencies supply labourers (Girmibas) to the garden concerned as per some agreements and get money for this job.

To look after the Labour Recruitment Policy in Terai and Doars the British planters of this area established an association named as Tea District Labour Association with its head quarter at Calcutta. This association had their agents in recruiting grounds. Besides, the Christian Mission had their own Labour Bureau to help the TDLA. There was the problem of Labour Enticement. The employers who had less labourers would seek to entice labourers from their neighbouring gardens, and they had spent considerable amount for it. In 1889 a set of rules provided interalia that workers leaving one estate for another without permission must be turned out or sent back. Doars planters and then the planters of Terai region signed to this agreement. In 1959 recruitment from outside West Bengal has been reduced and gradually the TDLA dissolved. By this time a surplus condition among the plantation labourers has been created in North Bengal and the planters could recruit the required labours from the surplus one settled down in and around their plantation.

Types of Work, System of Works and Working Hours

In plantation daily wage labourers perform all types of manual works such of plucking of leaves, weeding, hoeing, manuring, forking, cleaning soil, pruning the tea bush in winter, taking care of nursery bed of young tea plants and cleaning the tea stalk in factory, spraying of pesticides and so on.

Plucking is considered to be the most important job in plantation and need patience. This job is generally done by the women folk who are believed to collect better quality of leaves with greater efficiency. The plucking season generally begins with early rain in March and ends either in November or in early December. The plucking gives the highest yield during July to August when rain fall is heavy. The plucking in early monsoons is supposed to produce the best quality tea.

After plucking the season of pruning the tea bush comes in winter on which depends the yield of the next season. On the basis of height of the bush pruning is made as light, medium and deep. The women folk perform the light and medium pruning while the deep pruning is done by the male labourers. Beside this male labourers perform the heavy manual works like deep hoeing, digging, spraying of pesticide and weedicides. The women workers also perform: weeding, manuring, light hoeing, collecting the seeds of the shade trees, forking and preparing of nursery beds. The adolescent labourers perform the same types of works as the women folk. The aged

labourers are generally engaged in picking out the stalks from the tea leaves. They also engage in making nursery seed beds. Children are generally given light agricultural works such as removing creepers and parasites from tea bushes, light digging, collecting the seeds of shade trees etc.

Plantation works is generally done in group or groups termed as 'Patti' consisted of fifty labourers either men and women under the supervision of Sardar and Dafader. The tasks are fixed either interms of Nal or Dangs or Bushes. A Nal or Dang is an area of 12 square feet and roughly 3000 Nals comprise an acre. The task assigned to the women and children are proportionately less than the men.

In 1951 the Plantation Labour Act lays down the maximum weekly working hour for the labours. Later in 1957 another Plantation Labour Act is enacted which is in vogue. According to this act the normal weekly hours of work were in between 37hr and 47hr in West Bengal. The act provides for a day rest long period of seven days and for the payment of work done on the day before rest. The act also provides for grant of leaves with wage at the rate of one day for every fifteen working days. Accumulation of leave is allowed upto a maximum of 30 days.

Table 4.3.: Sexwise classification of Plantation work

Operation in Garden Factory	Period in Month	Sex of labourers
Garden Operation		
1. Filling of vacancies of Tea Bushes	Jan-May	Men & Women
2. Transplanting	Jan-Mar	- do -
3. Manuring	Feb-May	- do -
4. Tipping	Mar-Dec	- do -
5. Plucking	Mar-Dec	- do -
6. Spraying Pesticides	April-Sept.	Men
7. Pruning	Oct-Jan	Men & Women
8. Weeding	Throughout the year	- do -
9. Hoeing	- do -	- do -
Factory Operation		
10. Machine operating	Mar -Dec	Men
11. Withering	- do -	- do -
12. Rolling	- do -	- do -
13. Fermenting	- do -	- do -
14. Drying	- do -	- do -
15. Sorting	- do -	- do -
16. Packing	- do -	- do -

Source : 'Class Formation In Plantation System' . Bhowmik 1981

Wage and Remuneration of the Labourers and other Job Facilities

The tea garden labourers are paid according to the task they perform. A work is known as 'Thika'. He is paid a wage for completing his 'Thika' which is known as 'Hazirā'. The wage were previously fixed arbitrarily by the planters through their organisation. The Hazirā remained static between 1920-1947. It was for one anna, three annas and six paises per thika respectively for men, women and children (P. Griffith 1971). The labourers could increase his income by completing more than one Thika once a day. Beside the wages they were given certain monetary benefits like bonus, sick allowance, maternity allowance, incentives, some ex-gratia payments during festivals. All these were paid either directly to the labourers or through the Sardars. The wage of the labourers was determined by the labourers capacity to bargain to higher wage but not by the productivity of the labourers. Their condition was miserable. The government do nothing to protect them. In the post independence period the situation was quite favourable for the but the wage in tea plantation lagged far behind those in other industries.

In the post independence era several committee viz. Modak Committee 1950, Banerjee Committee 1952 were appointed who recommended 6 merely and subsistence wage, food, education and medical and other facilities for the tea plantation labourers. A Central Wage Board was appointed by 1960. This board announced two interim wage increments of 8 paisa and 6 paisa. The then wage in Terai plantation was Rs. 1.95 for men, Rs. 1.81 for women and Rs. 1.07 for children in Doars Rs. 1.98, Rs. 1.84, Rs. 1.07 for men, women and children respectively. The central board recommended the wage of men women and children will be increased by 13, 10 and 7 paisa respectively from 1966. 1966 onward wages gradually increased either through recommendations of bipartite meetings or through the demand of the trade unions.

Table 4.4.: Wage Chart of the Labourers (1969-1978)

Year	Male	Female	Children
1969-70	Rs. 2.39	Rs. 2.22	Rs. 1.29
1970-71	Rs. 2.48	Rs. 2.48	Rs. 1.33
1971-72	Rs. 2.71	Rs. 2.54	Rs. 1.45
1972-73	Rs. 2.94	Rs. 2.77	Rs. 1.56
1973-77	Increased of wage for 4 times of 1973		
1978	Rs. 5.24	Rs. 3.04	Rs. 2.73

Source : Class Formation in Plantation System Bhowmik 1981

The wage differences between men and women labourers was abolished in December, 1976. but many of the employers in West Bengal refused to pay equal wage even after the Equal Wage For Equal Work Act was passed. The Indian Tea Planters Association is in favour of maintaining the wage differences between the men and women labourers because Thika assigned to women labourers is always lesser than that of men

Table 4.5.: The Rate of Daily Wage for Tea Plantation Labourers

Daily wage rate	1.6.90 Adult	30.5.91 Child- ren	1.6.91 Adult	31.5.92 Child- ren	1.6.92 Adult	31.3.94 Child- ren	1.4.94 Adult	31.3.95 Child- ren
1. Doars								
(a) Tea Est 500 hec & above	16.50	8.37	17.90	9.07	19.30	9.77	21.80	11.02
(b) Tea Est. bellow 500 hec	16.47	8.37	17.87	9.07	16.47	8.37	17.87	9.07
2. Terai	16.44	8.35	17.84	17.84	9.05	9.77	21.80	11.02
3. Darjeeling	16.12	8.19	17.52	8.89	19.30	9.77	21.80	11.20

Plucking incentive rate : Doars & Terai 25p each for per 1 kg (Valied upto 31.5.92)

Plucking incentive rate : Doars & Terai 32p each for per 1 kg. (Valied upto 1.7.94)

Source : Tea Board Statistics 1992-93

The Dearness Allowance form a part of the revised wage fixed under the Minimum Wage Act. Besides a labourers gets ration at concessional rates with firewood. Some protective uniforms like umbrella, apron to protect their cloth in tea bush, pullover, jute hessian which are essential for working in the plantation are supplied free to the labourers alongwith blanket once in every two years.

Beside the other job facilities in tea plantation the labourers according to the Plantation Labour Act 1951 the labourers are provided housing facilities, with the provision of adequate supply of drinking water, latrine and other health facilities and a medical leave of 14 days in a week with 2/3rd of his minimum daily wage, Women enjoy maternity leave with full payment. The act also provides that every employer should provide and maintain a primary school for labourers children and a creche (where 50 or more women are employed.) The act also provides recreational facility to the labourers and paid holiday on Independence Day, May Day and Republic Day and one day each for Durgapuja, Diyali and Holi.

Social Environment of the Plantation Labourers

Environment, means surrounding, that stimulate or influence the behaviour of a group. 'Social environment' includes that part of environment consisting of interacting individuals, their pattern of social organisations, their way of life and the other aspects of society. The social environment of the multi ethnic plantation society of North Bengal with colonial background is very complex.

Modesia

The immigrant plantation labourers of North Bengal from Chotonagpur belong to different ethnic groups. Externally they form a more or less homogeneous group commonly referred to as 'Modesia' by the local people. The word 'Modesia' is an indigenous term denotes 'our people' or 'my native people'. The immigrants labourers initially referred to their native people as 'Modesia' (Mo-desia) before the local folk who later on started calling the whole immigrants tribal labourers group as 'Modesia'. Another meaning of 'Modesia' is the migrants tribal of middle areas of the country i.e. Madhyadesh. 'Modesia' is not at all a single tribal group but a heterogeneous group comprising a number of immigrant tribal groups from Chotonagpur and adjoining area who are internally highly differentiated with their distinct socio-cultural traits, religion, customs and languages. Yet they have some common traits due to their same place of origin and same type of traditional occupation. Their customs, beliefs, rituals have some similar traits though each tribe name them separately. Due to their daily close and face to face interaction some cultural assimilation take place among them, each group has to evolve a compromise formula and an attitude of tolerance to others. The most common thing the tribal groups have the illiteracy, ignorance and dire poverty. They are socially, economically as well as culturally backward.

Settlement Pattern

Almost the entire labourforce of plantation is resident labourers. They live at labour 'Bastee' in labourlines scattered all around the garden. Previously the housing was done by the labourers themselves under the vigilance of the Sardar and these were the 'kaccha' huts. The materials were supplied by the management. But the Plantation Labour Act of 1951 lays down the provision of pukka structured quarter of the labourers with proper sanitation system and provision of drinking water. The labourers are not

able to get all these facilities but some pukka quarters are built. Usually the tribes of same category cluster together surrounded by their same status group. By this their community life maintained alongwith separate tribal identity. In the present days the rule of single tribal cluster is not maintained so rigidly as was in past. The habitants of a bastee bond each other in kinship terms.

Language

Originally the tribals from Chotonagpur has their respective languages like 'Kurkh', Mundari of Dravidian language group. But in plantation living together for a long time these groups has undergone a process of acculturation affecting their culture, society even language. The effect of linguistic intercourse is unique, though superficial because no single language could emerge as dominant language. Rather a link language which is a mixture of Hindi, Bengali and Assamese had been made current. This link language known as 'Sandri' is at present the means for verbal communication. The major vocabulary of this language is either Assameese or Bengali with a considerable amount of Hindi. The choice of major vocabulary depends on the regular contact and use of neighbouring Indo-Aryan language. The primary unit consists of Assameese, Bengali and Hindi words with secondary units comprising the language of Eastern Bihar. The original grammar of the language is seen to be lost totally. The interaction of various tribal groups and contact with highly developed speech community might be the main reason for the growth of Sandri language in the garden. It is already in the form of pidgin and functions as lingua franca among the labours of the garden. (Benerjee 1998).

Social Structure and Social Stratification

The social structure of the adibasi labourers group is very complex. Internally these Modesias are further subdivided into various sub-groups. Religion is one of the criteria of such subdivision. On this basis the tribals are divided into 'Saosar' (follower of tribal religion) and non tribals mainly Christian. Integration of this two groups are very easy. Among them there is no sense of inferiority or superiority complex. But subdivisions into various status group depending on same place of origin and same traditional occupation creates some complexities. The different ethnic groups arrange themselves in a hierarchical rank depending on this criteria keeping the traditional agriculturists at the top and artisans at the bottom. On this basis the traditional agriculturist tribes like Oraon, Munda Kheria form a common status group superior to

that of the artisan tribes like Turi, Baraik, Lohar etc.. Their commensal relation follows this hierarchy. The tribals of higher status group do not live with the lower one and not willingly come to form any affinal relation. The women are more conservative in this respect. This hierarchy and this commensal relation was followed very strictly in the earlier days but the rigidity slacken in the present days to some extent but in case of community participation these rules are followed strictly but no rule of pollution is followed in case of taking rice beer (harria).

Family-Authority and Kinship

Mainly pairing family, nuclear family is predominant in the plantation society along with very few joint families. The tea industry absorbs both male and female members as its labour. The basic unit of recruitment of the planters is the family. They encourage the family based immigration to get cheap and settled labourers. Several job facilities like small family quarter, ration, firewood are given according to the household except according to the heads of family members. Additional labourers are also taken from household basis. All these encourage the nuclearisation of family in plantation. The functional role of family changed in plantation economy as the self supporting tribal peasants turned to wage earner. Thus the family changed from the unit of production to the unit of consumption. Traditionally joint family was essential for joint and organised effort for agriculture and to support the family economy. In the present situation in plantation joint living deprives the labourers of some of the due benefits from the garden authority. Thus joint family except under some special circumstances is disfavoured.

With the break down of joint family in plantation society the patriarchal authority system has been diminished. Here both men and women are the wage earner. The authority came into the hands of the earning male member though: he exercises his dominance comparatively less on his working wife, who too earns the bread for the family.

Kinship ties are slackening in plantation society and kinship obligations are comparatively less than the order days. There is a striking decrease in the frequency of their visit to their natal places now a days. Local marriage which is highly preferable in this society, that develops a new kind of kin groups within plantation and ⁱⁿ the neighbouring villages. A close relationship with a new set of neighbouring kins men arises who help each other in

problems. This close kinship inter dependence of the plantation society differs from that of the other industrial society.

Marriage

Marriage among the tribals of plantation is more a social contact based on individual choice rather than a sacrament. Adibasi boy and girl can marry according to their own will without prior consent of their parents. Such union easily breaks down as their own will. Negotiation marriage (Sadi) is the general rule fixed up generally by the parents of the couple concerned. Here bride price is prevalent. After the fixation bride price a premarriage celebration takes place in the girl's house followed by feast, drink and dance. There is no fixed age at marriage. Endogamous marriage is a rule though inter tribal marriage also takes place. But marriage within the same status group is desirable. There is no problem in the marriage between Christian and Saosar. Marriage is strictly monogamous. Polygamy is also practiced though socially criticised. Divorce and remarriage of both men and women is also common. Another common feature of tribal plantation society is consensual union (Rajikhusi) in which couple live together without marriage and have children, 'Ghardamad' is another peculiar feature of plantation ^{society} when the boy stays in the girl's family for some period after marriage and work for this family if he fails to give the fixed bride price. 'Ghardamad' concept has changed today from that of the previous time. Now a man having plenty of land or property but has no son can keep his 'Damad' (son in law) at home out of agreement settled at the time of marriage. The plantation community try to confine their marriage within their same occupation group. At present marriage in the same garden is common as the job opportunity is diminishing. If the girl of other garden come to her husband's place she has to give up her job. Now in the surplus labour condition there is very little chance to get a job for her in the new garden. Marriage alliances in their natal village is now not preferred mainly due to the communication problem.

In plantation society plantation work become essential and normal component of married women's daily existence. Their husband as well as in laws have a positive attitude towards their work.

Social Control

Law and order in garden is maintained by the Panchayat, not the statutory one but the un official garden panchayat which is generally a

temporary body form when problem arises. This Panchayat is of two kinds- one is the tribal panchayat deals the problems exclusive to the respective tribe like inter tribal dispute, custody of children of a separated couple etc. The garden panchayet is a multi ethnic panchayet body solve the problem of the garden like theft, rodism etc.

Employment

The adibasi people in plantation generally work as labourers in garden and factory. By upward mobility they come only upto the chaprasi level. In the slack seasons the temporary labourers work as share cropper in agricultural field in an out the plantation. The economic condition of the permanent labourers are stable. Beside this these people get engage in rickshwa pulling, petty business, and also get some return from live stock and poultry.

Social Interaction

The plantation society of North Bengal is a plural society where several ethnic groups with their diverse place of origin and linguistic and racial differences live side by side and communicate to each other during their daily and face to face interaction being in same economic activity. Each group has to evolve a compromise formula and degree of tolerance in their due course of interaction. Here several social processes are in operation. Some groups lose their identity through the process of amalgamation. Additional groups are created out of ethnic differentiation. Some groups lose their identity while some, specially the numerically dominated ones, able to retain their traditional identity, to some extent. But no group is so dominant to keep their identity intact. Here the tribals have to keep three levels of interaction. Besides the interaction within their own tribal group, with the different tribal labour groups, they have to interact with the other non tribal groups of lower caste Nepali, Bihari and Bengali as well as the Bengali, Bihari and Nepali Babu groups. The Bengalees are considered superior to the all the groups whom the tribals try to immitate almost in all respects. The Nepalis being ^{rat} greater are looked down upon.

Political consciousness

Tea plantations are generally located in the isolated part of rural areas of hills and foot hills of North Bengal. Besides, as a part of colonial economy the planters kept the labours out of the contract from outside. These people

are very little conscious of their actual position and the happening outside of their 'Universe'.

The surplus labourers of this region as share cropper (Adihar) got involved in the Tebhaga Movement of 1940's, Land Garb Movement of 1950's and Naxalbari Movement of 1960's. But these failed to keep any longlasting effect on them. At present Trade Unionism and Co-operative system entered among them. But they are much concerned to increase their bonus, wage and issues strike for these rather than long lasting improvement.

Religion

The adibasi plantation labourers are commonly the follower of traditional tribal religion, animism. They call themselves 'Saosar' They are mostly divided into different clans with their respective totem which is also taboo to them. At present in the plantation society converted Christian tribes men are also there. Some also claim themselves to be Hindu as they do not mean this term in its orthodox sense. Among the Christian and Saosar there exists easy integration and very little differences in their life style except the Christians attend church and follow a somewhat different rule of marriage. Actually the Saosars too are not the follower of their traditional religious life. They have come from their homeland long past and exposed to the tea garden culture. The religion they are practising to day is a mixed religion with some of its original traits blended to the new ones which they adopt in tea garden from their neighbouring ethnic groups..

Status of Women

These tribal women are generally enjoy much freedom than the Hindu caste women. They are exposed to very few restrictions. There is no prohibition of their smoking and drinking. In these society men usually exercise less authority over women. The inclusion of women as wage earner and their crucial economic contribution helps to raise their status, personal power and authority in the family. Besides, the role as bread earner they have to bear the burden of household and child rearing. Here they have to play the role as a woman worker, wife and mother at a time. They have to perform the role of wage earner at their working hours and as housewife in the time when the males enjoy leisure. In plantation society doing the domestic work and looking after the children do not affect the dignity of the husband. Here in this society husbands take the opinion of their wives but naturally it is not much

valued except regarding the matter of day to day expenditure domestic action etc. The wives usually do not object to their drinking which is their traditional habit but quarrel occur regarding excessive drinking and spending a large part of the income on it. It is found that women are the primary bread earner of the plantation family.

The life of the immigrant tribal labourers have changed to a great extent as they came to plantation system of North Bengal. The innocent hard working tribals with traditional peasant or artisan background turned to industrial wage earner and came to the fold of industrial bureaucratic organisation of plantation with agro based productive system. The village based tribals have to live into labour settlement allotted by the management. The new working and living environment affect their traditional life to a great extent. Nuclearization of family, reduction of kinship obligations increase in inter ethnic marriage, change in the religious rites and rituals are the result of this. These changes due to the immigration and adoption of new working and living condition and so on have a great sociological importance.

OBSERVATION

As the tea industry in North Bengal flourished since 1860's onward a huge labour force was needed to carry out the operation of this labour intensive industry at its different levels. The then scanty and disperse population of North Bengal failed to meet the demand of enormous supply of cheap labour. As a result and also as a part of colonial rule semi aboriginal people were imported from outside the state to serve the industry. These people were from different tribal groups viz. Oraon, Munda, Santal, Bhumij, Kheria, Lohar, Asur, Turi, Barik etc. of Chotonagpur plateau of Bihar and its adjoining region of Madhyapradesh and Orissa. Traditionally these people were of agricultural or artisan background. They came in the fold of the strict three tyre bureaucratic structure of tea industry.

Initially the immigrant labourers were recruited by 'Arakati' or 'Sardari' system though the agents who draw them from their natal place by advance paying. With the expansion of tea industry in North Bengal by 1959 the recruitment from outside the state were stopped by act. By this time the planters could recruited labourers directly from the previous ones who immigrated with family and settled down in and around the plantation creating

a surplus condition. In plantation the daily wage labourers perform all types of manual works in field and factory. Depending on sex generally light work is given to women ^{and} children. In West Bengal they have to work in between 37 to 47 hours in a week. The tea garden labourers are given wage (Hazira) according to the task (Thika) given to them for a time period. In 1994-95 the daily wage of the adult workers were Rs. 21.80 in the big gardens (500 hec) of Doars and Rs. 17.87 (500hec) Terai and hills of Darjeeling while the children gets Rs. 11.02. Besides wage they enjoy some other job facilities like free quarter, fire wood, ration, medical facility education facility for the children etc.

The immigrant tribal labourer groups externally form a more or less homogeneous group termed by the local folk as 'Modesia' (i.e. native people) by which the adibasi people initially referred to their tribes men before the local folk who started calling the whole group by this name. Internally the Modesias are highly differentiated with their distinct socio-cultural traits, language, religion and customs. They may have some similarities due to their same place of origin and same traditional occupation yet the great similarity they have is the illiteracy, ignorance and dire poverty which make them backward socially and culturally in every aspects of their life.

The structure of the multi-ethnic plantation society is very complex and unique where different ethnic groups have daily, friendly and face to face interaction being engaged in same economic activity. Here several social processes are in operation, several groups and subgroups are formed through the process of assimilation, amalgamation, as well, based on religion, traditional occupation, place of origin and so on. The different ethnic groups arrange themselves in caste like hierarchy on this basis and their communal relation follow this hierarchy, though not so rigidly in today except in community participation.

In plantation the adibasi labourers live in 'Bastee' i.e. the labour settlements allotted by the management, communicate in 'Sandri' i.e. broken Hindi mixed with Bengali and mostly are 'Saosar', animist, by religion. Their family get nuclearised with the authority resting upon the earning male member of the working couple. Their kinship obligation in homeland get staking and new relationship grew up within plantation with increasing local as well inter ethnic marriage. Marriage, commonly endogamous, appears more a social contact, based on individual choice than social sacrament.

Law and order of this society rests upon the unofficial garden panchayat. Large scale women participation in plantation as wage labourer raise their status in society. Besides plantation work these people also engage in agricultural activities as share cropper in and outside plantation and also in petty business. These people living in the remote gardens of North Bengal are very much unaware of the political scene of the country. At present trade unionism entered among them but these unions are much concern about the issues like increase of wage, bonus etc.

Immigration, adoption to new socio-cultural setting, occupation mobility from traditional agriculture to industrial bureaucratic organisation of plantation changes almost all the aspects of life of the Modesia labourers which is of a great sociological importance.

Research Setting — The Gardens and The Labourers

In this chapter discussion is made on the research setting i.e. the two tea gardens namely Matigara Tea Estate and Soongachi Tea Estate, studied in Terai and Doars respectively the plantation system and its people. The two gardens represent a typical plantation of the Terai and Doars region of North Bengal. The Matigara Tea Estate of Terai being the smaller one studied thoroughly while in the Soongachi Tea Estate of Doars, the bigger one, observation is made mainly from its tribal sudded parts. Under the following paragraphs the two gardens, their plantation system and their labourers are discussed one by one. Discussion is made on the primary data collected through census and interview schedules.

Garden No. 1

Matigara Tea Estate

Matigara Tea Estate of Terai Darjeeing is one of the plantation studied. This tea estate was established in 1932 in Darjeeling district at Matigara block by the side of No. 31 National Highway on which buses ply frequently. The nearest town ships are Siliguri and Bagdogra each at about 8 kms away in the east and west respectively. Being at the fringe of the urban centres adibasi labourers of the plantation have been considerably influenced by the urban way of life.

The owner of the plantation is Hurdeo Das Co. (P) Ltd. It covers an area of 124.46 hectares under tea. Factory is on 0.35 hectare while quarters and roads cover 9.53 hectares and 5.08 hectares respectively. The estate



Matigara Tea Estate

produces CTC type of tea. The yearly production is at about 140,000 kgs while monthly production is roughly 12439 kgs. The estate is in two blocks

namely Eastern and Western Block respectively. In between these two blocks river Balason passes. The factory and the main office health centre, quarters of Deputy Manager and Clerks are at the Eastern Block with four labour lines while the other four lines and the Manager's quarter are at the Western Block.

At the time of investigation, in 1998 March-April, there are 228 permanent labourers (official record 214) of which 47.8 percent are male and 52.2 percent are female. Beside there are 83 male and 84 female temporary labourers. There are 50 child and adult temporary labourers, both male and female, getting daily wage. Only the permanent labourers are provided with quarter (officially the number is 163) most of which are pacca and twin quarters. 40 percent of the pacca quarters have electricity in eight residential lines. 20 (officially 27) wells are distributed in these lines for providing drinking water, often bathrooms are attached to it. The garden has no primary school nor any hospital but only a health centre. There is a recreational centre established in 1997 with some indoor games like ludo, carram etc. The total number of households in the plantation is 204 of which 3 are of the three managers and eight are of the clerks. Of the rest 193 households are occupied by the labourers and substaffs of different adibasi and Nepali and Bihari caste groups. 93.78 percent of the total labour household are of Adibasi group while the rest 6.27 percent comprise the nontribals. The CITU trade union has prime hold in the garden.

Population

As the study is on the plantation labour society and their children analysis of population structure is made of the labourers and the substaff categories, who are in most of the cases promoted from the labourers. The population of the three managerial households and the clerical staffs are not analysed here.

The labour population of the plantation consists of multi ethnic communities (Table 5.1A). The labourers belong to the various adibasi communities of Bihar, Madhyapradesh and Orissa alongwith of few Nepali and Bihar Caste groups. Of the total labourer and sub staff population there is one Rajbansi women (casual labourer) from Alipurduar married to a Naik man. Among the total labourers (950), 92.94 percent (883 persons) are from different adibasi groups while 7.05 percent (67 person) are from the non tribals. Of the tribal households of 181 there are 19(10.49percent) households

TABLE 5.1A. : Age and Sexwise Distribution of Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Sub-staff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate

Sl. No	Ethnic Groups	House hold No.	0-6		7-14		15-18		19-50		Above 50 Yrs		Total	Percentage
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
A. Adibasi														
1.	Oraon	19	9	12	9	5	3	4	29	29	7	1	108	12.23
2.	Munda	37	16	19	17	16	6	6	36	41	4	5	166	18.79
3.	Kheria	5	3	2	2	1	-	-	4	6	2	2	22	2.49
4.	Kisan	3	1	1	1	2	-	-	3	3	2	-	13	1.47
5.	Baraik	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	4	-	-	4	9.45
6.	Malpahari	3	1	4	2	-	1	-	4	5	1	-	18	2.49
7.	Mohali	26	15	10	18	16	10	2	29	24	4	3	131	14.83
8.	Bhokta	6	-	1	6	8	3	-	6	11	1	-	37	4.19
9.	Korwar	4	-	-	2	1	2	3	6	4	1	-	19	2.15
10.	Lohar	30	7	14	17	10	5	8	33	37	4	3	138	15.62
11.	Turi	3	-	2	1	2	-	-	2	3	2	1	13	1.47
12.	Roidas	2	-	1	2	1	-	-	3	3	-	-	10	1.13
13.	Naik	42	26	23	17	23	8	8	45	47	6	1	204	23.10
14.	Total	181	78	89	96	85	38	31	200	214	35	16	883	100.00
Percentage			8.83	10.07	10.87	9.73	4.30	3.51	22.65	24.23	3.97	7.80	100	
B. Caste Group														
1.	Napali	6	1	3	5	3	3	-	7	9	1	1	33	49.25
2.	Bihari	6	1	-	5	5	3	1	9	5	3	1	33	49.25
3.	Bengali	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1.49
Total		12	2	3	10	8	6	1	16	15	4	2	67	(100)
Percentage			2.98	4.47	14.92	11.94	8.95	1.49	23.88	23.00	5.96	2.98	(100)	
Adibasi & Caste Group														
A.		181	78	89	96	86	38	31	200	214	35	16	883	92.94
B.		12	2	3	10	8	6	1	16	15	4	2	67	7.04
Total		193	80	92	106	94	44	32	216	229	39	18	950	(100)
Percentage			8.42	9.68	11.15	9.89	4.63	3.36	22.73	24.10	4.10	1.89	(100)	

Source : Field Observation.

of Oraon, 37 (20.44 percent) of Munda, 5 (2.75 percent) of Kheria, 3 (1.65 percent) of Kisan, 1 (0.55 percent) of Baraik, 3 (1.65 percent) of Malphari, 26 (14.36 percent) of Mohali, 6 (3.37 percent) of Bhokta, 4 (2.20 percent) of Korwar, 30 (16.50 percent) of Lohar, 3 (1.65 percent) of Turi, 2 (1.10 percent) of Roidas, and 42 (23.44 percent) of Naik.

Among the non adibasi households of 12 there are 6 (50 percent) each households are of Nepali and Bihari caste groups. The Biharis are mainly substaffs and the cooks of managerial quarters while labourers are there also from Napali caste group.

Of the multi ethnic population of this tea estate the numerically dominant tribal groups are Naik, Munda, Lohar, Mohali and Oraon comprising 23.10 percent (204), 18.79 percent (166), 15.62 percent (138) 14.83 percent (131) and 12.23 percent (108) of the total adibasi population respectively. The population of the various other tribal and non tribal groups are comparatively low of which Bhokta comprises 4.19 percent, Kheria 2.49 percent Korwar 2.15 percent, Malpahari 2.03 percent, Turi and Kisan 1.47 percent each, Roidas 1.13 percent and Baraik 0.45 percent. Of the non tribal population Bihari and Nepali caste groups comprise 49.25 percent each with one Rajbansi woman.

Housing, Sanitation and Drinking Water Facilities

The plantation provides eight residential areas of the labourers known as 'labour lines' where housing facilities are available for the labour families. In the eight labour lines, known as 7 no line, Gudamline, Station line, Pakka line, 9no. line, 10 no. line, 11 no. line and 12 no. line, labour quarters are scattered. There are 163 labour quarters provided to most of the permanent labourers while some of them and the casual labourers also live in self build thatch roofed houses in the labour lines. Almost all the quarters have about one katha land for kitchen garden. The concentration of population



Labour line, Matigara Tea Estate

in the labour lines are not equal. Highest concentration is in the 9 no. line in the Western Block where 54 tribal households are located alongwith the Pakka line and Station line of Eastern Block where concentration of household is 42 and 30 respectively. The 12 no. line (of west) and Gudam line (of east) have also fairly high population 24 and 20 households respectively followed by 10 no. line with 15 households. The number of household in 10 no. line is 5 while in 7 no. line only 2 families reside. (T-5.2).

The brick build Deputy Manager's Bungalow and the factory is situated at the centre of the Eastern block behind which there are the quarters of the clerks (Babus) at the end of Gudamline. The labour quarters start in the Gudamline are segregated by a that thatchwall from the Babu quarters. Another Banglow is situated at the extreme northern part of Western Block just beside the national highway housed by the Manager and the Assistant Manager. Behind this there is the recreation club of the labourers established in 1997 housed in a one storied pacca building.

Table 5.2 Distribution of Adbasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Residence in the different Lines : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl.	Ethnic Group	I 9no. line	II 10no. line	III 11no. line	IV 12no. line	V 7no. line	VI Gudam line	VII Stn. line	VIII Pacca line	Total
1.	Oraon	1	1	-	5	1	2	2	7	19
2.	Munda	12	-	-	3	-	4	2	16	37
3.	Kheria	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5
4.	Baraik	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
5.	Mohali	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1
6.	Malpahari	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	3
7.	Mohali	15	1	-	8	-	-	-	2	26
8.	Bhokta	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	4
9.	Korwar	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	4
10.	Lohar	-	-	-	1	-	1	21	7	30
11.	Turi	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	3
12.	Roidas	-	11	2	-	1	3	3	-	42
13.	Naik	22	11	2	-	1	3	3	1	42
14.	Nepali	-	1	1	-	-	3	1	-	6
15.	Bihari	-	-	-	4	-	2	-	-	6
	Total	54	16	5	24	2	20	30	42	193
	Percentage	27.97	8.29	2.59	12.43	1.03	10.63	15.54	21.76	(100.00)

Source : Field Observation.

Just like the other industrial communities the population of the plantation is heterogeneous who live interspersed in the labour lines. No residential

segregation is seen according to tribal and caste communities in the population. Only the Bihari caste groups are concentrated in a part of the 12 no. line (4qrs) behind Manager's Banglow and 2 in Gudam line behind the factory near Babu quarters. No. such concentration is seen among the Nepalties. Such multi ethnic residential population is non traditional. Naiks are mainly concentrated in no. 9 and 10 lines; Oraons are in no.12 line and Pacca line, Mundas are in no.9 and Pacca line, Mohalis are in 9 and 12 no. line Lohars are in Station line and Pacca line. The other ethnic groups are scattered all along the eight lines while 5 Kheria households are seen in Pacca line only.

The garden authority fails to provide proper sanitation facility for all the labourers. There are 20 wells scattered along the eight lines of which 5 are in the highly populated no.9 line three each in Pacca line Gudam line and Station line, 2 each in no.12 and no. 11 line and 1 each in no.10 and no.7 line. These are the sources of drinking water as well as the sources of water for bathing and washing cloths. On the off day of the week, which is Tuesday here, people often go to the near by river Balason for washing cloth. Some public urinals and latrines are also seen in some lines while it is informed that the authority has started to build latrine with the labour quarters.

Household

In plantation it is a bit difficult to identify the types of the families. Here it is seen that some individuals who live in a family in certain cases are unrelated members. Without going into the detail complexities here only the distribution of the labour household in two predominant family types viz. Nuclear and Joint, is discussed. The Nuclear families comprise parents and unmarried children. Joint families include married couples, unmarried and married children alongwith their relatives. The average size of the labour household is of 5 members and the size of the families varies from 1 to 10 members. On and average there are 4.80 members as per family; in case of tribal family it is 4.87 while in case of caste group it rises up to 5.58.

In the plantation there are 193 labour households of which 62.69 percent are nuclear type 10.63 percent are joint type and the rest are unclassified. Of the total caste group household 62.69 percent are nuclear type. Of the total unclassified families two tribal families are single and most of the others are the residue of joint family. (T.5.3A).

It is revealed from the table that majority of the households are of nuclear type, which is very common in any industrial society. Plantation system also influences the labourers to live in nuclear families because the houses that are provided to them are suitable for nuclear family. Besides, there are other facilities like the family ration of food, firewood, adoption of casual labourers etc. encourage the nuclearisation of labour family in plantation.

Table 5.3A: Household Distribution among the Adibasi and Non-Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl	Ethnic Group	Total no.of household	Percentage	Types of households		
				Nuclear	Joint	Unclassified
A. Adibasi						
1.	Oraon	19	10.49	10	5	4
2.	Munda	37	20.44	25	3	9
3.	Kheria	5	2.76	2	-	3
4.	Kisan	3	1.65	2	-	1
5.	Baraik	1	0.55	1	-	-
6.	Malpahari	3	1.65	1	1	1
7.	Mohali	26	14.36	18	1	7
8.	Bhokta	6	3.36	5	1	-
9.	Korwar	4	2.20	3	-	1
10.	Lohar	30	16.57	18	2	10
11.	Turi	3	6.65	2	-	1
12.	Roidas	2	1.10	1	1	-
13.	Naik	42	23.20	28	4	10
A.	Total	181	100.00	116	18	47
	Percentage		100.00	68.50	9.95	21.55
B. Caste Group						
1.	Nepali	6	50.00	2	1	3
2.	Bihari	6	50.00	3	1	2
B.	Total	12	100.00	5	2	5
	Percentage		(100.00)	41.66	16.66	41.66
Adibasi & Caste Group						
	A.	181	92.78	116	18	47
	B.	12	6.21	5	2	5
	Total	193	100.00	121	20	52
	Percentage		(100.00)	62.69	10.36	26.94

Source : Field Observation.

Mother Tongue

In the multi ethnic society of plantation different tribal and non tribal ethnic groups work together and live side by side within the garden in labour lines. During their daily course of day to day activities they have to interact. Here most of members of the different tribal groups are the members of the

second or third generation of the migrated tribals who are totally cut out of their natal place as well as their native culture. Even they can not speak in their mother tongue. Here they speak in a common language of tribal dialect mixed with broken Hindi, locally termed as 'Sandri'. Not a single Oraon or Munda here can speak in their original mother tongue 'Kurkh' or 'Mundari'. Only the elderly persons have ever heard the name of their respective mother tongue. Nepali and Bihar caste people speak in Napali and Hindi respectively though 'Sandri' is the common language.

Table 5.4A : Mother Tongue of the Ethnic Groups (Labour and Substaff): Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl.	Ethnic Group	Mother tongue				Total
		Sandri	Nepali	Hindi	Bengali	
1.	Adibasi	883	-	-	-	883
2.	Nepali	-	33	-	-	33
3.	Bihari	-	-	33	-	33
4.	Bengali	-	-	-	1	1
	Total	883	33	33	1	950
	Percentage	92.94	3.47	3.47	0.10	(100.00)

Source : Field Observation.

Migration

Tea plantation is always associated with a resident labourforce. In the initial stage due to acute labour crisis labourers were imported from the adibasi people of the neighbouring states. But later on the industry got strong hold in this region, new labourers were adopted to the garden from among the family members of the immigrant labourers settled in and around the plantation. Most of the labourers of this tea estate are the descendents of those previously settled labourers.

In Matigara tea estate 86.63 percent of the adibasi are Matigara born, 46.33 percent of which are child and adolescent group. 13.36 percent are migrated population of which 1.57 percent came from other state, about 6 percent each from the other tea gardens and other bastee. Of the migrated tribal population 77.96 percent are female who have migrated due to marriage. Most of the migrated male population are the 'Ghardamad' who latterly got job in the garden. The large portion of the migrated population came from the other states are elderly people who came here long past in search of work from Bihar, Madhya pradesh and Nepal.

Of the caste people 65 percent^{are} Matigara born 81.81 percent Nepalis are Matigara born. The rest 18.19 percent is the only immigrants. Of the Biharis 45.45 percent are adolescent and children who are Matigara born except the two male all nine adult population came out of the state i.e. from Bihar. (T.5.5).

Table 5.5.: Migration among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Sub staff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl. Ethnic	Matigara Tea Estate Born				Migrated Population				Other Basti		Migrated	
	M	F	C/A	Total	Other State		Other TG		M	F	Total Popu.	Total Popu.
1.Oraon	35	14	42	91	-	5	-	6	1	10	17	108
2. Munda	34	30	80	144	-	-	1	9	5	2	22	166
3. Kheria	6	4	8	18	-	-	-	2	-	2	4	166
4. Kisan	2	3	5	10	2	-	-	-	1	-	3	13
5. Baraik	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	4
6.Malbahari	4	5	8	11	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	18
7. Mohali	29	14	71	114	2	2	-	6	2	5	17	131
8. Bhokta	8	8	18	34	-	-	-	2	-	1	3	31
9. Korwar	7	3	8	18	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	19
10.Lohar	34	27	61	122	-	-	2	7	1	6	16	138
11.Turi	2	2	5	9	-	-	1	2	1	-	4	13
12. Rohidas	3	2	4	9	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	10
13. Naik	45	26	105	176	1	2	1	10	4	10	28	204
Total	209	138	418	765	5	9	5	47	16	36	118	883
Percent	23.66	15.62	47.33	86.63	0.56	1.01	0.59	5.32	2.03	4.07	13.36	100
B. Caste Group												
1. Nepali	6	6	15	27	1	2	-	-	1	2	6	33
2. Bihari	2	-	15	17	10	6	-	-	-	-	16	33
3.Bengal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Total	11.94	9.95	44.77	65.67	16.41	11.94	-	-	1.49	4.47	34.32	100.00
Adibasi & Caste Group												
A.	209	138	418	965	5	9	5	47	16	36	118	883
B.	8	6	30	44	11	8	-	-	1	3	23	67
Total	217	144	448	809	16	17	5	47	17	39	141	950
Percentage	22.84	15.15	47.15	85.15	1.77	1.78	0.52	4.94	1.78	4.10	14.2	100.00

Source : Field Observation.

TABLE 5.6A : Marrital Status of the Adibasi and Non-Adibasi (Labour and Sub-staff) Population : Matigara Tea Esatate

Sl.	Ethnic Groups	A d u l t P o p u l a t i o n										Total population
		Married		Widow/ Widower		Divorced seperated		Adult un-married		Total Adult population	Child /Adolecent unmarried population	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
1.	Oraon	28	28	4	2	-	-	4	-	66	42	108
2.	Munda	34	35	4	8	-	-	2	3	86	80	1660
3.	Kheria	4	4	28	4	-	-	-	-	14	8	22
4.	Kisan	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	8	5	13
5.	Baraik	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3	4
6.	Malpahari	4	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	10	8	18
7.	MOhali	27	25	4	2	-	-	2	-	60	71	131
8.	Bhokta	7	8	1	1	-	-	-	2	19	18	37
9.	Korwar	4	4	-	-	-	-	3	-	11	8	5
10.	Lohar	32	32	5	3	-	-	-	5	77	61	138
11.	Turi	3	3	1	-	-	-	-	1	8	5	13
12.	Rohidas	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	10
13.	Naik	41	43	4	2	1	1	5	2	99	105	204
A.	Total	190	193	28	22	1	2	16	13	465	418	889
	Percentage	21.51	21.52	3.17	2.49	0.11	0.22	1.81	1.80	52.66	47.33	100.00
B.	Caste Group											
1.	Nepali	5	5	-	2	-	-	2	3	18	15	33
2.	Bihari	6	6	2	-	-	-	4	-	18	15	33
3.	Bengali	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
B.	Total	12	12	2	2	-	-	6	3	37	30	67
	Percentage	17.90	17.90	2.90	-	-	-	8.95	3.00	55.22	44.77	100.00
	Adibasi & Caste Group											
A		190	193	28	22	1	2	16	13	465	418	883
B		12	12	2	2	-	-	6	3	37	30	67
	Total	202	206	30	24	1	2	22	16	502	448	950
	Percentage	21.26	21.68	3.15	2.51	0.10	0.20	2.00	1.68	52.84	47.15	100.00

Source : Field Observation.

Marriage

Marriage has a vital role in our life as well as in the life of ignorant poor tribal people of plantation. In this garden out of the tribal adult population of 465, 384 persons are married, 29 are unmarried, 49 persons are widow and widower and two women and one man are separated the rest 418 persons are adolescents and children who are unmarried. Of the caste group 24 adult persons out of 37 adult are married, 2 each are widow and widower 9 person are unmarried. The rest 30 persons are of child and adolescent group are unmarried. (T. 5.6A).

Marriage to be strictly monogamous though two cases of polygamy is observed among the two Naik families where the wives live together with their husbands in the same family openly. There may be some secret case of polygamy but except these two case there is no family where the 'Satins' live together. There may be the first wife or husband had gone away alone or with others to other place.

Inter tribal marriage in this plantation society is common. Being close to the urban centre it is increasing in these days. Here there are 16 cases of inter tribal marriage and three cases of marriage between the tribals and the Nepali caste group and Rajbansi woman. Biharis are a bit conservative in this respect. (T. 5.6B).

Most of the senior people opines that negotiation marriage is preferable after the age of 18 years though they admit that the younger people very often fled away at about the age of 15-16 years ignoring the ethnic identity of their beloved. Bride price and the system of Ghar Damad are prevalent in this garden.

Table 5.6B : List of Inter Tribal and Intra Tribal Marriage occurred (Among Labour and Substaff) : Matigra Tea Estate.

	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	Naik	Oraon	7. Mohali	Oraon	13. Munda	Bhokta
2.	Naik	Munda	8. Lohar	Munda	14. Munda	Kheria
3.	Naik	Mohali	9. Lohar	Oraon	15. Naik	Lohar
4.	Kisan	Naik	10. Lohar	Naik	16. Mohali	Naik
5.	Munda	Naik	11. Lohar	Mohali	17. Nepali	Naik
6.	Mohali	Naik	12. Oraon	Lohar	18. Nepali	Malpahari
					19. Naik	Rajbansi

Source : Field Observation.

Social Control

In this garden problem of law and order and social control among the labourers is managed by Adibasi Panchayet headed by the selected elders of different adibasi groups. The matters settled by this institution are witchcraft, sorcery, inter ethnic marriage and interethnic dispute, adultery, theft etc. The local trade union leaders also play a main role in the functioning of adibasi panchayet.

Literacy

The picture of education rather literacy is very miserable in this garden. 92.94 percent of the plantation labourers are of adibasi origin. Traditionally they have no culture of education. Besides both the adivasi and caste group labourers are too poor to afford the education for their child. The garden has no school, even the primary one. The poor labourers prefer their children to stay at home to look after their small kids and the household; and as soon as they grown up they also get into the plantation work as child labour to help their parents to earn bread.

Here in the plantation generally three generation of labourers are seen. The first generation at the age group of above 50 years is totally illiterate. Of the age group 19-50 years the rate of literacy is very low among the male and negligible among the female (specially among the adibasis). Education is a fancy of the third generation which includes the child and adolescent population of the garden.

Of the total labour population of the garden only 24.84 percent are literate, a large portion of which are the adolescent and the child population 75.15 percent are illiterate. Of the total adibasi population of 883 persons 21.29 percent i.e. 188 persons are literate and 78.70 percent i.e. 695 persons are illiterate. Of the illiterate persons 167 children are below the age group of 6. Of the literate persons 76.42 percent are adolescent^{and} children i.e. 145 persons out of 188 persons of this 96 and 22 persons are at primary and secondary levels respectively. All of them continuing their education. The rest 27 includes only literates and drop outs. Of the illiterates a large portion is occupied by the women. Of the total adivasi women population (230) 97.82 percent (225) are illiterate. 83.82 percent of the total adivasi male population are illiterate. Of the caste population 71.64 percent are literate and 28.35 percent are illiterate.

Table 5.7A: Literacy among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl. Ethnic Group	Illiterate population						Literate population					
	Total	M	F	Adl/	Total	Percentage	M	F	Adl/Child	Total	Percentage	
A. Adibasi												
1. Oraon	106	30	30	30	90	12.94	6	-	12	18	9.57	
2. Munda	166	35	46	55	136	19.56	5	-	25	30	15.95	
3. Kheria	22	5	8	8	21	3.02	1	-	-	1	0.53	
4. Kisan	13	4	3	4	11	1.02	1	-	1	2	1.06	
5. Baraik	4	-	1	1	2	0.28	-	-	2	2	1.06	
6. Malpahari	18	5	5	8	18	0.58	-	-	-	-	-	
7. Mohali	131	29	27	43	99	14.24	4	-	28	32	17.02	
8. Bhokta	37	7	9	7	23	3.30	1	2	11	14	7.44	
9. Korwar	19	4	4	4	12	1.72	3	-	4	7	3.72	
10. Lohar	138	30	39	29	98	14.10	7	1	32	40	21.27	
11. Turi	13	4	4	5	13	1.87	-	-	-	-	-	
12. Rohidas	10	3	3	4	10	1.43	-	-	-	-	-	
13. Naik	204	41	46	75	62	23.30	10	2	30	42	22.34	
A.Total	883	197	225	273	695	100.00	38	5	145	188	(100.00)	
Percentage	100	22.31	25.48	30.91	78.70		4.30	0.56	16.42	21.29		
B. CastGr.												
1. Nepali	33	2	5	3	10	58.82	6	5	12	23	46.00	
2. Bihari	33	2	3	3	8	35.29	10	3	12	25	54.00	
3. Bengali	1	0	1	-	1	5.88	-	-	-	-	-	
B.Total	67	4	9	6	19	100.00	16	8	24	48	100.00	
Percentage	100.00	5.97	13.43	8.95	28.35		23.88	11.00	35.82	71.64		
Adibasi & Cast Group												
A.	883	197	225	273	695	97.61	38	5	145	188	78.99	
B.	67	4	9	6	19	2.38	16	3	24	48	21.00	
Total	950	201	234	279	714	100.00	54	13	169	236	100.00	
Percentage	100.00	21.15	24.63	28.36	15.15		5.68	1.36	17.78	24.84		

Source : Field Observation.

Economic Participation

The adibasis work in the garden only as labourers and often as substaffs. In the tea garden plantational work is the main source of income of the labourers. Here there are 228 permanent labourers of which 215 are adibasi. Of the adibasi labourers 53.48 percent are women. Among the caste groups Bihari women are mostly house wife while 50 percent of the Nepali women work in plantation. Most of the labourers get salary in weekly basis (174 rupees per week); the monthly rated labourers (1000 rupees per month) are mostly substaffs, cook and maid of managerial cottage. Here there are 81 male and 86 female casual labourers who work in plantation during the peak seasons. During slack season they work as daily rated labour in road repairing works or construction works and also as sand picker and stone

TABLE 5.8 : Occupation of the Different Ethnic Groups : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl. Ethnic Groups	Total popu.	Permanent lab & Sub-staff				Total permanent	Casual Lab & Sub-staff				Retired		Job outside			Jobless		
		Monthly	F	Weekly	F		Weekly	F	Ado/Child	Daily	M	F	M	F	Ado/Child	M	F	Ado/Child
A. Adibasi																		
1. Oraon	108	2	-	15	10	27	10	15	-	6	8	1	1	1	-	-	3	86
2. Munda	166	-	-	22	24	46	12	18	1	7	4	-	2	1	-	-	-	71
3. Kheria	22	-	-	2	5	7	-	1	-	-	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	8
4. Kisan	13	-	-	1	2	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	5
5. Baraik	4	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2
6. Molpahari	18	-	-	2	2	4	3	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	8
7. Mohali	131	1	1	15	14	31	11	10	2	8	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	16
8. Bhokta	37	2	-	2	2	6	1	7	1	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	2	16
9. Korwar	19	-	-	4	4	8	1	-	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
10. Lohar	138	3	-	10	22	35	14	12	1	5	5	3	5	-	-	2	-	55
11. Turi	13	-	-	-	4	4	2	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
12. Roidas	10	-	-	2	2	4	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
13. Naik	204	4	1	13	21	39	23	16	6	6	6	4	5	3	-	-	3	93
A. Total	883	12	2	88	113	215	79	83	11	38	36	16	20	6	1	2	10	367
Percentage	100.00	1.35	0.11	0.96	12.79	24.34	8.94	9.39	1.21	4.30	4.07	1.81	2.26	0.67	0.11	0.22	1.13	41.56
B. Caste Group																		
1. Nepali	33	1	-	3	4	8	1	2	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	3	15
2. Bihari	33	4	-	1	-	5	1	-	-	1	2	-	4	-	-	-	6	14
3. Bengali	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
B. Total	67	5	-	4	4	13	2	3	-	1	3	1	5	-	-	1	9	29
Percentage	100.00	7.46	-	5.97	5.97	19.40	2.98	4.47	-	1.49	4.47	1.49	7.46	-	-	1.49	13.43	43.28
Adibasi & Caste Group																		
A.	883	12	2	88	113	215	79	83	11	38	36	16	20	6	2	-	10	367
B.	67	5	-	4	4	13	2	3	-	1	3	1	5	-	-	1	9	29
Total	959	17	2	92	117	338	81	86	11	39	39	17	25	6	2	1	19	397
Percentage	100.00	1.78	0.21	9.68	12.31	24.00	8.52	9.05	1.15	4.10	4.10	1.78	2.63	0.63	2.1	0.10	2.00	41.93

Source : Field Observation.

breaker at river Balason. Some work as rickshaw puller. All most all the households have kitchen garden attached to their hut. They also raise cattle, pigs, hens which they sell at the time of their dire need. Here there are two small stationary shops within the garden run by two Naiks who also are casual labourers and one shop beside the road run by a Nepali lad which is his full time job. One Oraon woman works as fulltime maid in local house. Here we get child and adolescent labourers mostly among the tribals (50 out of 94) most of whom (97.8 percent) are paid on 15 rupees daily basis. (T.5.8).

The garden has a well organised four tyer bureaucratic structure at the top of which there are the managerial staffs i.e. the Sahibs, at the second tyre the clerk i.e. the Babus and at the third and fourth tyre the sub staff and the labourers. The following table gives the picture of bureaucratic structure of the garden (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9.: Bureaucratic Structure of Work Organisation : Matigara Tea Estate.

A. Grade I.	Managerial Category		
	1. Manager	1	
	2. Deputy Manager	1	
	3. Assistant Manager	1	
	Total	3	
B. Grade II.	Clerical Category		
	1. Field	2	(Bagan Babu.)
	2. Factory	1	(Factory Babu)
	3. Office	3	(Babu)
	4. Dispensary	2	Dawa Babu)
	Total	8	
C. Grade III	Substaff Category		
	(with special reference to their ethenic Group)		
	1. Engin Driver	1	(Bhokta)
	2. Factory Server	2	(Bhokta & Nepali)
	3. Oil men	2	(Lohar & Oraon)
	4. Tea Maker	4	(Oraon)
	5. Boider	1	(Naik)
	6. Chowkider	4	(Lohar 2, Bihari 1 each)
	7. Dawalala	1	(Naik)
	8. Sardar (Factory)	3	(Bhokta 1 Nepali 2)
	9. Dafadar (Field)	7	(Naik & Lohar & each Malpahari & Bihari 1 each 1 Naik woman married to Nepali).
D. Grade IV	Labourer		
	214 permanent (including male & Female) labourers		167 casual labourers.

Source : Field Observation

Political Participation

CITU is the trade union that has strong hold on the labourers of this garden. Almost all the labourers are reported to be the member of this union. But very few of them actually know the name of the union or the name of the party it is backed by. Subscriptions are regularly collected from them for the union. They have to attend the occasional meetings of the union without knowing the agenda. The union here fight for the short term issues like the regular payment of salary, payment of Bonus etc. without having any long term issue.

Religion

The majority of the adibasis of the plantation adhere to their own traditional religion locally known as 'Saosar'. Religious conversion is absent in this garden. One man in Naik was Christian but he had gone away with another woman to some other place. His family claim themselves as 'Saosar' though the name of the children are like the Christian. The Bihari and the Nepali labourers are the followers of Hinduism. The adibasis adopted some traits of Hinduism from their Hindu neighbours like the worship of Tulsi and Siva; They visit the local mandaps during Durga, Kali Puja too. (5.10A).

Table 5.10A: Religion of the Ethnic Groups (Labour and Substaff) : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl.	Ethnic Group	Religion				Total
		Saosar	Hinduism	Christianity	Islam	
1.	Adibasi	883	-	-	-	883
2.	Nepali	-	33	-	-	33
3.	Bihari	-	33	-	-	33
4.	Bengali	-	1	-	-	1
	Total	883	67	-	-	950
	Percentage	92.94	6.94	-	-	(100.00)

Source : Field Observation.

Social Interaction

Interaction is unavoidable among the different tribal and non tribal groups being in same living and working environment in the garden. Every ethnic group has evolve their course of interaction upto a certain level. Here all the tribal groups behave like a same community. There is no such pronounced

social differentiation or the notion purity or pollution. Though all the different tribal groups prefer marriage within their groups still there are 16 cases of inter tribal marriage none of which has to pay any penalty for such marriage. Except the Oraons and Mundas all drink and dine together in social occasions. They solve their dispute togetherly. As far as the caste group is concerned the Biharis try to keep their ethnic identity intact and live in two clusters in 12 no. line and Gudam line near managerial quarters and the clerk quarters. In case of Nepali there is no such segregation. Even the Nepali family of 12 no. Line has to accept a daughter in law from the neighbouring Malpahari family, but they themselves admit that it is a stray case. These people inform that they have a friendly relationship among themselves. Even when dispute occur the tribals support the caste group if they think that they are not the offender. No personal dispute is taken upto community level. But the notion of purity and pollution is very strong among the caste groups and the adibasis. The caste people never take prepared food (pakka khana) from the adibasis. In case of social occasion they attend the occasion but without eating food they take 'Dhaonsa' of non-prepared (Kaccha) food from them. During the 'Gram than puja' i.e. the worship of the old simul tree both the caste people and the adibasis take part togetherly and all take 'prasad' of candy (batasa) and fruit. During the worship of 'Khar' or 'Tista buri' (river Balasan) the adibasis collect 'Viksha' from the caste people too.

Interaction of Plantation labourers with the World outside and their Outlook

Tea plantation are usually situated in remote areas and the labourers are to live within the boundary of the plantation. They have minimum connection with the world outside. But Matigara Tea Estate being situated near the Siliguri town the labourer's interaction with the outside World is greater than that of the labourers of the interior plantations. The society of Matigara Tea Estate has undergone some changes but by and large it has remained traditional. The young boys and girls have changed styles of their dresses. They occasionally visit Siliguri town. The old and middle aged persons mostly remain confined within the tea garden. Their contact with the world outside is limited. They only meet the outside people in the local weekly market i.e. the Haat which takes place here on Tuesday. This market day is also the weekly holiday of this garden as well as the neighbouring gardens too. And the day before is the payment day. Many labourers from the neighbouring

tea gardens assemble in the Haat where they drink, gossip and exchange information with one another. This^{is} also a place for romance for young boys and girls. Many marriages are negotiated in the Haat. Most of the labourers come to the Haat for drinking rice-beer (Haria) and country liquor (Daru). Haat is perhaps the only place of contact with the outside world particularly older generation of labourers. While the young girls and boys are fond of cinemas and frequently visit town for this purpose. The men and women of this garden are not so orthodox as the labourers of the gardens of remote area and do not maintain purity and pollution concept regarding food. They admit that they eat and drink food touched by persons belonging to other status groups and also inter-dine with them in Haat.

Among the adibasi labourers smoking and drinking are very common among both men and women labourers but now a days a tendency among the women is seen to be abstained from drinking and smoking. This may be the influence of their caste neighbours upon them. These people are less conscious of their living condition. Their outlook can be judged from their low level of literacy. They have no idea of the need and importance of education and do not encourage their wards to go to schools. Their knowledge about world outside is very poor. Most of them even do not know the name of the country or their natal place. The garden is the only universe for them. They remain in an under-dog position and have become prisoners to a self-perpetuating system in which it is difficult to come out and improve their condition.

Garden and the Women

In plantation society the women labourers enjoy considerable freedom of action and their status when compared to their caste counter part is higher. But as far as it is compared to men it is very low. The statement should be proved by analysing the situation in the garden studied.

It has been seen in the garden that the adibasi women suffers from fewer restrictions in society than the caste women. They can select their mates and can leave their mates when they like or they can marry again. The system of brideprice prevalent here refers to some kinds of higher status of women in the society. In this society marriage being easily dissoluble the children may remain in the custody of mother or father as may be agreed upon. In the nine cases seen in the garden the children stay with their mother

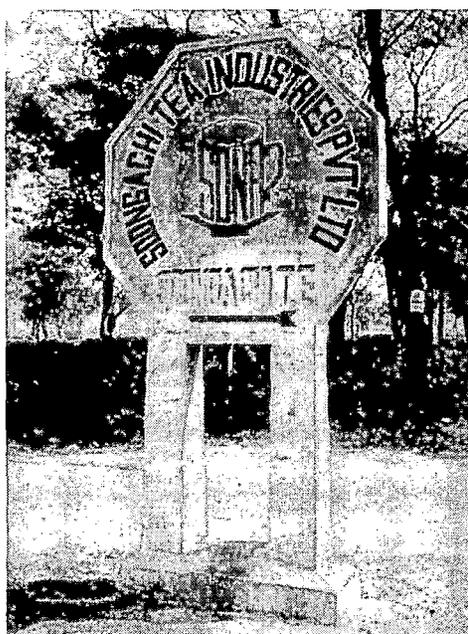
and when the mother remarry the step father accepts the children in the family fold as his own. This has been possible because the woman also contribute her wages to support the family. But still this society is male dominated and women are treated as a commodity. The wife is often referred to as the 'kept' by the husband but a husband is never referred to as a ' kept' by the wife.

The overall occupational status of the woman labourers is lower than that of the men labourers. Although wages of men and women labourers are equal to day, the women received lesser wages a few years ago. Plantation women labourers have no voice in adibasi panchyat. Trade union leadership from the women labourers of plantation has not yet been emerged. The educational attainments of plantation women labourers is very low. Generally the education level of plantation labourers as a whole is very poor. In case of women labourers it is almost nill. This has further helped to perpetuate the lower status of women labourers. Her economic contribution has not helped to raise her status so as to make it equal to men.

Garden No.2

Soongachi Tea Estate

Soongachi Tea Estate is the second tea estate studied. This estate was established in 1879 under Jhemse & Finley Company now owned by M/s.



Soongachi Tea Estate

S.T. Industry Private Ltd. The Garden is situated in Jalpaiguri district under Mal P.S., at about 3 kms away from Malbazar town beside No. 31 National Highway. The garden owns a land of 1052. 10 hectares on the slope and foothills of which 681.37 hectares is under tea. The rest is occupied by quarters, factory godown and roads. The type of tea produced here is CTC with an average turnover of 15 lakhs kgs. yearly.

Total number of resident labour population of the garden is 9052 persons. Permanent labourers are

1513 (Male 876 and Female 586, 33 adolescent male and 18 adolescents female). At the time of the field work there is 188 temporary labourers of which 45 are male and 143 are female taken from the dependents of the permanent labour household during the peak season. The labourer of different ethnic groups live in the 12 lines scattered haphazardly in and around the garden. The lines, are ⁱⁿ two divisions namely Nakhati and Bytagool. Name of the lines are Nicher line, Simul line, Jhorna line, Mal line, Kulli line, 6 No. line, Upper line, Premnagar line. The different ethnic groups namely Oraon, Munda, Nagasia, Sabar, Sanathal, Rajwar, Baraik, Majhi, Dhimol, Sonar, Lohar, Mohali etc. live side by side in residential quarters. The garden management have provided 1173 pacca quarters. 65 percent of which are twin quarter. All the quarters have electricity.

The source of drinking water is well as well as taps. Main source is a natural stream, the water of which is stored in an underground reservoir. Then it is sterilized and supplied through taps. In work-side there are latrins three for the males and one for the females.

The garden has a hospital with 25 beds with one medical officer, one mid-wife, two nurses, two compounders. Here there are three primary schools. previously owned by the garden but at present under the control of D.I. There are also 12 creches to keep the children below 2 years and above. These provide milk to the babies and take care of them in absence of their mother.

The garden has 10 recreation centres with the indoor games like carrom, ludo and cards and outdoor games like football, volley ball, and cricket. Often inter line matches are arranged among the labourers. Here there is also a Labour Welfare Unit with two welfare officers. The prevailing Trade Union is CITU.

The garden has a strong bureaucratic organisation of management. Under a strict chief manager there are four assistant managers and one trainee manager, two each law officers and welfare officers and one medical officer, 75 staffs i.e. clerks and 141 substaffs.

As stated earlier that the garden is a very big one having the household of more than 1100. Yet is hard to make a through study of the total garden. A part of the tribal sudded Bytagool line has been selected for the study having 264 tribal labour households. In this part the representative of almost all the tribal groups are available.

TABLE 5.1B: Age and Sex wise Distribution of Adibasi and Non-Adibasi (Labour and Sub-staff) Population : Soongachi Tea Estate

Sl. Ethnic Groups	Household No	0 - 6		7 - 14		15 - 18		19 - 50		Above 50		Total	Percentage
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
A. Adibasi													
1. Oraon	54	20	25	14	26	6	9	66	72	21	16	275	23.87
2. Munda	36	7	10	16	17	9	8	41	42	14	10	174	15.10
3. Kisan	11	2	2	5	7	1	2	10	13	6	4	52	4.51
4. Santal	26	4	6	9	11	3	1	31	30	7	8	110	9.54
5. Sabar	34	11	18	14	17	5	6	44	42	5	7	169	14.67
6. Bhumij	4	1	1	1	-	-	-	4	3	1	-	11	0.95
7. Sonar	5	-	4	3	4	1	-	7	7	2	2	30	2.60
8. Lohar	23	5	7	8	14	-	3	29	28	3	5	102	8.85
9. Korwar	6	1	-	3	4	2	2	9	8	2	1	32	2.77
10. Mohali	2	7	4	10	7	2	3	13	13	1	1	61	5.29
11. Baraik	7	1	1	3	3	-	-	8	5	2	3	26	2.23
12. Turi	8	1	1	2	3	1	1	10	10	-	-	29	2.26
13. Rajwar	4	1	1	-	1	1	1	4	4	1	1	15	1.30
14. Malar	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2	0.17
15. Porja	11	1	2	3	3	1	1	9	12	4	4	40	3.47
16. Kanjar	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	3	0.26
17. Dhimol	5	3	4	-	-	-	-	8	6	-	-	21	1.82
A. Total	248	65	86	91	118	32	37	295	297	69	62	1152	100.00
Percentage		5.64	7.46	7.89	10.24	2.77	3.21	25.60	25.78	5.98	5.38	100.00	
B. Caste Group													
1. Bihari	13	4	9	4	4	2	2	15	14	4	4	62	52.10
2. Nepali	11	3	1	2	12	4	3	15	14	1	2	57	47.89
Total	24	7	10	6	16	6	5	30	28	5	6	119	100.00
Percengate		5.88	8.40	5.04	13.44	5.04	4.20	25.21	23.52	4.02	5.04	100.00	
C. Adibasi and Caste Group													
A.	248	65	86	91	118	32	37	295	297	69	62	1152	90.63
B.	24	7	10	6	16	6	5	30	28	5	6	119	9.36
Total	272	72	96	97	134	38	42	325	325	74	68	1271	100.00
Percentage		5.66	7.55	7.56	10.54	2.98	3.39	25.56	25.57	5.82	5.35	100.00	

Source : Field Observation.

Population

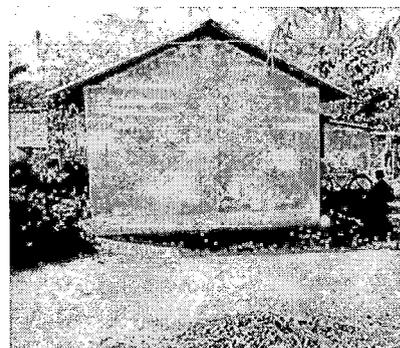
The labour and sub-staff population of this part of the garden is multi ethnic, just as the whole garden. Of the total population (of this part) of 1271 persons 93.63 percent (1152 persons) are from different adibasi groups while the rest 47.89 percent (119 persons) belong to the different caste groups of Bihari and Nepali.

Of the different adibasi groups Oraon is the dominant one with the population of 23.87 percent (275 persons) followed by Munda 15.10 percent (174 persons), Sabar 14.67 percent (169 persons); then come the Santhal 9.54 percent (110 persons), Lohar 8.85 percent (102 persons) and Mohali 5.29 percent (61 persons) and Kisan 4.51 percent (52 persons). The next group comprises Kowar 2.77 percent (32 persons) Sonar 2.60 percent (30 persons) Baraik 2.25 percent (26 persons) Turi 2.26 percent (29 persons) Porja 3.47 percent (40 persons), Rajwar 1.30 percent (15 persons) and Dhimol 1.82 percent (21 persons). The population of other groups like Malar, Kanjar and Bhumij having the population of 0.17 percent, 0.26 percent, 0.95 percent respectively.

Of the total household (of this part) 248 (91.18 percent) are of the different adibasi groups and 24 (8.82 percent) are of the different non adibasi groups. Of the adibasi household the Oraon has 54 households (21.77 percent), Munda 36(14.51 percent) Sabars 34 (13.70 percent), Santhal 25 (10.48 percent), Lohars 23(9.27 percent), Mohali 12 (4.83 percent), Kisan 11 (4.43 percent) Porja 11 (4.43 percent), Turi 8(3.22 percent), Baraik 7(2.82 percent), Korwar 6 (2.41 percent), Dhimol 5 (2.01 percent), Sonar 5(2.01 percent), Bhumij 1(0.40 percent). Of the non tribal households the Biharis have 13 (54.17 percent) and the Nepalis 11 (45.86 percent) household (T.5.1B).

Housing, Sanitation and Drinking Water Facilities

The plantation provides residential quarters to its permanent labourers. In this part of the garden most of the quarters are pacca. 60 percent of these are twin quarter basis, with electric line. In some places labourers have built thatch roofed sheds for keeping their cattles and often temporary kitchens mostly in the joint households where there are a great scarcity of living room.



Labourline Soongachi T.E.

Concentration of population are not equal in all the lines. Though all the lines are multi ethnic still tendency of clusterization of the same ethnic group is seen. This is seen mainly among the Bihari and Nepali caste groups.

The garden authority has failed to provide proper sanitation and drinking water facility. In this area 25 wells are scattered here and there. These are the main source of drinking water with an additional scare supply of tap water. Some public urinals and latrins are also seen in the lines but these are very insufficient. It is informed that beside these there are four latrins in the work place for men and women labourers.

Household

As is seen in the Terai Garden, in this part of the garden of Doars the household has been distributed among the adibasis as well as the caste groups of Biharis and Nepalis. Though the percentage of the non tribal households are less. Of the total household (of this part) 272, 248 i.e. 91.18 percent are of different adibasi groups and the rest is 8.82 percent i.e. 24 are distributed among the Bihari (13) and Nepali (11) caste groups.

As commonly seen in the tea garden the percentage of Nuclear household is high. Among all the groups, both tribals and no tribals here 48.16 percent households are of nuclear type as against the 26.47 percent joint type of household. The residue of joint families and pairing families single families are grouped together in unclassified group (T.5.3B).

Table 5.3B : Household Distribution among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and sub staff) Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.

Sl. No.	Ethnic Group	House Hold		Nuclear	Joint	Unclassified
		Total No	Percentage			
A. Adibasi						
1.	Oraon	54	21.77	28	15	11
2.	Munda	36	14.51	14	10	12
3.	Kisan	11	4.43	5	1	5
4.	Santal	26	10.48	0	7	10
5.	Sabadar	34	13.70	18	9	7
6.	Bhumij	4	1.61	4	-	-
7.	Sonon	5	2.01	-	5	-
8.	Lohar	23	9.27	11	6	6
9.	Korwar	6	2.41	2	2	2
10.	Mohali	12	4.83	4	4	4
11.	Baraik	7	2.82	4	2	1
12.	Turi	8	3.22	5	1	2
13.	Rajwar	4	1.61	3	1	-

Sl. No.	Ethnic Group	House Holders				
		Total No	Percentage			
			Nuclear	Joint	Unclassified	
14.	Malar	1	0.40	1	-	-
15.	Powja	11	4.43	6	1	4
16.	Kanjar	1	0.40	1	-	-
17.	Dhimol	5	2.01	2	1	2
A.	Total	248	100.00	117	65	66
		100.00		47.19	26.20	26.61
B. Caste Group						
1.	Bihari	13	54.17	8	4	2
2.	Napali	11	45.83	6	3	1
	Total	24	100.00	14	7	3
		(100.00)		58.33	25.86	12.51
C. Adibasi Caste Group						
A.		248	91.18	117	65	66
B.		24	8.82	14	7	3
Total		272	100.00	131	72	69
		100.00		48.16	26.47	25.36

Source : Field Observation.

Mother Tongue

The garden has been established in 1879. The present workers here are the descendants of the immigrant labourers who came from their natal place in the earlier period. These labourers have been born and brought up in and around this garden. None of them know their original language of Kurkh, Mundari or Santhali. Here 'Sandri', a mixture of broken Hindi with Bengali, Nepali and adibasi language is the common 'lingua franca' though the Nepalis and Biharis speak in their mother tongue, Nepali and Hindi respectively.

Table 5.4B.: Mother Tongue of the Ethnic Groups (Labour and Substaff) : Soongachi Tea Estate.

Sl. No.	Ethnic Group	Mother Tongue				
		Sandri	Nepali	Hindi	Bengali	
					Total	
1.	Adibasi	1152	-	-	-	1152
2.	Nepali	-	57	-	-	57
3.	Bihar	-	-	62	-	62
	Total	1152	57	62	-	1271
	Percentage	90.63	4.48	4.87	-	100.00

Source : Field Observation.

Migration

This garden is a very old one. It has been established in 1879 i.e. the early stage of tea plantation in North Bengal. At this time due to scarcity of

labourers in this region large scale import of labourers has taken place. But now import of labour from outside the state has been stopped by rules. The present labourers here are the descendents of these immigrant labourers. It has been reported that all the 1152 persons of this part of this garden are born and brought up here.

Previously it has been seen that girl from other garden after marriage come to her husband's garden to live and the garden absorbs her as a labourer. But at present getting a permanent job in a garden has become tougher. So the labourers try to marry the girls of their own garden with a permanent job. Same is happened in case of 'Ghardmad'. Besides, the increasing popularity of love marriage stopped marriage outside the garden. So all the adibasi here are reported to be the settlers of this garden. Some of them may came from the other parts of the garden.

Of the Nepali adults of 32 persons 6 are from Kurseong while the 8 adult Bihari males and 13 females came from outside the state.

Marriage

Marriage has a vital role among the life of the adibasi people. Among them it is common to get married when a man get adult, may be he has a permanent job or not. Of the total adult population of this part of the garden (of 792 persons) 662 persons are married, 78 persons are widow and widower and 52 persons are unmarried. The rest 489 persons are in the age group of 0-18 years i.e. child and adolencents and are unmarried. No divorce or separated person are noted (5.6C).

Marriage is strictly monogamous, though cases of polygamy is seen, divorce or separation is not present here. Stability of conjugal bond depends on the wish of the couple. If either party wishes may go away and marry other person. Tribal Panchayat may intervene though hardly have any success. Negotiation marriage is preferable though the youngsters mostly fled away and marry their beloved outside the garden and then come back. But almost all the adults realise the evils of child marriage which is totally absent in the garden. Inter tribal marriage is common though it is considered to be a matter of social shame and the respondents reluctantly admit the cases. Bride price and the system of Ghardamad is prevalent in this garden.

TABLE 5.6C. : Marital Status of the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and Substaff) Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.

Sl. Ethn ic Groups	Married		Adult population				Unmarried Adult		Total adult	Unmarried Child & Ad o	Total
	M	F	Widow		Divorced seperated		M	F			
			M	F	M	F					
A. Adibasi											
1. Oraon	68	68	12	20	Nill		7	-	175	100	275
2. Munda	50	50	2	2	-		3	-	107	67	174
3. Kisan	10	10	3	2	-		3	5	33	19	52
4. Santal	35	35	1	3	-		1	-	76	34	110
5. Sabar	45	43	1	2	-		3	2	98	71	169
6. Bhumij	9	9	1	2	-		1	-	8	3	11
7. Sonar	3	3	-	-	-		-	-	18	12	30
8. Lohar	30	30	2	3	-		-	-	65	37	102
9. Korwar	8	8	2	1	-		1	-	20	12	32
10. Mohali	10	10	1	3	-		3	1	28	33	61
11. Baraik	8	8	-	-	-		2	-	18	8	26
12. Turi	8	8	-	-	-		2	1	20	9	29
13. Rajwar	5	5	-	-	-		-	-	10	5	15
14. Malar	1	1	-	-	-		-	-	2	5	15
15. Porja	11	11	1	3	-		1	2	29	11	40
16. Kanjar	1	1	-	-	-		-	-	2	1	3
17. Dhimol	5	5	1	1	-		1	1	14	7	21
A. Total	307	307	28	41	-		28	12	723	439	1152
Percentage	26.64	26.64	2.43	3.55	-		2.43	1.04	62.76	38.10	100.00
B. Caste group											
1. Nepali	13	13	2	3	Nill		4	2	37	25	62
2. Bihari	11	11	2	2	-		3	3	32	15	117
B. Total	24	24	4	5	-		7	5	69	50	117
Percentage	20.16	20.16	3.36	4.20	-		5.88	4.20	57.98	42.01	111.00
Adibasi & caste group											
A.	307	307	28	41	Nill		28	12	723	439	1152
B	24	24	4	5	-		7	5	69	50	119
Total	331	331	32	46	-		35	17	792	489	1271
Percentage	26.04	26.04	8.5	3.6	-		2.75	1.33	62.31	38.47	100.00

Source : Field Observation.

Social Control

Here in this garden social control is maintained by the Adibasi Panchayet with the help of local trade union leaders. In this garden Oraons make a strong hold in the panchayet as they are high in number as a result the smaller groups like Dhimol etc. do not always get justice.

Literacy

As seen in the Terai garden here in this garden too literacy rate among the labourers is very low. This is mainly due to their extreme poverty and lack of culture of education. Education is a fancy of the present generation. Of the total labour population of this part only 24.35 percent are literate; the large proportion of this literates the members of the present generation i.e. persons of the age group of 6-18 years. 75.84 percent are illiterates. Of the total adibasi population of 1152, 20.39 percent are literate and 79.68 percent are illiterate. Of the literates 64.68 percent are adolescent and children. Of the caste people 41.42 percent are illiterate while 68.58 percent are literate. Literacy is high among the Biharies. Though among the caste women literacy rate is low as their tribal counterparts (T.5.7B).

Economic Participation

The garden is old one as well as big. Here the management and the labourers are more organised than the Terai garden studied. Here at the time of my field work there was a total of 1513 permanent labourers. The temporary ones were taken from the dependents of the permanent labourers. Like the Terai garden, here there is no household of only temporary labourers. Here in this part there are 470 permanent labourers 48 percent of which are females. Their adult dependents work as temporary labourers at the pick seasons. In the other time they work as labourers on contract basis in local construction works of road or buildings. The permanent labourers get a daily wage of Rs. 32.30 and work in two shifts i.e. from 7a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 2 p.m. to 5p.m.

Political Participation

CITU is the trade union that has a strong hold over the labourers. But just as be seen in the Terai garden, the common labourers have a very little awareness except giving the subscription. They attend the meeting called by the Union without knowing its cause and consequences. Only they expect

TABLE 5.7B. : Literacy among the Adibasi and Non Adibasi (Labour and substaff) Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.

Sl. Ethnic Groups	Illiterate population				Total Illiterate population		Literate population			Total literate population	
	Total population	M	F	Ado/child	population	Percentage	M	F	A/C	population	Percentage
A. Adibasi											
1. Oron	275	67	80	75	202	22.00	20	8	45	73	31.06
2. Munda	174	50	50	40	140	15.26	5	2	27	34	14.46
3. Kisan	52	10	15	10	35	3.81	6	2	9	17	7.23
4. Santal	110	28	30	20	78	8.50	10	8	14	32	13.61
5. Sabar	169	45	49	51	145	15.81	4	-	20	24	10.21
6. Bhomij	11	5	3	3	11	11.99	-	-	-	-	-
7. Sonar	30	9	9	12	30	3.27	-	-	-	-	-
8. Lohar	102	28	30	20	78	8.50	4	3	17	24	10.11
9. Korwar	32	11	9	10	30	3.27	-	-	2	2	0.25
10. Mohali	61	10	14	20	44	4.79	4	-	13	17	7.23
11. Baraik	26	10	8	8	26	2.83	-	-	-	-	-
12. Turi	29	10	10	9	29	3.16	-	-	-	-	-
13. Rajwar	15	5	5	5	15	1.63	-	-	-	-	-
14. Malar	2	1	1	-	2	0.21	-	-	-	-	-
15. Porja	40	8	16	9	33	3.59	5	-	2	7	-
16. Kanjar	3	1	1	1	3	0.32	-	-	-	-	-
17. Dhimol	21	6	6	4	16	1.74	2	-	3	5	2.12
A. Total	1152	304	336	277	917	100.00	60	23	162	235	100.00
Percentage	100.00	26.38	29.16	24.64	19.68		5.20	1.99	13.19	20.39	
B. Caste Group											
1. Napali	57	10	13	5	28	59.57	6	3	20	29	40.27
2. Bihari	62	9	10	-	19	40.42	10	8	25	43	59.79
B. Total	119	19	23	5	47	100.00	11	11	45	72	100.00
Percentage	100.00	15.96	19.32	4.20	49.49		9.24	9.24	37.81	68.58	
Adibasi & Caste Group											
A.	1152	304	336	277	917	95.12	60	23	152	235	76.54
B.	119	19	23	5	47	4.88	16	11	45	72	23.45
Total	1271	323	359	282	964	100.00	76	34	197	307	100.00
Percentage	100.00	24.41	28.24	22.18	75.84		5.97	2.67	19.43	24.15	

Source : Field Observation.

from the union that it would help them to get regular wage, increased bonus and can ask the management to make a job permanent.

Religion

In this part of this garden generally the adibasis are the follower of their traditional religion i.e. Saosar. Three or four converted Christian adibasi family is reported to be present in this garden at the other parts but no Islam adibasi is available here. Acceptance of some traits of the Hindu neighbours is common like the Siv puja, Kali puja, Laxmi puja, attending neighbouring Durga Mela, Saraswati puja etc. All the Nepali and Bihari families are the followers of Hinduism (T.5.10B).

Table 5.10B.: Religion of the Ethnic Group (Labour and Substaff): Soongachi Tea Estate.

Sl. No.	Ethnic Group	Religion			Total	
		Saosar	Hinduism	Christmity		Islam
1.	Adibassi	1152	-	-	-	1152
2.	Nepali	-	57	-	-	57
3.	Bihar	-	62	-	-	62
	Total	1152	119	-	-	1271
	Percentage	90.63	9.41	-	-	(100.00)

Source : Field Observation.

Social Interaction

Interaction among the different ethnic groups of labourers are almost same in all the gardens. The different groups behave like a same Universe yet all of them have some differentiation in all levels and a distinct notion of endogamy, exogamy, purity and pollution. At present it is not so pronounced except in case of community participation.

Interaction of the Plantation Labourers with World Outside and their Outlook

Soongachi tea estate is a comparatively remote garden in Doars. The labour lines being at the more interior parts totally detached to the world outside. The labourers have a very little contact to the near by township and is almost self-sufficient. It has school, hospital, small shops of necessary goods in the garden. The young boys and girls attend the cinema halls at Malbazar mainly on their rest days which is Sunday in this garden. This day

is the day of local 'haat' too. The middle aged malefolk and some womenfolk attend haat to buy their necessary goods and also to meet kins and friends. This haat is their only link to the world outside the garden. Except this they attend the Mal Hospital in the town in most critical cases of illness. The general awareness of the labourers, both male and female, is very low. They know very little of the world except 'two leave and a bud in between.'

Garden and the Women

When analysing the status of women in this garden the garden shows nothing special. The women as wage earner enjoy some facilities in the society but her over all status is still quite low. She suffers from lack of education, work burden and exploitation from family fold and outside. In most cases she always suffers from a sense of insecurity that her husband can leave her and her children whenever he wishes as it is a common practice in this society. Besides, regular abuse and physical torture by drunk husband is a common feature of these women inspite of being a bread earner or housewife. Although they enjoy some facilities more than their caste counter part as they can chose their partner by them selves, they can dissolve their marriage alliances when they think it does not suitable for them but in most of the cases it is not so easy. In this garden I have got atleast five cases where the women have to live with their jobless or characterless husbands for ^{the}shake of their children. In these days the permanent job has become so scare and the price of things are so high that every man try to marry girl with job and without any liability. So it is tough for the mother of a number of children to get married again except she has a permanent job. Today's women labourers get same wage as their male counter parts but in most cases she has not much hold on their income. She spends it for the maintenance of the household but in many cases the husband forcively take the money and spend it over haria. Finally it can be said that inspite of being bread earner the status of women in the plantation society has not raised much. The society is still very much made dominated where women are treated as comodity.

OBSERVATION

The two gardens studied in Terai and Doars are of two types. Both are old while the Doars garden is the older (1879) bigger (1052.10 hec) well organised, well equipped than that of the Terai garden (1932; 124.46hec) with higher yearly production of 15 lakh kgs. in comparison to 140 thousand kgs. of the Terai garden. Both of these gardens produce CTC type tea.

Both of the gardens have well organised bureaucratic management under which groups of staffs (Bengali and Bihari caste group) work. The third and fourth categories are formed of sub-staffs and labourers from different adibasi groups of Oraon, Munda, Kisan, Sabar, Santhal, Baraik, Turi, Mohali, Dhimol, Lohar, Naik and other tribal groups who are in small number. The Mundas are high in number in Terai garden with Naik, Lohar, Mohali, Oraon are considerable groups. The Oraons are dominant in the Doars garden. Santhal, Sabar, Sonar, Rajwar, Dhimol, Bhumij are seen exclusively in the Doars garden alongwith the other common groups. At the time of investigation as per official records the number of permanent labourers in Terai garden was 214; male 109, female 119. In Doars garden the number of labourers was 1513; male 876 and female 568.

The labourers of multiethnic community live side by side in labour lines scattered in and around the garden. Except the Bihari no such ethnic clusterization is pronounced. The garden authority provide quarter to its permanent labourers which is more developed in the Doars garden. Here all the labourer quarters are pacca and have electricity and 65 percent of these are twin quarters while in Terai garden 50 percent quarters are pacca. In both of these gardens well are the source of water both drinking and bathing, though in Doars garden tap water is also available. Sanitation and sewage system in both of these gardens are very low.

The Terai garden has only a small health centre while the Doars garden has a 25 bedded hospital. Both of these gardens have a medical team each, to help the labourers in problem.

In both of these gardens among the adibasis Sandri is the common 'lingua franca' as seen in the other Terai and Doars gardens and they are the followers of 'Saosar' religion mixed with some traits of Hinduism. Besides the Biharis and the Nepalis are Hindu and speak in their respective languages.

Both of these gardens are old enough and its labourers are the second or third generation of the earlier immigrants. Most of them are born and brought up in the respective gardens except some women came from neighbouring gardens or basti due to marriage.

Marriage is monogamous and endogenous. It is a rule though polygamy and inter tribal marriage is seen in both of the gardens. No legal divorce is reported while either one of a couple may leave the other and the children as he / she wishes.

Literacy picture in both of these gardens is very low. In Terai garden only 25.05 percent of the labour population are literate and most of them are child and adolescent population. In the studied part of the Doars garden the percentage is 24.15 percent. Most of the literates are the child at the age group of 7-14 years and the adolescent. More than 60 percent in women of both of the gardens are illiterate. Among the tribals there are the lack of culture of education, seriousness and consciousness of education as well. Besides these poverty sicken people hardly afford their basic necessities Education is a fancy to them. Still among the parents of present generation some, sense of consciousness regarding their ward's education have been arose. The Doars garden also provide free primary education for the wards of the labourers; the Terai garden has no primary school of its own but the Kadamtala Primary School, adjunct to it, may serve the purpose to some extent. The willing parents sent their wards to this school. So in both of these gardens percentage of literacy among the children and adolescent are comparatively high.

Plantation work is done in both of this gardens in two shifts with a weekly holiday which is on Sunday and Tuesday in Doars and Terai garden respectively. The labourers get daily basis payment on the day before weekly holiday. In Terai garden it is 29.15 Rs. and in Doars garden it is Rs. 32.30. At the time of investigation there was 215 permanent labourers in Terai garden of which 53.48 percent was women. Beside the permanent labourers there also live some people in separate households who get job in the garden in pick season while in the slack season they work outside as jugari, ricksaw puller and so on. But in the Doars garden there is no such household of temporary labourers. The authority take the dependents from the permanent

labourer's household in pick season. Child labour is also present in both the garden though the authority deny their existence.

CITU is the prevailing trade union in both of these gardens though the labourers mostly are unaware of their political rights and duties. They attend union meetings and gatherings, give the subscription mechanically and the union generally fight for the short term issues like regular payment of salary and bonus.

The adibasi labourers have a cordial relationship with each other and inspite of their ethnic differences behave like single universe. The notion of purity and pollution is not so pronounced in these days, as was in past except community participation. Through regular and intense interaction each group have affected by the customs of others. Local 'haat' i.e. weekly market is the main link of the labourers to the world outside the garden.

The status of women is not raised satisfactorily inspite of being bread earner. They enjoy some freedom than their caste counterparts but as their status with their male counterpart is compared it is quite low. They are exploited both in home and working place and is burdened with a lot of works and responsibilities without adequate authority.

Adibasi Girl Child in Tea Plantation : Field Studies

In the Second Chapter a brief discussion was made on the situation of girl child in contemporary Indian society as a whole and also the back ground of the gender biasness of our society. In this chapter a broad discussion will be made on the girl child among the adibasi plantation labourers based on first hand information collected from the two gardens studied.

Value of Children Among Adibasi Plantation Labourers

The society and culture determine the attitude of parents, the attitude of parents and the kinsmen towards their descendents. The socio-economic-cultural values largely govern the value of children among the adibasi society. To the adibasi labourers children are desirable for the continuation of lineage and also for the satisfaction of the self. They largely view the children as the sources of emotional gratification economic benefit and social security. Procreation is the essence of life for them, whether boy or girl, the birth of the child is considered as if a chain which binds the family in continuity.

Children are considered as 'Gift of God' and are considered extremely valuable among the adibasi plantation labourers of both Terai and Doars gardens of North Bengal. A family unit is considered incomplete without atleast one child.



Girl Child of Tea Garden

Almost all the respondents of both of the gardens opine that each couple should have at least one child, boy or girl, whatever it may be. 90 percent of the respondents opine that in an ideal family there must be both boy and girl child. The rest 10 percent say only boy child is desirable for a family though not a single family prefer only girl child.

Child bearing is an essential part in an adult woman's life. Inability to

conceive or to have no living child is a serious family and social matter. Bearing child, particularly son is considered most important role of a married lady which she must contribute for the shake of continuation of her husband's lineage.

A childless woman is called 'Banj' in this society and is looked down upon. She is not socially outcasted or ritually tabooed but due to her childlessness she is taunted every where, in any social ceremony, any gathering, festival even in the quarrel among the womenfolk. Every body taunt her but when they are asked 'weather the childlessness is a fault of the woman' they answer the negative and consider it an 'ill luck of the woman' a 'nasty trick of god played to her'. Often several indigenous herbal medicines are given to her, rituals are performed for her by the adibasi medicine men and 'Charal' are offered to the 'Bongas' but in most of the cases all these go in vain due to lack of medical treatment. Quarrel between the couple brokeout due to their childlessness. It often lead to more addiction towards liquor even to a second marriage. When it is asked, 'whether a man should marry for the second time if his wife has no issue,' 75 percent repondents opine that a second marriage is not at all a solution to the problem of childlessness. A second marriage can not give a warrantee of having child out of it moreover it will destroy the peace of the family. The rest 25 percent who prefer the second marriage are mainly the middle aged malefolk. The logic of these folk is without a ward there is no one to look after them in their old age. A childless man should take a chance of having child out of another marriage. Though the elderly people of this society say that childlessness is not at all a cause of second marriage, which is very common in plantation society, It may be a lame excuse.

The tribal society has no traditional transcendental base of son preference. Rather they are much bound to their economic needs. To them son is a helping bread earner who is expected to take their charge in the old days. Their son preference is also to some extent the result of their interaction with the neighbouring caste people. 56.6 percent of my informants admit, that they prefer sons. To them 'son' is the proud of the family. (Ghar ki Sobha). He may not take care of them but he will live on their eyes from which the parents can get a mental satisfaction. This type of thinking is new among the adibasis. The terms and conditions of employment in tea plantation, quarter type, all prefer pairing family. So it is common to migrate a married son to a

separate household after marriage. The parents have to bear this. The son bias group clarify this saying that after marriage son like the daughter may live in separate household still his stem family has a control over him. He attends his parents when they need his help. But after marriage a daughter become the property of her laws, if she wishes she cannot do anything for her parents. The rest report that they have no such choice. Sons and daughters are same to them as both of them came from the 'same womb' in the 'same process' both are 'their blood'.

The adibasi society has no traditional hatred for the girls but these days it is seem that they prefer sons than the daughters. They say that the expenditure made on girl will go in vain after her marriage when she will go to her in law's house. If she is a wage earner then the parents would no more get even a share of her wage. Previously the custom of 'brideprice' was in vogue among them. when the husband's family had to pay the girl's family some money as this girl, being an economic entity, transferred to their family. At present this customary payment of 'brideprice' has been abolished with the popularity of 'love marriage' and local marriage among the friends and the neighbours; as well as the poor adibasi people are not so affluent to bear the cost of 'bride price'. As a result the girl's family become economically loser with the birth of a girl. A system of 'Ghardamad' in its present sense prevail in the gardens where a sonless man with so many landed property keep his daughter and son in law with him but it is not possible for the poor labourers for whom it is tough to earn their daily food. Besides they opine that a ghardamad can never be a substitute of a son. All these made the adibasi labourer a 'hater' of girl child who traditionally was not so. None of my respondent opine an ideal family with only girl though most of them think girl should be in the family with boys. Discrimination regarding food, cloth, education, and medical treatment also follow the same line. It is true that the adibasi labourers are too poor to afford these enormously still the quantity they can afford is supplied mostly to their sons. Every where the logic is same. The mothers say that if they specially treat their sons in their childhood they, when become able to earn, should remember this and would tell this to their wives that how the parents preferentially treated them depriving the others and then both of them would be more sympathetic and caring to the parents. Though 50 percent of the respondents report that at the time of birth parents prefer to have a boy but after birth the discrimination is not pronounced regarding their food dress or health care.

Both the gardens have medical units the sisters of which give monthly round in the labour lines. They make the ^{labourers} aware of family planning. They too inform them of the date of sterilizing camp. 95 percent of my respondents, both male and female, approve family planning in the days of high price (Mehengai). They admit that 'children are gift of god' still in these days it is hard to afford more than 2 or 3 children. They at the same time curse the early marriage as it brings more children. Those who have 5 or 6 children shamefully regret that they were too ignorant and committed the fault.

Adibasi Children : Age and Sexwise Distribution

Generally, human being upto the age group of 14 years is considered as 'child' who occupy a large proportion of all human society.

Table 6.1A : Age and Sex wise Distribution of Adibasi Child Population : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl. No.	Ethnic Gr.	Total popu.	0-6 yrs		7-14yrs		Total child popu.	Percentage
			M	F	M	F		
1.	Oraon	108	9	12	9	5	35	10.01
2.	Munda	166	16	19	17	16	68	19.98
3.	Kheria	22	3	2	2	1	8	2.29
4.	Kisan	13	1	1	1	2	5	1.43
5.	Baraik	4	-	-	2	1	3	0.86
6.	Mal Pahari	18	1	4	2	-	7	2.00
7.	Mohali	131	15	10	18	16	59	16.90
8.	Bhokla	37	-	1	6	8	15	4.29
9.	Korwar	19	-	-	2	1	3	0.86
10.	Lohar	138	7	14	17	10	48	13.75
11.	Turi	13	-	2	1	2	5	1.43
12.	Roidas	10	-	1	2	1	4	1.14
13.	Naik	204	26	23	17	23	89	25.50
Total		883	78	89	96	86	349	100.00
Percentage			22.34	25.50	27.50	24.64	100	

Source : Field observation

The table showing the adibasi child population of Matigara Tea Estate. The total adibasi child population constitute 39.52 percent of the total adibasi population. Of the total adibasi child population male child at the age group of 0-6 years and 7-14 years are 22.34 percent and 27.50 percent respectively. The female child in the age group of 0-6 and 7-14 years are 25.50 percent and 24.64 percent. Of the total adibasi child population 25.50 percent are

Naik; 19.98 percent Munda, 16.90 percent Mohali, 13.75 percent Lohar and 10.02 percent are Oraon. The other adibasi groups comprises 1 or 2 percent each (6.1A).

Table 6.1B : Age and Sex wise Distribution of Adibasi Child Population : Soongachi Tea Estate.

Sl. No.	Ethnic Gr.	Total popu.	0-6 yrs.		7-14 yrs.		Total child popu.	Percentage
			M	F	M	F		
1.	Oraon	1275	20	25	14	26	85	18.05
2.	Munda	174	7	10	16	17	50	13.88
3.	Kisan	52	2	2	5	7	16	4.44
4.	Santal	110	4	6	9	11	30	8.33
5.	Sabar	169	11	18	14	17	60	16.66
6.	Bhumij	11	1	1	1	-	3	0.83
7.	Sonar	30	-	4	3	4	11	3.05
8.	Lohar	102	5	7	8	14	34	9.24
9.	Korwar	32	1	-	3	4	8	2.22
10.	Mohali	61	7	4	10	7	28	7.77
11.	Baraik	26	1	1	3	3	8	2.22
12.	Turi	29	1	1	2	3	7	1.94
13.	Rajwar	15	1	1	-	1	3	0.83
14.	Malar	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Porja	40	1	2	3	3	9	2.50
16.	Kanjar	3	-	-	-	1	1	0.27
17.	Dhimol	21	3	4	-	-	7	1.94
Total		1152	65	86	91	118	360	100.00
Percent			18.05	23.88	25.27	32.77	100.00	

Source : Field observation.

The table showing the adibasi child population of Soongachi Tea Estate. The total adibasi child population constitute 31.25 percent of the total adibasi population. Of the total adibasi child population male child at the age group of 0-6 years and at the age group of 7-14 years are 18.05 percent and 25.27 percent respectively. The female child at the age group of 0-6 years are 23.88 percent and 7-14 years are 32.77 percent. Of the total adibasi child population Oraon child are 18.05 percent Munda 13.88 percent, Kisan 4.44 percent Santal 8.33 percent, Sabar 16.66 percent, Sonar 3.05 percent, Bhumij 0.83 percent, Lohar 12.20 percent, Korwar 2.22 percent, Mohali 7.77 percent, Baraik 2.22 percent Turi 1.94 percent, Rajwar 0.83 percent, Porja 2.5 percent, Kanjar 0.2 percent and Dhimol 1.94 percent (6.1B).

Migration Mother Tongue and Marital Status

The two tea gardens studied here established in 1932 and 1879 respectively the labourers working here are the decedents of the earlier migrants (mostly the labourers of Soongachi). The present population at the age group between 0-14 years are the seventh or eighth generation of the immigrants. The present child population of the gardens are born and brought up in the respective gardens. They are totally out of touch of their original culture, they even donot know their original language. This is true in most of the cases of their parents also. 'Sandri' is their common language to communicate. While Hindi can be recognised as their second language. Most of them understand Bengali but cannot speak fluently.

Child marriage among the adibasi plantation labourers of Terai and Doars have been abolished these days. It is not due to the acts enacted by the Government but the awareness among the adibasis of its evil effect has made it possible. The adibasi labourers now are very much conscious of the size of family. Almost all of them admit that in the days of 'high price' it is impossible to maintain a family with so many kids. To them an early marriage means a large number of children. To avoid this the parents to day do not arrange a 'child marriage'. The incident of runaway with the 'beloved' and marriage is common in the gardens but boys and girls at the age group up to 14 years hardly dare to do this. Generally this happens after 15 years. So incident of child marriage is totally absent in both of the gardens studied.

Family Back ground

The study includes the wards of adibasi labourers' family and very few from the sub-staff family.

Generally the children of the adibasi labourers inherit from their parents dire poverty, ignorance and backwardness both socially and culturally. Here three types of conditions prevail among them. The condition of the labourers family are a bit affluent where both of the couple are permanent job holders. Where either one is permanent and the other works as temporary labourer the financial condition worsen specially in the slack season when a temporary worker has no job. The condition ^{is} worst where the only earning member of the family is the temporary labour. This condition is seen in the Terai garden only. In Soongachi of Doars no such household exists in the garden.

The permanent labourers' households are so many in this large garden that the temporary labourer is taken from the permanent labourer's family, when it is needed. The permanent labourer's family enjoys free quarter with kitchen garden attached to it, free fire wood and ration. These families generally belong to domestic animals like cow, goat and pigs (in case of Naik, Lohar, Mohali, Karwars) and have a number cocks and hens which are considered as valuable family assets that can be sold at the time of financial problem, death, marriage or serious illness, to meet the needed expenditure. Beside poultry is another source of their income as well as food. These families generally belong to the valuable things like T.V., radio, cycle, tape deck etc. The children of these families enjoy certain privileges. Almost all the boys of such families attend school; Even the girls too are school goers atleast upto the primary level. They do not have to join in plantation work in their tender age nor to work outside the garden. The girls have to do some domestic works but this confine within the family.

The families where only one person is permanent labourer, may be the male or the female, the condition is not good, Here the children face more problem. If the father works in plantation the situation is not so worse because then the mother try to earn by any kind of work like, maid in neighbouring houses, labour in construction work or stone breaker. If the father is jobless then he tends to be more alcoholic and furious. In most of the cases he suffers from a kind of inferiority complex and anxiety of living at wife's quarter at her work place. He may do any kind of laborious job or works as riskaw puller and spends most of his income outside. Want of food and daily requirements mounting up in the home, The children in most cases can not go to school. Tension arises when alcoholic father comes home and beaten up the wife and children. Children, specially the girls has to work in plantation as child labour and outside the garden too. The condition of the children is awfully miserable whose parents have no permanent job.

Child Rearing and Socialization

Child rearing among the adibasi plantation labourers of both of the gardens of Terai and Doars have been found to be a mixture of tradition and modernity. Child rearing in the early babyhood and childhood is considered to be the mother's job. Often elderly ladies living within the family or the neighbourhood are consulted when young mother get into problem. Generally

birth takes place at home by untrained local midwife called 'dai'. In serious condition the would be mothers are taken to the garden health centre or hospital outside. 'Dais' are paid in cash and kind. Breast milk starts 2 or 3 days after birth and continues upto 2 years., 'Chatti' is done after six days of birth. Immunization of the children is not known to about 70 percent of the respondent parents. Generally, food other than breast milk is given after third or fourth month though the formal rice ceremoney (Muhojhuti) takes place at sixth or seventh month . Weaning starts after the second year. No special emphasis is given on the toilet training. At the age of about 3 years child is asked to defecate^{te} outside the house.

After the fifth or sixth week of child birth the working mother usually has to resume her work in plantation resulting into a mother child separation for a substantial period of a day which creates a sense of insecurity, helplessness and also hunger tension among the child.

Girls are seem to be more obedient and responsible than the boys. It is found that the responsibility training start somewhat earlier in female child. Most of the children's mother work in plantation. It is seen that the ward of the working mothers are more responsible than the others. Girls usually are initiated to household works like clearing hut, ^{and} courtyard, utensils, sweeping, making breakfast, helping mothers in cooking, looking after their younger sibs etc. Often they carry tiffen for their parents to the field; Boys also do some household works like bring water from well, fatching family ration, collecting firewood. My respondents are mainly younger girls. They claim that actually they do these jobs and not their brothers who often attend local school. Some of them at about 13/14 years^{of} age work in field. Rest of the time they play and chat without taking any household responsibility.

Regarding formal education it is seen that the ward^s of the labourers are sent to local primary school at the age of about 6 years though education is by and large taken very casually. Girls are very often withdrawn from school at the age of 7 or 8 years when they become able to take household responsibilities. Actually the over all socio-economic condition of the labourers family is very poor mainly due to the expenditure of substantial amount of income of the male folk on 'haria'. Very often the parents fail to bear the basic need of their children.

The parents want their children should conform to their instruction and maintain them by applying physical punishment. Incident of assault by alcoholic father to both mother and children are common in plantation labourer's family.

Act of omission such as the failure of the parents to provide proper child welfare to provide for the child's basic needs and proper level of care with respect to food clothing, hygiene, education, medical attention and supervision etc. on one hand and acts of commission such as violence, assaulted by the alcoholic father to both mother and children on the other hand are very likely to influence the behaviour of the children of tea garden labourers.

In the plantation society the families are of nuclear type with limited number of members and a working mother. The children born and brought up here in plantation environment which greatly influence their socialization process. As far as their future life is concerned they know that they have to chose their partner from within this society and have to take this plantation work as their livelihood. Their parents do not prepare them for an ordered or a achievement oriented life. So the parents do not encourage their wards for education. Instead the children from their early days share an awareness of the problems of their future life. The girls are socialized in the way that they have to do the household works for helping their working mothers. They are also socialized in their role of male dependency which continues through their life. In case of education they show discrimination between sons and daughters. In most cases here the mothers are illiterate and it is natural that they do not want to educate their daughters. They think that female education is not necessary for employment in the garden as well as for rearing a family. But in choosing career in plantation they one willing to give equal encouragement to their sons and daughters.

Health Status

Health picture of both of the tea estates concerned i.e. the Matigara Tea Estate in Terai and Soongachi Tea Estate in Doars is not quite good. Of this Matigara Tea Estate is the garden with minimum health care facility. This garden has no hospital of its own but only has a health centre with a medical unit of one medical officer and two helpers; though this garden is within 2 or 3 kms from North Bengal Medical College. On the other

hand the Soongachi Tea Estate has a hospital of its own with 25 beds and a unit of 2 medical officers and 4 helpers. Mal Hospital is within 3 kms to this garden.

In the tea estate in Terai with minimum facilities of health, the picture is not good. Here in this tea estate most of the houses are of kaccha type with a few pacca houses. Rooms are not spacious or airy. A corner of the veranda is very often used as kitchen. Domesticated animals are kept in sheds adjunct to it for fear of cattle lifting. In the Doars garden with better facilities most of the labourers live in two roomed pacca houses. The rooms are not spacious enough but cosier. To make up the shortage of space some workers have constructed a kaccha room to use it as kitchen. But mostly cooking is done in a part of verandah. Domesticated animals are kept under a separate shed adjunct to living room for fear of cattle lifting, just same as seen in the Terai garden. This poses threat of contagious diseases mainly among the children, who have less resistant power than adults.

House sanitation among the labourers irrespective of the gardens and type of house is of very lower order. Environmental sanitation irrespective of the type of tea estate is very low. Sanitary latrines are almost absent except in the work place. The labourers defecate in fields. This leaves them prone to parasite infection and diarrhoea diseases which is particularly common among the children and takes 2 or 3 lives yearly. Efficient drainage system is also non-existent, sewage water from households are drained out to the outer periphery of the courtyard and where it gets accumulated and serves as breeding place for mosquitoes and germs. Rain water and water from water points get drained upto nullahs which surround the cluster of houses. These nullahs are mostly choked resulting in water accumulation. The accumulated water serves as breeding ground for mosquitoes and germs. Malaria is common among the labourers' children particularly in the Doars garden.

Source of drinking water in the Terai garden is kaccha and pacca wells. In the Doars garden tap water is also available in addition to the water from wells. Water from these sources is used also for ablution purpose. The wells, specially the kaccha wells lack proper basement around them leaving water prone to local contamination. No regular and efficient system of disinfection of water is undertaken. This is a major reason for dysentery and diarrhoea which is a major health problem among the children of the labourers.

The level of personal hygiene among the tribal labourers' children in both categories of plantation is of low order. The children mainly the smaller one have no toilet training and defecate in and around the hut and courtyards. They are not properly clean after a defecate. Moreover the bigger ones too play on dust and mud with open body without shoe. Bathing daily with soap is not usual. Washing of clothes with soap is undertaken once in 7 or 14 days and so is changing of clothes. All these prone to infections skin diseases among the children. Washing of hands before meals is common but the use of soap for the purpose is uncommon. Use of soap for washing hands after post defecation ablution is also uncommon, Cleaning of teeth daily with twig is common but 50 percent of the children suffer from carries. Wearing of shoes is not so common among the children.

Food is taken thrice a day. But it mostly contains low calories. The morning intake generally contains roti, dal and tea. Lunch comprises of usually rice, dal and vegetable and so also the dinner. Generally the rich food items, which are accumulated in smaller quantity, are preserved for the male child while even the girl can not get proper breast milk if she has a younger brother or 1 or 2 years older to her. Fish, meats are rare items consumed by the labourers once a week or fortnightly on the day of payment. Purchasing of food items is done according to the financial strength of the labourers and not on its nutritious value.

Care of pregnant women are neglected. These people has no idea of rest, care, check up, vaccination and other aspects of anatal care. Delivery is usually done by untrained midwives and undertaken at home. Anatal death of children as well as death of new born children during delivery in complicated cases is also common in both categories of the gardens.

Traditional child rearing process often lead to the death of the new born babies mainly during cold season. Immunization of children is unknown to 80 percent of the respondents. Neonatal death rate is quite high among these people. Most of the premature death are attributed to evil spirits.

Diseases like Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Worm Infections, Malaria, general weakness, Pneumonia, nutritional deficiency, Anemia, iron deficiency are common among the children. The vast majority of the adibasi parents. (about 72 percent) have been found to consult modern medical practitioners in the illness of their children. The cause may be the easy availability of the modern

medical facilities within the garden through its health care unit. Though the girls are generally taken to the health centre or hospital less than the boys, till their condition become worsen. The belief on evil eye', 'najar', 'witch craft' is also prevalent. Some diseases are solely attributed to these supernatural agencies. In such cases the parents do not consult doctor, but their traditional medicine men. It has been seen that the adibasi labourers of both of the gardens have no apathy towards the modern medical treatment because these second or third generation of the migrant labourers are acquainted more to this rather than their traditional one which is at present losing its popularity. But when the treatment of the garden health care unit fails the adibasi parents prefer to consult the traditional medicine men except going to the hospital, out of economic constrain, the fear of staying away from the ward and also due to the fear of going through the complex formalities of the hospital unknown to them. Seven leprosy cases have been identified among the children in the Terai garden. In five of these cases the either parent too has this disease. A team of the District Leprosy Unit visits the garden once a month and they give the patients medicine and advice needed. Though in the Doars garden not a single case of Leprosy is identified. 'Malnutrition' is very common among the children especially among the girls. If one get into the line he / she will soon get surrounded by malnourished children in torn dresses, empty feet, running nose, dry skin and oilless hair.

Educational Status

The adibasi plantation labourers have no 'culture of education'. Education is a present day fancy to the well to do part of them, 90 percent of the present generation parents are illiterate while the illiteracy percentage is much higher among those of the previous generation. Socio-economically the tribal labourers are so poor that they can not afford the basic needs of their family. Hence ward's education is a luxury to them. Their highest ambition of life is to get a permanent job in plantation. It is same for both sex. As this job donot need any educational qualification, so education has no value to them. Educational status of adibasi labourer's children is very low. Recently a kin fascination towards the education, especially of the male child's education is noticed among them particularly among those families where both the couple have permanent job, enjoy free quarter ration and so on. The adibasis do not take the education of their ward seriously and in most of the cases discontinuation and drop out occur specially after (Class IV) primary

TABLE 6.2A. : Education among the Adibasi Children : Matigara Tea Estate

Sl. No	Ethnic Group	Total No Adibasi children at the age gr (0-14 yr) (7-14 yrs)			Illiteraterate Adibasi children (7-14 yrs)			Total Adibasi literate Child	Literate Adibasi children continuing Education			Adibasi children drop outs				
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total		Primary Level			Secondary Level				
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1.	Oraon	35	9	5	14	2	4	6	8	6	1	7	1	-	-	-
2.	Munda	68	17	16	33	10	10	20	13	6	5	11	1	1	2	-
3.	Kheria	8	2	1	3	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Kisan	5	1	2	3	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Baraik	3	2	1	3	-	1	1	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
6.	Mal Pahari	7	2	-	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Mohali	59	18	16	34	10	10	20	14	5	6	11	1	-	1	2
8.	Bhokla	15	6	8	14	2	5	7	7	4	2	6	-	-	-	1
9.	Korwar	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
10.	Lohar	48	17	10	27	3	6	9	18	11	3	14	3	-	3	1
11.	Turi	5	1	2	3	1	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Roidas	4	2	1	3	2	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	Naik	89	17	23	40	5	19	24	16	10	2	12	2	2	4	-
Total		349	96	86	182	41	62	103	79	45	19	64	8	3	11	3
Percentage			52.74	47.25	100.00	22.52	34.06	56.59	43.42	24.72	10.43	35.16	4.31	1.64	6.04	1.64
																0.09
																2.19

Source : Field Observation.

level after which education is not free of cost. This rate is high among the girls who are over burden with household works since their childhood.

The picture of education among the adibasi plantation labourers' children are given in the following lines, by analysing the data collected from the two gardens.

In Matigara Tea Estate the number of adibasi children are 349 of which 47.85 percent (167 persons) go out of the sample, being in the age group of 0-6 years. The rest 182 persons i.e. the 52.14 percent of the total adibasi children fall within the age group of 7-14 years. Of the total adibasi children (182) of the age group of 7-14 years 96 persons i.e. 52.74 percent are male and 86 persons i.e. 47.25 percent are female. 56.59 percent (103 persons) of the children of this age group are illiterate of which 22.52 percent (41 persons) are male and 34.06 percent (62 persons) are female. 43.42 percent i.e. 79 persons of this age group are literate. 41.20 percent i.e. 75 persons continuing their education and 2.19 percent are drop outs. 35.16 percent have primary education of which Male is 24.72 percent while the percentage of female continuing their primary education is less than half of the male. It is only 10.43 percent. Percentage of children having secondary education is very low; it is only 6.04 percent Male child comprises 4.31 percent and female 1.04 percent. The children in this garden who have the secondary education are the ward of the sub-staffs who are quite better off than the labourers. The sub-staff parents have an ambition to give their sons the post of 'peon' which need education of upto matriculation level. (Table 6.2A).

This garden has no school, not even a primary one, of its own. The ward of the labourers generally attend the neighbouring Kadamtala school and Matigara School, very close to the Western and Eastern Block respectively.

Girl's education is a matter of joke here. It has been seen that more than 60 percent of the total illiterate children of this age group (i.e. 62 persons out of 103 persons) are girls. Of the total literate children of this age group only 30.37 percent (i.e. 24 persons out of 79) ^{girls} are literate of which only 3 girls are able to continue their education up to secondary level which is expected to be stopped within a few years. The school girls have a special status in the adibasi labour society. They normally do not mix with the other girls who adore them from a distance. These girls are expected to be more wise and smart by the other women folk and are send forward to talk with the

TABLE 6.2B. : Education among Adibasi Children : Soongachi Tea Estate.

Sl. No	Ethnic Group	Total No Adibasi children at the age gr (0-14 yr) (7-14 yrs)			Illiteraterate Adibasi children (7-14 yrs)			Total literate Adibasi Children	Literate Adibas children continuing education			Adibasi Child drop outs			Adibasi children drop outs			
									Primary Level			Secondary Level						
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	
1.	Oraon	85	14	26	40	6	15	21	19	6	6	12	2	4	6	-	1	1
2.	Munda	50	16	17	33	4	8	12	21	8	5	13	4	-	4	-	4	4
3.	Kisan	16	5	7	12	1	4	5	7	3	2	5	1	1	2	-	-	-
4.	Santal	30	9	11	20	4	8	12	8	3	3	6	2	-	2	-	-	-
5.	Sabar	60	14	17	31	4	7	11	20	7	7	14	3	2	5	-	1	1
6.	Bhumij	3	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Sonar	11	3	4	7	1	1	2	5	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	Lohar	34	8	14	22	3	8	11	11	4	5	9	1	1	2	-	-	-
9.	Korwar	8	3	4	7	1	1	2	5	2	2	4	-	-	-	-	1	1
10.	Mohali	28	10	7	17	6	3	9	8	3	3	6	1	1	2	-	-	-
11.	Baraik	8	3	3	6	1	1	2	4	2	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Turi	7	2	3	5	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	Rajwar	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Malar	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Porja	9	3	3	6	3	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16.	Kanjar	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17.	Dhimol	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		360	91	118	209	37	64	101	108	40	38	78	14	9	23	-	7	7
			43.63	57.37	100.00	17.70	30.62	48.32	51.67	19.13	18.18	37.32	6.69	4.30	11.00	-	3.35	3.35

Source : Field Observation.

strangers as their representative. Only the 24 persons of the total girls of this age group are literate. The rest are engaged in household activities, sibling care and also in economic activities.

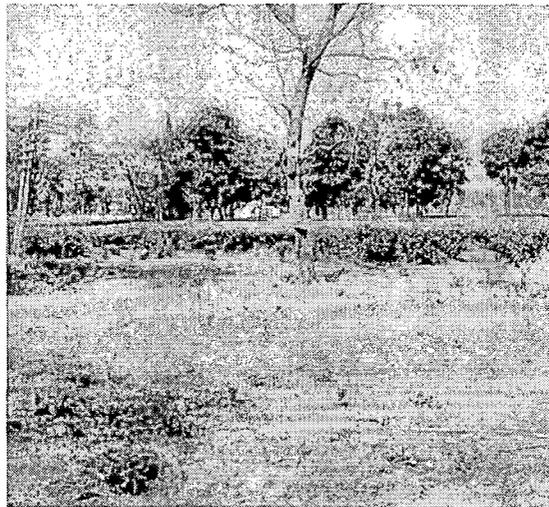
In the studied part of Soongachi Tea Estate the number of adibasi children are 360 of which 41.93 percent (i.e. 151 persons) go out of sample because of their age group (0-6 years). The rest 209 persons i.e. 58.04 percent of the total adibasi children of this part fall within the age group 8-14 years. Of the total adibasi children of this age group of 7-14 years 91 persons i.e. 43.63 percent are male and 118 persons i.e. 56.37 percent are female. 101 persons i.e. 48.32 percent children of this age group are illiterate of which 36.63 percent i.e. 37 persons are male and almost its double 64 persons i.e. 63.37 percent are female. Education picture of children of this generation is too poor. 51.67 percent i.e. 108 persons of this age group are literate; 48.34 percent i.e. 101 persons are continuing their education and 3.35 percent i.e. 7 persons are drop outs. 37.32 percent i.e. 78 persons are continuing their primary education of which male are 19.13 percent i.e. 40 persons and females are 18.18 percent i.e. 38 persons. The garden has three primary schools so the percentage of students having their primary education is comparatively high than the scene of secondary education. 11.00 percent i.e. 23 persons have continuing their secondary education of which male 6.69 percent i.e. 14 persons and female 9 persons i.e. 4.30. But the picture is not equal in the families of managers, and babu's who enjoy the facilities of higher education in local schools, colleges and even from Siliguri town. (6.2B).

65 percent of these girls report that they are not satisfied with their life, they want to go to school but their parents, particularly the mothers, do not allow them to do so. They hate the work burden put upon them. Discrimination regarding the girl child's education is very much pronounced among the adibasi plantation labourers which is not so prominent in terms of fooding and clothing. Girls' education is a luxury to them. 55 percent of the respondent parents opine that they are rearing their girls for others. Spending money on their education is nothing but sparing it. Girls in their later life have to do house hold work (Gharki kam) and plucking of leaves (Platti torna). None of these need education, they opine.

Economic Participation and Domestic Activities

It has been rightly said that the tribal girls from their childhood have very little leisure. Since they attain the age of 5 or 6 years they become the helper of their mother within home and after 1 or 2 years become the fullfledged bread earners. Almost all the girls on 7 years are burdened with household activities since the dawn to dusk. Those who live at home the wake up early in the morning with their parents; help the mother in preparing breakfast, cleaning hut and courtyard, cleaning utensils. They bring water from the nearby wells, collect fire wood at the noon. When the parents go for work in the plantation the girls of about 6 or 7 years take the charge of the household as well their younger sibs and the cattles. Very few of the girls of this age groups can get the opportunity to attend school though they get very little time for their study which is secondary to them. First they have to fulfil their domestic responsibilities. The following lines give a picture of economic participation of children of the two gardens studied.

In Matigara Tea Estate the child labour is present though small in number. Generally boys and girls of the age group of 15-18 years i.e. the adolescents are more engage as in plantation work than the children.



Girls Working in Tea Garden

completed within this time. Late attendance or breach of contact is strongly criticised. The work given to them generally are light digging, 'kondali', 'farua', 'laron jharon' 'nal chulla' i.e. cleaning of plantation bush and removal of weeds, dry leaves, collecting of seeds of shade trees, picking out of stalks from tea leaves etc. At present a trend among the girls is seen to work outside the garden. Few girls are seen to work in near by road constructional work as 'jogari' with the women folk of this garden though they are very small in number.

TABLE 6.3B. : Economic Participation among Adibasi Children Soongachi Tea Estate.

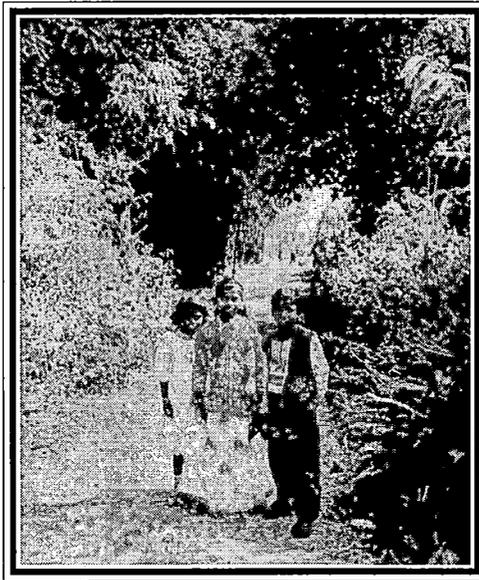
Sl. No	Ethnic Group	Total No. of children			Jobless adibasi children			Jobholder adibasi children			
		Total No. of children (0-14 yr)	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1.	Oraon	85	14	26	40	12	22	34	2	4	6
2.	Munda	50	16	17	33	15	15	30	1	2	3
3.	Kisan	16	5	7	12	5	7	12	-	-	-
4.	Santal	30	9	11	20	9	10	19	-	1	1
5.	Sabar	60	14	17	31	12	10	22	2	7	9
6.	Bhumij	3	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-
7.	Sonar	11	3	4	7	3	4	7	-	-	-
8.	Lohar	34	8	14	22	8	12	20	-	2	2
9.	Korwar	8	3	4	7	3	4	7	-	-	-
10.	Mohali	28	10	7	17	10	6	16	0	1	1
11.	Baraik	8	3	3	6	3	3	6	-	-	-
12.	Turi	7	2	3	5	2	3	5	-	-	-
13.	Rajwar	3	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
14.	Malar	--	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Porja	9	3	3	6	3	3	6	-	-	-
16.	Kanjar	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
17.	Dhimol	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		360	91	118	209	86	101	187	5	17	22
Percentage			43.63	56.37	100.00	41.14	48.32	89.47	2.30	5.23	10.53

Source : Field Observation.

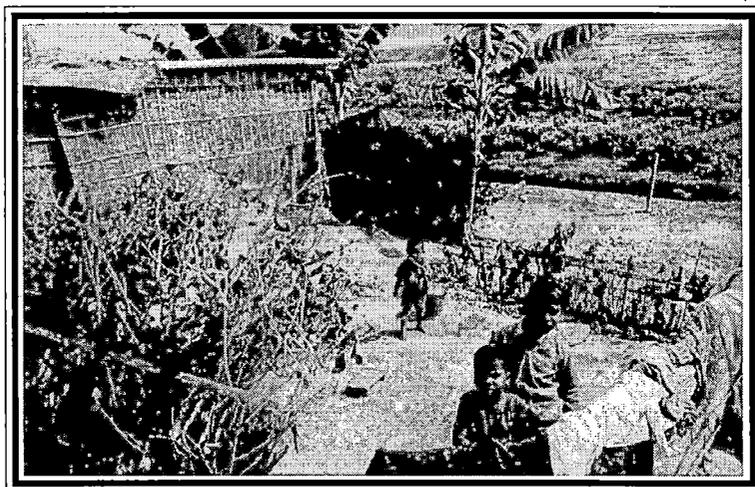
As seen in Matigara tea estate, in Soongachi too child labour is almost nil. The garden authority deny their existence though they admit the presence of adolescent labourers (15-18 years of age). Still very nominal percentage of child labourers are seen in this part of the garden among the adibasi



A Girl Fetching Water in a Tea Garden



Adibaśi Girls on Swaraswati Puja Day



Girl taking care of her small Sibs

TABLE 6.3A. : Economic Participation among Adibasi Children : Matigara Tea Estate.

Sl. No	Ethnic Group	Total No children			Total No. of adibasi children (7-14yrs)			Jobless adibasi children (7-14 yrs)			Jobholder Adibasi children (7-14 yrs.)		
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1.	Oraon	35	9	5	14	9	4	13	-	1	1		
2.	Munda	68	17	16	33	16	16	32	1	-	1		
3.	Kheria	8	2	1	3	2	1	3	-	-	-		
4.	Kisan	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	-	1	1		
5.	Baraik	3	2	1	3	2	-	2	-	1	1		
6.	Mal Pahari	7	2	-	2	2	-	2	-	-	-		
7.	Mohali	59	18	16	34	17	11	28	1	5	6		
8.	Bhokta	15	6	8	14	6	8	14	-	-	-		
9.	Korwar	3	2	1	3	2	-	2	-	1	1		
10.	Lohar	48	17	10	27	17	8	25	-	2	2		
11.	Turi	5	1	2	3	1	1	2	-	1	1		
12.	Roidas	4	2	1	3	2	-	2	-	1	1		
13.	Naik	89	17	23	40	17	15	32	-	8	8		
Total		349	96	86	182	94	65	159	2	21	23		
Percentage			52.74	47.25	100.00	52.00	35.00	87.36	0.10	11.3	12.63		

Source : Field Observation

In this garden child labourers are not higher in number. They belong to the age group of 7 to 14 years. Of the total children of this age group (82 persons), 12.63 percent (23 persons) work as labourers. Of this 92 percent (i.e. 21 persons out of 23 persons) are girls. The parents rarely send their sons of this age group to work considering them as 'Kids'. They either kept at home or send to school. May be the girls are more obedient than the boys and it is easier to convince them to work than that of the boys of their age. Dire poverty lead the parents to drive their girls to work at this tender age. The management too have certain facilities in employing these children; viz. they are employed in temporary basis and at a very low wage and can continue this wage rate upto a long time even after they become adult. (Table 6.3A).

These child labourers work in the garden either in morning shift from 7 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. or in noon shift i.e. from 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. They rarely work at double shift and get a wage of 15 rupees daily. As the adults they too are given an assignment of work for a particular time span which should be

labourer group. They are at the age group of 7-14 years. Only 10.63 percent children of this age group work as temporary labourer in the garden 8.13 percent of which are girls. They do the light jobs. None of them reports to work outside the garden. But that does not mean that the other 80 percent are studying; most of them are engaged in household activities as well as child rearing.

The laborious work from this tender age is very harmful for the children both for their physical and mental health. It robs off their childhood; keeps them away from education. Still it exists and will exist till the economic condition of the parents will be improved.

At present it is widely accepted that child labour is a curse of the society. Several seminars, discussions have organised to make people aware of its evil effects. Yet several acts and regulations have been passed to protect the child labourers which on the other hand admits the very presence of the child labourers.

Life cycle rituals and Religious Participation

Religion plays an important role in adibasi life. The animist adibasis perform different types of mysterious rituals and sacrifices to satisfy their Gods, Bongas, Ancestor's spirits. Some of them have been converted to Christianity or Islam. In the Terai tea garden and the studied lines of Doars there is no such converted tribesman. Though the impact of Hinduism is seen in their religious activities.

In the religious activities of the Saosar adibasis, the children both the boys and girls have no such important part to play except only observing the activities. The girls of 12 or 14 often assist their mother to prepare the puja place while the puja is done only by the male folk.

The girls often observe Siv or Tulsi puja which they have learnt from their Hindu neighbours.

Regarding life cycle ritual nothing special can be mentioned. 'Chatti' after the sixth day of birth is observed while nails of mother and child are cut down ritually and they take ritual bath. Their cloths are washed and houses are purified with cow-dung water. At the age of 6 months rice giving ceremony (Muhojhuti) takes place. At the age of 7 or 8 ritual tattooing, specially among the Oraons is done which is compulsory for girls. Their male counterparts

take 'tattoo's if they wish. During puberty no such ritual exists for adibasis except the 'chutka' of the girls during their mensuration. As the children grow up to adult they get into marital knot called 'Sadi' and life ends at death (Moron) as usual.

Games, Sports and Leisure

Adibasi children descend from very poor families. It is hard for them to get sophisticated game items like dolls, cars, balls, bats, rackets etc. They have neither the concept nor the power to afford these games. They engage themselves in petty games like 'Chui Mui', 'Dom Dom', 'Chupa Chupi', 'Kundakundi', 'Kitkit', 'Gadda ghuti', 'Luckachupi', 'Dang guti' Throwing of plastic ball is exclusively boys' game. The small kids both boys and girls upto 8-10 year generally play together. After this grouping starts. Girls form separate groups from boys and prefer gossip more while the boys start moving around the tea garden. Attraction towards television and movies is very much among them though they are not allowed to go cinema or video hall alone.

The tribal girls have very little leisure except the small one. From the age of 10-3 they have to take the responsibility of their household work, looking after their younger sibs and cattles. In most of the cases their mothers too engage in plantation work. Here the little girls have to cook too. Most of the girls cannot continue their education due to their family constrain and have to participate in plantation work at the age of about 12 or 13. These girls and those who attend school have to carry the burden of household responsibilities. These girls spend their leisure by gossiping, listening TV or radio or moving around the labour lines rather than playing. 65 percent of the respondents report that they can not meet their friends when ever they wishes. They have to complete their works, and only at the time they have no work they can do so.

Inter personal Relations

In the tea plantation the labourers have to maintain different levels of interaction and so also the children for the managerial staffs and the clerks they have a sense of awe for 'the Sahibs', 'the Babus'. Their residential clusters are away from these two classes. (In Gudamline of Matigara Tea Estate the labour settlement and the staff quarters are side by side but they are segregated with thatch wall). They have no interaction with sahib's and babu's

children apart from observing them from a distance. The labourers' children interact with the children and adults of same class. They are bound to the adults with some kinship terms like 'Mama', 'Kaka' 'Dada' irrespective to their ethnicity. The labourers' children are friends to each other and their ethnic identity do not make any bar to this friendship. They play with each other, move together dine together and have cordial feelings with each others. Grouping of boys and girls starts generally after 10 years. Small separate groups of boys and girls are seen here and there in the tea garden engage in livefull chatty^{and} are observed mainly at the afternoon. There is no hard and fast rule in mixing with boys and girls. 86 percent of my respondents report that their daughters mix freely with the garden boys, play with them also move in and around tea garden. The rest 15 percent say they allow their daughters to speak to the boys but do not move in the tea garden. They report that in tea gardens separate grouping of boys and girls are normal practice. But in no situation they allow their daughters to go outside tea garden with their boy friends. When ever the girls need to go outside the garden, to 'haat' or to town they are accompanied by their parents, father or mother, or close female kins or neighbours. Only 5 percent of the respondent girls boldly report that they go outside the garden with their boy friends. Very few boys upto the age group of 14 go outside the garden alone though after this they go outside. At present it is common practice among the adolescent boys and girls of the garden to flew away from the garden and get married to each other and then come back to the garden. But this is not discussed here elaborately as this study concentrates on the age group upto 14 years. Among them this is not observed.

Girl Child Abuse

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act PL 94 - 247 1974 defines child abuse as "the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment or mental torture of a child under circumstances which indicate that the childs' health or welfare is harmed or threatened there by ". These abuse will include not only the physical violence and exploitation but will also include verbal, psychological, emotional, mental, social, economic and sexual abuse, exploitation and ill treatment deprivation and neglect of the girl child. The deprivation include depriving her of the love, care, concern and understanding and of non discriminatory treatment.

Female foeticide is not so prevalent among the poor tea plantation

labourers of Terai and Doars who neither know nor afford the use of modern advanced tests to detect the sex of the foetus. The mother of a number of daughters often take the help of native medicinemen (Deora) who can detect the sex of the foetus within the womb seeing some external signs on the mother's face and belly and hearing her newly growing likings and dislikings during pregnancy and prescribes the native processes and medicines to kill the foetus if it is a girl. Often the mother of 5 or 6 children adopts this native process of abortion in case of undesirable pregnancy. Though no record of this foeticide is kept neither the adibasi people admit the existence of this custom so easily.

Female infanticide is not exist in the plantation society of North Bengal. Though there are records of yearly 3 or 4 cases of girl child death due to negligence and lack of neo-natal care. These take place mainly due to ignorance rather than out of intention or deliberate negligence.

The child's right to development according to the UN Convention of the Right of the Children 1989 includes the right of education which is abused and violated in the plantation society of North Bengal. In the adibasi society the culture of education is absent. Their dire poverty make them reluctant to avail the education facility even when it is free of cost at primary level. The discriminatory treatment is seen in giving the girl children education opportunity. In the Terai garden among the total adibasi girls of the age group of 7-14 years 27.90 percent are literate. Among the literates 8.33 percent are dropouts. The rest have only get the primary education. The garden of Doars has three primary schools. So the primary education is comparatively high among the girl children though the secondary education among the adibasi girls is almost absent. Here among the adibasi girls at the age group of 7-14 years 36.63 percent are literate. 55 percent of the girls report that they are not sent to school despite of their wish to go to school. The girl child's very right to be a child and to enjoy her child hood is denied to her by abusing and exploiting her with the burden of too much work like carrying out household duties of cooking, cleaning huts, washing cloths, clearing utensils, taking care of siblings and cattles and so on. In the poverty sicken families of plantation labourers they too have to earn bread by working in plantation and outside. Though the percentage of working girls in the studied gardens is very low.

In the two gardens studied, not a single case of sexual harassment of

the girl is reported but this it is a common incident that she is exploited in her work place and cannot get proper wage for her job. She is severely criticized or scold if she fails to attend her job at time or fails to fulfil her assignment. All these denies her participation in games and enjoying leisure time or any entertainment which is essential for her healthy development.

Another form of girl child abuse is the marriage of girls at the tender age before attaining their physical and mental maturity to bear the post marriage stress and strain and having the chance of child mother as well as child widow. In none of these two gardens, studied, child marriage is arranged though flew away with their boy friends and marriage among the adolescent boys and girls of the age group of 15 - 18 years is common. Other forms of sexual Abuse or pushing the girl child into prostitution is not reported in the gardens.

The girl child's right to continue her life properly is abused by negligence, deprivation, discrimination, rejection and denial of her health and medical care and access to these facilities and through deprivation of her fundamental needs of nutrition food love care attention and acceptance. Malnourished girl child have been significantly higher than that of boys. Girls suffers from severe malnutrition. Neo-natal mortality is higher among the girls than the boys due to negligence. Girls are given smaller quantity of foods than the boys as well as foods of comparatively low calories. 70 percent of my respondents report that if they had a single egg in house it would be given to the boy who is the asset of the family. A girl infant is breast fed for shorter period because of the hankering of the parents for son. The mother has to conceive soon after the birth of a girl child. Girls are less immunized and brought to the health centre or hospital lesser than the boys until and unless her condition get critical. 62 percent of my respondents report that they are scolded by their parents without their fault following an encounter between their male siblings, Rejection, negligence, depriving her of her educational opportunities, burdening her with too much of works all these abuses the rights of girls in adibasi plantation society.

Abuse, of any kind violates the right of the girl child's healthy integrated development. The victim of any kind of physical and mental abuse suffers from internalised feeling of shame, disgust, anxiety, guilt, low self esteem, low self confidence, revolt, resentments and anguish. They tend to grow up into disgusting adults and emotionally either over sensitive or decentralized.

persons. The abuse of any kind impairs the healthy development of the girl child.

Girl Child Discrimination and its Impact

The traditional adibasi society do^{es} not advocate son preference nor show glum face to girl child. But the society of immigrant adibasi plantation labourers adopted the vice of gender discrimination from their Hindu caste neighbour to some extent. This study shown that about 50 percent of the respondent parents admit that they are gender bias though discrimination is not so pronounced after the birth. 60 percent of the respondent girl children accuse their parents by saying that they feel discrimination regarding everything. The parents scold the girls bitterly when any encounter occur in between them and their male sibs. Discrimination is very much pronounced regarding the girl childs' education and work. In most of the cases they are not sent to school or withdrawn from school and burdened by household work and sibling care while their male counterpart attend school and enjoy life by playing and moving idle without any household duty.

All these discriminatory treatments have a strong and pathetic affect on the girls. They from their very childhood think themselves less valuable, less wanted - a 'lesser child'. During interview a large section of them report that they prefer to be boy if they get a chance and by this can enjoy the childhood. This feeling of inferiority is so deeprooted among them that even the elderly women of this society can not believe that have the equal status to their husband inspite of working together in plantation work.

Changing Scene

An enquiry of the women of atleast three generations in tea plantation is made to grasp an idea of the changing condition of girl child of the present generation. These three generations of women include the girl child of present,



Girl Child, her Mother and Grand Mother

day. Her mother and her grand mother.

First the elderly ladies are taken into consideration. Mostly they are the wives or daughters of the early immigrants. They took enough time to settle in the environment of plantation of North Bengal. All of them were illiterate. Recalling their childhood these elderly ladies inform that they spend their childhood happily. They belong to poor families indeed, still they had no problem with their parents and the family members. At their time, birth of girl child in a family was not a matter of regret. Both the boys and the girls were treated equally, grown up togetherly eating the same food and clothing. At their time child labour was not in vogue. Women started working in plantation besides their household duties. The young girls, helped their mother at home. Child marriage was in practice and also the system of 'bride price'. Negotiation marriage was the prime mode of marriage. System of 'Ghardamad' was also in practice but in a different way than in these days. At that time if the 'Damad's family failed to pay bride price at the time of marriage the 'Damad' had to stay in his in law's house and had to work for the wife's family. Hence the girl from her childhood were considered ^{as} a valuable asset who in time would not only earn for her family by also her family would be gainer too at the time of her marriage. Early marriage and early pregnancy was a bitter experience for the girl child who may lose her life at the time of child birth through the crude tribal method of delivery.

The ladies of the next generation i.e. the mothers of the present day's girls did not face much complexities as the present one. Their time too girls were welcome in the family. They too were the victim of early marriage and early pregnancy. Though in their time love marriage, inter ethnic marriage were prevalent. The importance of bride price decreased due to the increase of love marriage. System of 'Ghardamad' changed to its modern sense and became a fancy of well to do sonless families. They were under the curse of unchecked child labour and immense exploitation and also had to do household duties.

The condition of present days girl child has been changed. The change is good in some respect and bad in some too. The innocent adibasi people of these days adopted the vice of 'son preference' from their caste counterpart. Today's girl child sees glum face in most of the families. She faces discrimination regarding fooding, clothing, treatment and so on. She is deprived of family affection, educational opportunities and is over burdened with work in and out of the family and plantation. Being deprived and exploited

from the very childhood these girls become quite desperate. In most of the cases the girls keep a section of their earning with them and these percentage increase as they grow up. At their early adolescence these girls become more arrogant. Soon these working girls go almost out of control of their parents. They move in and out of the gardens with their boy friends, buy fancy things from their earnings inspite of giving this to their parents. The percentage of fled away marriage of the girls at the age of 15 or 16 years have been increased. Live together without marriage alliances has also been increased along with the breaking of marriage too. As the earning from bride price is no more the girls today first to meet the economic interest of the family. The parents like their caste counterpart today start thinking the spending of money on the girl child is go to vain.

Implementation of the Different Measures taken by the Government of India for the Improvement of Girl Child in the Plantation Labour Society : A Critical Analysis

In the present decade girl child has come to the forefront of National development programme. Several schemes (mentioned earlier) have been taken by the Government of India as part of this. But if one look at the interior part of the society at the grassroot level just as the society of adibasi plantation labourer it would be seen that actually none of these developmental schemes have been implemented here. The following instances can be given in support of this statement.

The Government of India have aimed for free and compulsory education upto primary level for all. Several measures have been taken to this end but in these tea gardens no such initiative is seen. The Doars garden have three primary schools within its premises while the Terai garden has none except one in neighbouring locality. Data collected from the schools shown very low enrolment of adibasi girls in those schools. Girl child labour is prevalent in both of these gardens but in small scale. Girl Child marriage is not reported here. But this is not due to the enactment of any law rather the people understand its bad effect by themselves. No ICDS team has reached to these gardens with any development scheme. For mother child health care facility the garden health centres have only some vaccines which are inadequate in quantity. Female foeticide or female infanticide is not prevented here, this again is not out of the fear of any legal punishment but due to the fact that the poor adibasi people do not have such deeprooted apathy against

the girl child and also due to that they cannot afford the advanced medical techniques to abort female foetus. Stray cases of abortion is reported through the crude method in cases of unwanted pregnancy. These ignorant as well as innocent people of tea gardens of North Bengal are totally unaware about the schemes, programmes initiated and laws enacted. No such effort is seen to make them aware of the value of their girl child by any government body, or the social workers or Non Governmental Organisation nor the respective garden authority.

Status of Boys in Adibasi Plantation Society : A Comparative Study

Boys in all society have a special importance and so also in the society studied. The birth of child is useful to the family for helping and assisting parents and guardians. At the initial stage children are valued for being children and not for their positive or negative costs. However differentiation in gender roles and the norms of patriarchy make the boys more important than the girls. To adibasi folk both boys and girls are good but considering several socio-cultural issues the preference for boys is rather high to girls. The birth of child is normally greeted with warmest demonstration of unaffected joy in the home but when a male child is born there is much rejoicing. In both of the gardens both men and women assert that a boy's birth brings great joy. On the other hand the people greet girl's birth silently as they consider that the girl is some one else's property. The difference between son and daughter is marked from the very moment of birth and that also reflects the child rearing practice. The need of children is more associated with the need of son to look after the parents and family property. The woman whose first issue is a male child is considered very fortunate. Traditionally the adibasi society has no notion of such 'son preference' exists in caste society. But these adibasi people have adopted this trait from their caste neighbours. Besides they also feel the practical facility of having a boy child who is expected to look after them at their old age. 56.6 percent of my respondents admit that they prefer son. Hankering after son lead to form a large family of 4 or 5 or even more girl child is not uncommon in this plantation society.

In both of these gardens the boy child from a large part of child population. In Matigara Tea Estate it is 49.84 percent and in Soongachi Tea Estate its is 43.32 percent of the total child population. These boys are

considered as assets (Ghar ki Sobha) of family so are much beloved and much cared then their female counterpart, though the parents say that at the time of child birth they prefer son but after birth no such discrimination exists regarding fooding and clothing. Still discrimination exists. The boys are given the 'delicious food' viz. eggs, large share of weekly meat, the whole amount of milk, how small amount the family can gather. They get much health care when needed. The health centre and hospital of both the gardens have record of male child patient more than the females. When dispute in between the children occur the parents generally donot intervene. If they have to do so then the slap in 90 percent cases fall upon the girls' face without knowing who is the culprit. The boys enjoy the lion share of the family affection in most cases. Education of the children is a fancy of the parents of percent generation among the plantation labourers. But there is a great tendency of the parents to send the male child to school. In Matigara Tea Estate of the total literate adibasi childrens (43.42 percent of the child population) 29.05 percent is male child in Soongachi Tea Estate of the total literate adibasi children (51.67 percent of the total child population) 25.82 percent is male child. In both of these gardens generally the male child^{ren} are allowed to go upto the secondary level of education. Parents send their son to school if they afford it inspite of the boy is less intelligent to their girl who is kept at home with a huge burden of household work. In most case the boys do not have to do any household work. He may be a school goer or may not be but enjoys the childhood. In few cases they take the charge of cattle rearing reluctantly. Another peculiar thing is that in these families the parents allow their girls to work in the field from their tender age if necessary arises. But in case of boy child's job they are very reluctant. In Matigara Tea Estate of the total child population 12.63 percent are job holder of which boy child form only 0.10 percent. In Soongachi Tea Estate 10.53 percent of child population are job holders of which 2.30 percent is the boy child. The boys enjoys much freedom than that of the girls inspite of being younger in age.

Above all the boys in this society enjoy such a position that the girls are gealous about them. 95 percent of my girl informants report that they are not happy with their life because they are treated by their parents in such a way that they are inferior to their male counterparts.

There is no such ethnic differences regarding the preference of boy child. Rather it mainly depends on the attitude of the parents, the member of

girl child in the family, the hankering of the parents regarding the boy child, the economic condition of the family and so on. From the following table the comparison between the boy and the girl child can easily be grasped.

Table 6.4 : Comparison between Boy and Girl Child.

Criteria	Preference given to
Birth	Son
Fooding and Clothing	Almost equal to all
Health Care	Son
Education	Son
Household Work	Girls bear the burden mainly.
Economic Participation	Girls are employed mainly.

Source : Field Observation.

OBSERVATION

Children are equally valuable in all societies and so also in adibasi society, where they are considered as the 'Gift of God'. Tribal society traditionally had no such son preference as experienced in the society of the caste people neither showed any gloomy face to the new born girls. But in tea gardens living side by side with the caste people the innocent adibasis too have adopted the ugly idea of 'son preference'. Now son to them is considered as 'future helper', he may not take care of them in future still he would live before their eyes; he is considered as the asset of a family, 90 percent of the respondents of both the gardens opine that in an ideal family there must be both boy and girls but almost all of them says a boy child is a must for a family. In the gardens no such pronounced discrimination between the boy girl child exists, except in case of education. Here the girl children are over burdened with household activities while the boys enjoy too much free time. In Matigara tea estate the total number of child are 349 of which 50 percent are girls and in the studied part of Soongachi Tea Estate there are 360 children and the girls constitute 55 percent. 92 percent of the respondents prefer family planning to cope with the 'high price' of essential commodities.

The family back ground of these children are very poor. From their parents they have inherited dire poverty, ignorance and illiteracy. The children

whose parents both are permanent job holders enjoy a comparatively good condition than the others. In most cases they get a chance to go to school and do not need to go out for earning; those children whose either parent is a permanent labourer their condition is quite better but the condition of the ward of the temporary labourer is worst. They do not even get food regularly. Study is more than a dream to them. Even they have to earn by working within the garden as child labourer or outside.

Child rearing is the duty of mothers who do it with the help of the elderly women in family or neighbouring. Mostly women in tea garden work as labourers and it is hard for them to take proper care of their kids. In Soongachi tea estate there are 12 creches to look after the kids of the working mother upto 2 years. While in Terai tea garden there is no such facility. Here mother generally keep their kids under the care of their elderly siblings, often take them to the garden tying them with cloths on their back.

Health picture in both of the gardens is not very good. There is lack of consciousness of both personal as well as environmental hygiene. The sanitation system as well as sewage of both the gardens is very low. There is also lack of hygiene training. The children play on mud and dust in bare feet and very often without dress. They suffer from skin diseases. The close living with domestic animals lead to some contagious diseases to them. Dysentery and diarrhoea is common to them along with iron deficiency, anaemia, worm infection and malnutrition among the children. Both of the gardens have medical facilities which record that the girl children are rarely taken to them than that of the boys.

Education status of the tribals are very low; though among the tribal children it is quite high. Of the children at the age group of 7 - 14 years 43.42 percent children of Terai garden is literate while it is higher (51.67 percent) in Doars garden where there are three primary schools within the garden. But this percentage is high only upto primary level (35.16 percent in Terai garden and 37.32 percent in Doars garden). This percentage is very low among the girls (13 percent in Terai; 26 percent in Doars garden) who very soon have to stop their education. The tribals traditionally have no culture of education. They are not at all serious of the education of their ward. Girls education, to them is meaningless. They think that girls have to rear child, prepare food and pick up leaves; none of these need education. In many families girls stay at home to look after their younger siblings and cattles as

well as to do the household works left by their mothers while their brothers enjoy school life.

The adibasi girls are over burdened with domestic works from dawn to dusk. Collection of fire wood, cleaning huts, utensils, washing cloths bring water, look after the cattles and the younger siblings are their normal duty. Those who are studying go to school after doing these. The unfortunate ones who stay at home very often prepare the lunch of their family when the mother is at work. Some also work as wage earner in the local construction work as daily labour. Though this situation is absent in Soongachi. But in both of these gardens very small percentage of children (5.32 percent and 12 percent in Doars and Terai garden respectively) work in plantation too. Though light activities are given to them like light digging, cleaning of nursery beds, cleaning the bushes or nullahs, picking up the seeds of shed trees and the stalks etc. But all these rob their childhood from them.

The performance of religious rituals are the job of the elderly male members of a tribal family. The younger ones only observe these. The younger girls often show 'deep dhup' to god and goddess, Some often fast on Siv Puja. Some worship Tulsi. All these they adopted from their caste neighbours.

The respondents report that the tribal girls have very little leisure. They lose their childhood even in their childhood. Leisure is lesser among the girls of working mothers. In little leisure these poor children play indigenous games like chupa-chupi, kunda-kundi, dom-dom, kitkit etc. The comparatively aged one of 12 - 14 years spend much time in gossip.

The children of all ethnic groups are friends together. All the elderly people of a locality are called by the name, 'kaka' 'dada', 'mama', 'mami' 'bhatu'.

Child abuse, especially the abuse of the girl child is a common crime in our present society. The adibasi plantation society is not free from it. Female foeticide and infanticide is not reported in either garden. But depriving the girls of minimum health care and nutrition, depriving them of their right of education, over burdening them with household activities and sibling care thus rob their leisure and childhood are some crude forms of abuse too. No incident sexual abuse has been reported in the gardens though the working girls are always become afraid of being scolded by the sardar at their work place due to late and lack of fulfilment of the assignment given. The abuse

and discrimination affect the girl child a lot. 70 percent of my respondents report that they have to be boys because being girls they enjoy lesser freedom, respect, care and comfort than that of their brothers. They grow from their childhood with lesser self confidence, self respect and low esteem.

The ignorant and innocent adibasi labourers living at the remote part of North Bengal know nothing about the plans and programmes initiated by the Government for the development of their girl child. No such effort is seen to make them aware of the benefit they can get either from the garden authorities or Government agencies or the existing local NGOs. So the girl child among the adibasi plantation labourers are still in total darkness.

As far as the comparative study regarding the position of girl child in the two gardens of Terai and Doars is concerned it is more or lessly same. The only difference is that as the Doars garden has three primary schools within its premises. Here the enrolment of girls upto primary level is comparatively high then that of the Terai garden. The percentage of girl children working in plantation is comparatively low in Doars garden. Here girls need not go out of the garden for work. Here in this garden (Doars garden) there are a number of creches so the burden of sibling care is also less on the elder sisters. Though the other things are almost same in both of these gardens. In Matigara Tea Estate the male child form 49.84 percent of the total child population. It is 43.32 percent in Soongachi Tea Estate. The status of boy child is superior to the girl regarding health and education. The boy child enjoys more health care than the girl and also the more nutritious foods. Of the total literate adibasi children of Matigara Tea Estate (43.42 percent) 29.05 percent is male child. It is 24.82 percent out of 51.67 percent of Soongachi Tea Estate. They enjoy their childhood without work burden and get a larger share of family affection.

Profile of Girl Child in Tea Plantation : Some Case Studies

In the previous chapter a study on the social situation of the girl child among the adibasi plantation labourers is presented. In this chapter a profile of the girl child is given on the basis of some 20 case studies gathered from the two tea gardens under study. 10 cases from each garden have been presented. Case number one to ten are from Matigara Tea Estate and case number eleven to twenty are from Soongachi Tea Estate.

Matigara Tea Estate

Case No. 1

Patni Turi is a girl of 14. Her father is retired due to illness and mother is a permanent labourer. They are two sisters and one brother. Her elder sister (19) works in the plantation as a casual labourer and is expected to get her father's job soon. Both work at 175 weekly wage basis. The brother (2) stays at home. Patni works in the garden as 'Kodali' on 15/- daily wage. Her working hour is 7.30 A.M. to 12 noon. She has her mother and an elder sister, so she is not so much burdened with household works. As usual in the line she too gets up early in the morning. Her mother and sister prepare food and tea while she cleans their hut, courtyard, utensils. Then takes breakfast and tea and goes to the garden for work. The father do the rest works at home. He prepares lunch for them and also takes care of the boy. None of the boy and girls have attended school. The girl comes back home at the noon. The break is from 12 to 2 p.m. which is very short period. It is also very busy time in the line. The wells are crowded mainly by the female folk all the whom want to get a few mugs of water. At that time she does not take bath but wash hands and face only and take the lunch. She does not work in second shift but her mother and elder sister do. At the noon, after a little nap, she along with the other girls move here and there in the bush and collect fire wood. She brings water from well at that time before the well get crowded. She brings the cattles from the field in the afternoon. Then takes bath, dress and moves in and around the garden with her mates and spends

the after noon in gossiping. In the evening she sees television at home, often listen to radio, often plays with her brother. They are not allowed to go out the hut in the evening. Her mother and elder sister prepare dinner. She often helps them. All the habitants of labour line sleep early after dinner as they have to wake up early in the morning. The girl opines that her parents love her, though they care much their son because he is small. She gives her income to her father who buys her dresses when she need it. Her parents never take her decision when any problem arises. She is not allowed to go outside the garden alone or with her friends but only with her parents. They buy the things of her choice. She can wear dresses of her wish, can meet her friends when she wish. There is no restriction on her in speaking or playing with boys but her mother forbidsher to move in an around the line with them. The girl has no ritual to do except observing 'Upash' on 'Shivaratri' day. She is satisfied with her life and does not like to go to school.

Case No. 2

Roma Baraik is a beautiful girl of around 14 years, lives with her brother and mother. Her father has gone away and lives with another woman in a neighbouring bastee. Romá's mother is a permanent labourer, works on 175 rupees wage weekly. Roma works as 'Jogari' (casual labour) outside the garden. At the time of my field work she was working as jogari in the road repairing work just outside the garden on Rs. 20/- daily wage. She spends her day a bit differently. Her day starts from the early morning; she cleans their hut and courtyard and helps the mother in preparing food and tea. After this the mother goes out for her routine work in the tea garden. The girl cleans the utensils, cooks food for them, brings water from well and prepares her brother for school. Then she goes out for work. She takes her lunch at her work place as she cannot come home at the midday. Along with other women who also work as 'jogari' she awaits outside the garden from where the contractors collect them for work. In the afternoon she comes back from her work, takes bath, dress carefully, then moves here and there in and around the lines with her mates. But they never go outside the garden. In the evening she comes back her home. Both of these children have a strong affiliation to their mother. The evening these three spend together by chatting; they listen to radio but never go to see television to other's house. (Her father has taken away their own television). She helps her mother in preparing dinner her brother read and soon the day ends.

The girl says that there is no discrimination in their family among boys and girls. Her father has gone away; so they three love each other so strongly. When it is asked that don't she regret that she cannot go to school like her brother, she boldly says that she should not as she opines that she has to earn with her mother because her father has gone away. She keeps a small part of her income with her and gives the major part to her mother. She buys her ornaments and cosmetics when she need. She never goes out to movie or to 'haat' alone but her mother always accompany her. She freely speaks with the boys but her mother forbids her to move outside the garden with them. In her work place too she is asked to stay with the women folk of the garden. Her mother takes her opinion when she needs. The girl being bold and beautiful is not satisfied of being girl, though she herself don't know the cause. The girl lives with the hope that her father will come back to them and they will live together happily like the previous days. She does not observe any religious ritual. Her mother gives 'sanjbati' in the evening. When her father stayed with them he often arranged 'bap-ma puja' which does not take place now.

Case No. 3

Rajni Munda is a girl of 14 years. Both of her parents are permanent labourers. Her elder sister lives with their aunt in Kurseong while their elder brother reads at school. Rajni and her sister Majni (12) are the girls belong to the group of the lucky girls who get a chance to attend school. The girls too belong to the families with better economic condition. The girls are burdened with the household works alongwith their studies. They do not need to work in the plantation. The girls wake up in the early morning with their parents. Rajni helps her mother in preparing food when Majni brooms the hut, courtyard. As the parents go out for work the girls do the household works together. When one cleans the utensils the other washes cloths, one brings water from well, the other takes the cattle to the field. Generally the elder one does the heavier jobs than the younger one. They jointly prepare lunch for them and then go to school at 11 a.m. Rajni reads at class IV while Majni at class III. At the afternoon they come back from school. Their parents do not allow them to mix or play with the kids of the garden. They play within their courtyard and among brothers and sisters where their cousin Joti Chetri (daughter of Nepali father and Adibasi Mother) comes. They see T.V. at home, listen to radio then read in the evening. The mother alone prepares their supper.

The girls report that there is not discrimination regarding food, dress or treatment. ^{They} get their dresses fancy ornaments from their parents when they need it. The girl ^{are} not allowed to move in and around the garden alone or to move outside the garden except with the parents. ^{They} can choose the dress but ^{do} not have the right to give her opinion when any family problem arises. ^{They} do not perform any religious ritual but to see the 'Bap-Ma Puja'. The girls ^{are} satisfied with the life.

Case No. 4

Rukmoni Mohali is a girl of 13 years. The parents of this girl are the permanent labourers of the garden. The father is a chowkider and the mother is the maid of manager's cottage. The girl has elder brothers, two of them attend school and two are dropouts but the girl is confined within home. (Even the mother of the girl during my household census forgot to inform of her existence). The family is one of the few better off families in the plantation yet the parents don't send the girl to school. From this, the status of the girl in the family is clear though the mother does not admit that any discrimination exists in their treatment between girls and boys. The girl starts her day by helping her mother in preparing breakfast. Then the mother goes out to attend the cottage. She has no specific time of work but to attend the cottage before eight and has to work upto noon till she finishes her due tasks. The girl cleans their home and utensils, washes the cloths, brings water from the well, then sends the brothers to school. When the mother comes back she prepares lunch and the girl assists her. The girl's mother being the maid of manager's cottage has a special status among the labour women folk. She never allows her daughter to move here and there around the garden and lines with the other girls. So this girl has to obey certain restrictions. She cannot meet her mates whenever she wishes or to move here and there. She can chat with her mates only when the girls come to their courtyard and she has no work. Restriction is very strong on meeting, chatting and moving with boys. She has no income of her own. Neither her opinion is taken in any family problem. She can only go out with her mother. She wants to go to school but can not understand why her mother does not send her to school. She reports that for any fault the mother accuses her and not her brothers even when she has no guilt at all. She admits that she gets dress, food equally whenever she need. She is allowed to see television or listen to music at home when she wants. She doesn't have to work like the other girls

or she does not has to go out to the field to rear the goats still she is very much unsatisfied with her life. Her parents never allow her to go outside. Even they don't take them to 'haat' while her brothers go alone. She is only allowed to accompany her mother to the nearby Siv temple when she goes there for puja.

Case No. 5

Mono Naik is a girl of 9 years and probably is the sweetest and luckiest girl I have met in the garden. She lives in a joint family where the grand-pa, probably the most experienced and efficient labourer of the garden, looks after the 'Nursery bed'. Her grand-ma is an old lady works as casual labourer. Both of her parents are permanent labourer. She has a brother of her own and a small step brother lives with them with his mother. The girl under the shadow of mother and grand mother has no work to do. Her step mother being a housewife, takes the total house hold responsibility. The family is financially better off. The girl has no economic participation nor her opinion is taken in any family problem. She reads at class III in the local school. Except reading the thing she has to do is playing wearing silver ornaments in ears, nose, neck and arms. She plays whenever she wants and with whom she wishes. She never goes out of the garden and she does not need it. Whatever she wants her papa and grandpa bring for her. Like a small butterfly she moves here and there in the garden. She looks to be highly satisfied with her life.

Case No. 6

Drupdi Roidas is a girl of 14 years and is the daughter of an old permanent labourer who has taken retirement and gave his job to his son. Drupodi's mother acts as mid wife in the line. The girl works as 'Paniwali' in the garden at Rs. 15/- daily wage. The girl is illiterate. The girl only works in the garden. Her sister in law lives with them who does all the household works along with her mother who stays at home when she has no case to attend. In the morning the girl takes (tiffin) and then goes to the field for her duty. In the mid day she comes back takes bath and lunch. She has to go to field by 2p.m. The girl comes back in the afternoon; get refreshed then move out with her friends. She spends the afternoon by gossiping and moving around the garden. In the evening she often stays with her friends, sees television with them, often she stays at home in the evening though being

tired she never helps her mother or sister in law in preparing dinner. The girl admits that she has some boy friends with whom she often goes to see movies too. They go to 'haat' together. Her parents allow her to speak and meet every body because they say soon she will get married and will have to obey so many restrictions. She keeps a part of her income with her and spends it at her own wish. Her parents consult her when they need her decision. She fasts on the Sivaratri day with her sister in law and attends the Siv temple. She feels no discrimination in the behaviour of her parents in treating her. She says she does not want to go to school and is very much satisfied with her life. She is awaiting for marriage which will be arranged after a few years with her elder sister's husband who has been died a few months ago at the time of giving birth of a child.

Case No. 7

Belpattia Oraon is a girl of 10 years. This girl is the only daughter of a man who was previously a permanent labourer but now has to retire as he is suffering from Leprosy. His work is given to his wife. Belpatti too is suffering from Leprosy. She has a small brother of about 2 years. The father is suffering from frustration due to his disease. His work is given to his wife, who previously was his dependent, and now become the single bread earner. The guy by no means is ready to lose his authority over the family and always be arrogant, angry and dominant. He earns nothing, but the wife has to give her total income to him as the job she is doing is actually of his. The man spends a lot of money after alcohol. The little girl is growing up in a peculiar atmosphere at home. The mother goes out early morning for work. The father moves here and there without any job or any income. He neither takes any household responsibility. The economic condition of the family is very poor. The girl helps her mother in making morning breakfast and tea. As the mother leaves home for work she alone cleans their hut and the utensils. She brings water from the well; then looks after the brother. She is too small to prepare the lunch. The mother when comes back at mid day she prepares the lunch, and the girl helps her. The father often comes to eat with them and starts quarrel by hooks or by cooks. The busy mother soon leaves home for her job. Most of the days it is the girl upon whom the father discharges his anger by beating her. Then he goes out. In the noon the girl goes out for collecting the farrowed. She knows that she is suffering from the dreaded disease, though it is not she alone who has this disease, still she is bit frustrated too.

The girls of her age generally avoid her for her disease. They also tease her for her father's hot temper and quarrelling habit. She spends most of her times with her brother Bikram. The medical team of District Leprosy Unit comes once in every month and gives her free medicine like the others. The tired mother comes back home in the afternoon after the whole day job. She cannot give the girl much mental support. She has her cooking. She has to give much time to her small son who stays the whole day without the mother. The girl helps her mother in preparing the dinner. The quarrel at night is a regular incident in their hut when her drunk father comes back. It is also a common thing in the garden but the girl says that her father is worse of the lot.

Case No. 8

Amrita Naik is a girl of 8 years. She is the daughter of a permanent labourer. Amrita's mother has gone away with another man leaving behind her three daughters Amrita (8), Arti (6) and Moriom (3). The father has married another woman of this garden from whom he has a son of 1½ years. Amrita's step mother is a casual labourer who at present works in the morning shift only. Amrita is the poor girl who has to live with her step mother. She is illiterate and is burdened with a lot of works from the early morning upto the whole day. In the morning when her mother prepares their breakfast she cleans the hut, brings water from the well then cleans the utensils. As the parents go out for work the small girl takes the soul responsibility of her sibs and even her step brother. She washes them, keeps them clean, gives them food when they need it, makes them sleep, plays with them and engage them with any kind of play and work. From 7^{A.M.} to 12 PM this small girl acts as the mother of the smaller ones. When the parents come back she helps her mother in preparing their lunch. In the noon when mother stays at home she washes their cloths in the well; then goes out with other girls for collecting fire wood. She collects and prepares mud for repairing their hut when it is needed. The girl admits that there is discrimination regarding all respect. The mother loves the boy more because he is her own. Her younger sisters can play at their hut but she has no time to play. She is not allowed to move along here and there within the lines. Her mother chooses dresses for her. She has no money to spend for herself. Her parents never take her and her sisters outside the garden. The mother often takes the small boy when she goes to 'haat' or health centre but not the girls. She says that she never gone to the health

centre as her fever 'cure by itself'. The girl is not satisfied with her life.

Case No. 9

Largi Lohar is a poor girl of 12 years. She is the younger daughter of a jobless man; Her mother is a casual labourer and her deaf elder sister 'Beheri' (14) too works as casual child labourer (Rs. 15/- daily). The girl probably is the poorest girl in the garden. Her family is too poor to say. The father does not work. Very often he sells his own blood, which is a common practice in this garden, and spends the money on 'Daru'. The girl very often begs to earn their livelihood. The girls of her age laugh at her. In most of the time the mother has no work in the garden. She often goes outside the garden for job, and does not come back for the whole day. The father moves here and there. The girl stays at their 'shed' alone. She often brings water, collects fire wood, and moves here and there in the lines. She awaits eagerly for the return of her mother and elder sister who brings some food for her.

Case No. 10

Moriom Naik is a girl of 14 years. This girl is the daughter of the only Christian man of the garden who was a permanent labourer previously but gone away with another woman and settled in a neighbouring baste. The mother of the girl, Rimni, works as a permanent labourer and her son Jullius too is a permanent labourer. The girl has another sister Christina (13). They have no relation with the father, Immanual, and out of terrific hatred they even give up his religion Christianity and became Saosar again. Moriom works as casual labourer in 15 rupees daily while Christina does the domestic works. None of them are literate. The girls are free to move in and out the garden. They have no restriction in meeting the boys or moving out with them to haat and movie. Moriom keeps a part of her income with her which the two sisters spend at their own wish. They feel no discrimination regarding food, cloth and treatment but they are ashamed of their father's deed. People particularly the women folk and the girls always taunt them for their father.

Soongachi Tea Estate

Case no. 11

Purbi Oraon is a girl of 14 year who lives with her parents. Due to his illness Purbi's father took retirement and his job was given to his son Sona Oraon who is now a permanent labourer and look after the family. But his

income is not sufficient to bear up their joint family of eight so Purbi has to work along with her mother who too is a casual labourer. Purbi's sister in law takes charge of the household activities. Purbi works in plantation at single shift as a 'Pharua'. After taking morning tea and tiffin she goes for work at 7 AM and work upto 12 P.M. At noon returning home she takes bath and lunch then enjoys a little nap. At the afternoon after a careful dressing she brings drinking water from the near by tap where she enjoys some chat with her mates. At home she cleans the hut and courtyard then go^{es} out with her friends in and around the lines. She enjoys her evening in seeing television at home while her mother and sister in law prepare dinner. She gives her wage to her brother who control all the family matters. She takes money from him when she need something. She enjoys a total freedom. She can meet her friends both boy and girl, when ever she wishes. Very recently her brother allows her to go to see movie at Malbazar with her friends. This girl seems to be happy. She does not regret as she can not go to school. She wants to make her job permanent within few years and wants to get married though she says that she has not yet select any body.

Case No. 12

Asha Munda is a girl of 11 years. She is the elder daughter of a permanent labourer. Her mother Arti is a housewife. Asha is a student and read at class - I in the garden school. The father goes out for work early in the morning while the mother prepares breakfast for him. At this time the girl take care of her small brother. Then she cleans the hut and courtyard, often plays with their cocks and hens, often does her study. She then starts preparing for school which is 20 minutes walk from their line. She is lucky enough to have her mother at home and can spend a care free life till now. Returning from school in the after noon she takes her tiffin and goes out for playing. She is never allowed to go far away without her parents. Her father gives her the things which she requires. Her opinion is never taken in any family matter. She attends school but her parents never ask her to study. The girl is satisfied with her life but get jealous when sees that her brother is treated specially by the parents.

Case No. 13

Radha Sabar is a girl of 13 years. She is the eldest daughter of a permanent female labourer and the father is a jobless man. The father often works as casual labourer but most of the time walk here and there. He has a

strong addiction to 'Haria'. The mother works hard to maintain the family and Radha bears the burden of the household duties and sibling care upon her small shoulder. From the early dawn her day starts. She helps her mother in preparing the breakfast and tea; the mother then goes away for work. The girl cleans the hut and utensils then feeds her younger brother Ram (10) and sister Rupi (2). Then she brings water from nearby well, washes cloths and finally prepares the brother for school. At the mid day she prepares lunch for the family and gives relief to the tired mother who comes back home at around 12 AM. After lunch she goes out with her mates to collect fire wood. This is her pass time which she enjoys by gossiping with her mates. She spends her afternoon in the same way, through gossiping, after bringing water from the tap nearby. The mother prepares dinner in the evening and the girl keeps her siblings at her charge. She says that the mother consult her whenever she need it. She is allowed to meet her friends but not allowed to go out side the garden with them. She does not like study and is happy with her life. Only thing that disturbs her is the daily evening quarrel in between her parents, though her mother assures her that she will not leave her and the younger kids.

Case No. 14

Savi Oraon is a girl of 12 years, Both of the parents of Savi are permanent labourers. Savi and her brother read in the garden primary school while her elder sister Sita (17) takes the charge of the household activities. In the morning when Savi's mother and elder sister prepare morning breakfast she cleans the hut. Then takes tiffin. After this she takes their cattle to the nearby grazing land. Often she accompanies her elder sister in bringing water. The sister then starts cooking and she takes the preparation for school. This lucky girl reads in class-III. After returning home in the afternoon she takes, tiffin, brings the cattle from the field then plays with her mates, most of whom are school goers like her. She is happy with her life and feel pity of her fellow girls who can not attend school. Very often she gets afraid that she too would have to leave school as soon as her sister get married.

Case No.15

Jaymoti Santhal is a girl of 14 years. Jaymoti is the daughter a permanent labourer. Jaymoti's mother is dead. Her brother lives in the other line with her maternal uncle and attends school. Poor Jyamoti has to work hard for the family, both at home and also in the plantation. Her day starts from the early

morning. She prepares morning tea and tiffin for her and her father. Then they go out for work. At noon she returns home, takes bath and prepares their lunch. After this the father goes out for the second shift of work. The girls household work starts since then. She cleans their hut and the courtyard, and also the utensils. She washes the cloths in nearby well and brings drinking water. She may take little nap after finishing her work. She spends her afternoon with her mates by gossipping mainly. In the evening she prepares their dinner; listen to radio, then takes her food and get asleep. She keeps a part of her income with her and gives a part to the father. The father allows her to meet her friends both male and female and allows her to move outside the garden with them. He takes her opinion whenever he requires it. But the girl is not happy with her life. She feels quite insecured and afraid if her father marry for the second time and drive her away. She thinks that she badly need a permanent job.

Case No. 16

Monita Munda is a girl of 13 years. She is the younger daughter of a permanent labourer and her mother is permanent too. Monita's elder sister is married. She has a brother of about 14 years who too goes to school. Monita reads at class VI in the local school. She is a lucky girl of this garden who can continue her study upto secondary level and enjoys special prestige in the line. The elderly women push forward her to speak with any stranger because she is considered to be very smart and wise. Like the other girls in the garden her day too starts with preparing tea and breakfast for the parents who soon go out. Then she cleans their hut and utensils, brings water from well, look after the cattle. She prepares lunch for them and about eleven she and her brother go out for school. At the mid day the parents come back and go out for a second shift of work after sometimes. The girl comes back from school at the afternoon. After taking tiffin she moves here and there in the garden with her friends. Her parents impose no restriction on her in choosing dress or friends. She has many relatives house in the garden where she goes frequently. In the evening she often seestelevision though she has to give some time to her study too. She has no income of her own but she says that her parents give her 5 rupees in every week as pocket money which she spends at her tiffin time. She is allowed to meet her friends in neighbouring villages outside the tea garden. She feels no discrimination regarding food and dress. Her parents treat her and her brother equally in all respects but

she feels that they love the brother more because whenever any quarrel arise in between them they support the son. She is not satisfied of being girl because she thinks if she was a boy she could enjoy more liberty like the brother and had no work to do.

Case No. 17

Susila Lohar is a girl of 12 years. This girl is the daughter of a casual labourer. Her mother is a permanent labourer working in the plantation. She has an elder sister, a younger sister and a small brother Montaj (2). All these children are illiterate. The girl's day starts from early morning. She with her mother prepare food and tea for all. Then she cleans the hut and courtyard. After taking food the parents and the elder sister go out for the work of morning shift which starts from 7 am. Susila cleans the utensils, washes the cloths then brings water from well and also takes care of her younger sibs. She prepares lunch for all. In the after noon the parents and the elder sister come back. After some refreshment all take the lunch. After a little rest Susila and her sister. Tula goes out for collecting firewood from the field. They also take care of their goats. In the after noon coming back from the field the parents take bath then rest. The father goes out with his mates. Tula and Susila go out for playing while Montaj goes to its mother. In the evening the girls come back home. They enjoy this time by listening T.V. or radio. None of them have to study as all are illiterates. The elder girl: often help the mother in preparing their dinner after which the days ends. The girl says that she don't like to be girl because she has no time of her own. The parents love the son more. She and her sisters only has to work for the whole day. The parents do not allow them to go outside the garden nor they take them outside. They only take their son when they go outside. Discrimination also exist regarding good food and new dresses. The girl is very unhappy with her life.

Case No. 18

Sabila Lohar is a girl of 13 years. This girl is the daughter of a temporary labourer who's wife is a permanent one. She has two younger sisters and a small brother. She has to work in plantation along with her parents for the maintenance of the pretty large family. The girl's mother had a hankering after male child and she boldly says that she loves and cares her son more as he is the only hope of her old age. Of the girls Sabila works in the plantation as a 'Kodali' on Rs. 15/- daily wage. She takes some of the household

responsibilities in the absence of her parents. In the morning she helps her mother in preparing tea and breakfast then goes out for her work in the plantation. Her sister takes the responsibility of the household and the smaller sibs in their absence. She works in double shift and spends very little time at home. At the mid day she comes home only to take lunch. At the after noon after returning from her work she enjoys her time with her mates. The girl admits that her parents love the brother most who is the central figure of their care and attraction. The parents hope to send him to school after a few years to make him 'man', though they think that their girls don't need education. Sabila wants to go to school and accuses her mother who does not allow her to go. She does not like to work which is 'hard' as well as 'bo. rning'. She is not satisfied with her life. Being a bit shy she cannot express her feeling. She admits that she often gone to weekly haat with her mates - both boys and girls though the parents do not allow her to go outside the tea garden alone or with friends. She is allowed to move within the lines with her friends. Sabila keeps a part of her income with her and often buy things of her choice though the parents bring her dresses when they think the girl need it. The parents never take her opinion in any problem. She does not participate in any religious rituals except observing the ancestor worship done occasionally by her father.

Case No. 19

Somri Sabar is a girl of 14 years. The case of Somri is very unique. This girl lives with a cruel step mother who takes the revenge of her husband's second marriage on her. The girl's father from his first marriage had no child and married second time. He kept his first 'banj' wife with his new wife. These two women have had a great rivalry in between them. Then Somri came. After some years her mother died living behind another new born son 'Sona'. Now these two children live with the father and the step mother. The father is old and alcoholic and took retirement giving his permanent job to his first wife i.e. the 'step mother' Now this lady is the only bread earner of the family. Somri has to work for the family from dawn to dusk. She does all the household activities from cleaning to washing and preparing food too. She also takes care of her small brother 'Sona'. The father being too much alcoholic is a good for nothing fellow. The mother works outside home. At home her only work is to abuse Somri at any cost. The girl is exploited by the mother badly. She has no rest, no leisure even no peace. Education is more than a dream

to her. Her mother do^{es} not allow her to me^et her neighbours too. The story of Somri is a matter of discussion in the line but no one can help her.

Case No. 20

Deomoti Santhal is a girl of 10 years. The case of Deomoti is peculiar. She is the only daughter of an aged couple. Both of her parents were permanent labourers. The girl's mother has give up her permanent job after her birth. It is believed that the girl is the 'Gift of God'. She came to this family, as the God i.e. the 'Deo' wishes, at a time when the aged mother was about to believe that she is a 'banj'. To look after the girl the mother g.ive up her job. She is given all the best things of their society. She has no work to do. But inspite of the girl's wish to go to school the parents do not allow her to go there as they think that the 'Deo' may be angry if the girl get education which is against their traditional culture. She is not allowed to work or to move alone. The over caring parents make the girl's life hell by their blind belief.

To get a clear picture of the adibasi girl child in tea plantation society let us prepare a table of their profile.

TABLE 7. : The Profile of Girl Child in Tea Plantation

Sl. No.	Name	Ethnic group	Name of the garden	Family background	Household Duties	Educational Status	Economic Participation	Freedom enjoys	Voice in the family matter	Opinion about life	Position in the family
1.	Patni (14 yrs)	Turi	Matigara Tea Estate	Father-rtd Lab. Mother-per Lab. Elder sistr-Cas Lab. in Pt.	Nil	Illiterate	Works in plantation as Cas. lab.in 15/- daily wage basis	Meets and moves with the girl friends only in and around the lines. Give total income to the father	Nil	Satisfied	Both the parents and the girl admit that discrimination exists in the family against the girl
2.	Roam (14 yrs)	Baraik	Do	Mother is separated from the father work as per. lab. in Pt.	Mother's helper. Takes the responsibility of household in the absence of mother	Do -	Works out side pt. as cas. wage lab. at 15/- daily wage	- Do -	Mother takes her decision when needed	Very depressed due to the father's behaviour. She is not satisfied.	Discrimination exists regarding education and working in and outside the house hold.
3.	Rajni (14 yrs)	Munda	Do	Both the parents are per. lab. in Pt.	Mother's helper	Reads in Class IV	Nil	No freedom at all	Nil	Satisfied	The girl's position is good in family except she is over buddened with household works
4.	Rukhmini (13yrs.)	Mohali	Do	Both the parents are per. lab.in pt.	Takes the household responsibilities in the absence of the mother	Illiterate	Nil	Do	Nil	Can not say	Position of the girl is not good. Discrimination exists against her regarding everything.

Sl.	Name	Ethnic group	Name of the garden	Family background	Household Duties	Educational Status	Economic Participation	Freedom enjoys	Voice in the family matter	Opinion about life	Position in the family
5.	Mono (9 yrs)	Naik	Matigara Tea Estate	Live in a joint family where almost all the members work in Pt. Mother, Father & Grandpa - per Lab. Mother & Grandma-Cas. Lab.	Nil	Read in class III	Nil	Satisfied	Nil	Cannot say	The girl's position is very good in the family which accept her with total love and care
6.	Dropodi (14 yrs)	Rohidas	Do	Father-rtd. Mother Mid wife Eld borhter-per lab. in Pt.	Nil	Illiterate	Works as paniwali in Pt. at 15/- daily wage.	Free to meet every body and move with keeps a part of her income	Nil	Satisfied	Well accepted in the family.
7.	Belpatti (10 yrs)	Oraon	Do	Sick father rtd. Mother per lab. in Pt.	Buddend with full of house hold duties	Do	Nil	Nil	Nil	Very sad and depressed for her illness and ashamed due to father's behaviour	The girl suffering from leprocy very badly treated mainly by the alcoholic father discrimination exists regarding everything.
8.	Amrita (8 yrs)	Naik	Do	Fathr per lab. step Mother cas. lab. in Pt.	Mother's helper as well as burdened with sibling care. Take the total household responsibility in the absence of mother.	Do	Nil	Nil	Nil	Cannot say	Discrimination exists against the girl regarding everything

Sl.	Name	Ethnic group	Name of the garden	Family background	Household Duties	Educational Status	Economic Participation	Freedom enjoys	Voice in the family matter.	Opinion about life	Position in the family
9.	Largi (12yrs.)	Lohar	Matigara Tea Estate	Father-Jobless Mother & elder sister Cas. Lab. in Pt. very poor family	Do all the household activities as the mother and eld. sister work.	Illiterate	Nil	Nil	Nil	Not satisfied	The girl is the worse sufferer in this extremely poor family.
10.	Moriom (14yrs.)	Naik	Do	Seperated mother per Lab. Elder Brother-Cas. Lab. at Pt.	Very few	Do	Works in Pt at 15/- daily wage	Free to meet any body keeps a part of her income with her.	Mother takes her decision when she need it.	Ashamed due to father's behaviour and she is not satisfied.	Good
11.	Purbi (14 yrs)	Oraon	Soongachi Tea Estate	Father Ret. Mother Cas. Lab. Elder Elder brother Per. Lab. in the Pt.	Nil	Do	works in in Pt. at 18/- daily	Do	Nil	Satisfied	Not so good
12.	Asha (11 yrs)	Munda	Do	Father Per. Lab in Pt. Mother housewife	Nil	Reads in Class I	Nil	Free to meet friends but does not go outside the lines	Do	Do	Good
13.	Rahda (12 yrs)	Sabar	Do	Mother Per. Lab. in Pt. Father jobless	All the household works and sibling care	Illiterate	Nil	Do	Mother takes her decesion when she need it	Do	Good
14.	Savi (12 yrs)	Oraon	Do	Both of the parents are per Lab. in Pt.	Helpsher elder sister who do most of the household works	Reads in Class III	Nil	Do	Nil	Do	Good

Sl. No.	Name	Ethnic group	Name of the garden	Family background	Household Duties	Educational Status	Economic Participation	Freedom enjoys	Voice in the family matter	Opinion about life	Position in the family
15.	Joymoti (14 yrs)	Santhal	Soongachi Tea Estate	Father (Widower) Per Lab. at Pt.	Do all the household works alone	Illiterate	Nil	Meets and moves with her boy and girl friends	She gives her opinion if her father asks for it.	Satisfied	Good
16.	Monita (13 yrs)	Munda	Do	Both of the parents are Per. Lab in Pt.	Very few	Reads in IV	Nil	Meets and moves with her girl friends only	Nil	Not satisfied	Good
17.	Susila (12 yrs)	Lohar	Do	Mother Per Lab. Father & Elder sister-Cas. Lab in Pt.	Do all the household works and sibling care	Illiterate	Nil	Do	Nil	Do	Extreme discrimination exists against the girl in all respect
18.	Sabila (13 yrs)	Lohar	Do	Do	Very few	Do	Works in Pt. as cas. Lab. in 18/- daily wage	Do	Nil	Do	Do
19.	Somri (14 yrs)	Sabar	Do	Father Rtd. Mother dead. Step mother Per. Lab. in Pt.	Do all the household work	Do	Nil	She has no freedom at all	Nil	Do	Abnormal case Tortured and abused by the step mother
20.	Deomoti	Santhal	Do	Father per Lab in Pt. Mother	Nil	Do	Nil	Do	Nil	She can not say	Very well accepted in the family. But it is an abnormal case.

Source : Field observation

Note : Cas Lab. = Casual Labourer Per Lab. = Permanent Labourer Rtd. = Retired Pt. = Plantation.

OBSERVATION

By analysing the case studies of the girl child of the plantation labourers it is obvious that the situation of the girls are not at all good. They are overburdened with work, mainly with the household activities and sibling care. They have to work from dawn to dusk. This is true for those who attend school as well as stayed at home or work to earn money.

Generally in this society girls are seen in four situations. The girls, the smaller ones at the age group of 3-6 years just eat, play and sleep without any work or study. Those at the age group of 6-14 years have the tough time. Very lucky few of them studying at school. They are mainly the daughters both of the parents of whom are permanent labourers. Yet they can not take their study fully but have to fulfil certain household duties after which they get a chance to go to school. Their parents too are not conscious of their study and they are under a continuous threat of dropout. In Doars garden the percentage of school goer girls are higher than in the Terai garden. The next category includes the girls mainly at the age group of 12-14 who work to earn money. In the Doars garden these girls work only in the plantation while in Terai garden some of them work outside the garden in neighbouring constructional works. In plantation they work light type of activities at a very low wage (15/- in Terai and 18/- in Doars garden) as casual labourer. The girls, who have no economic participation nor have to attend school, ^{their} condition is awfully miserable. They have to do all types of household activities, to take care of their cattles and siblings in absence of their parents. They do all the thank less jobs. They don't have the honour of the school goer girls neither they have the freedom like the job holders.

Another particular thing is noted in both of these gardens is the peculiar grouping among the girls. The working girls group together ^{and} are generally more dashy; enjoy certain freedom. They spend a part of their wage or go outside the garden to see movie or to village market with the girl and boy friends. The school goer girls being the most privileged group enjoy some kind of respect from the elderly women too. These girls try to confine their friendship among themselves. The last group live their life without any pleasure but with burden of duties.

In the study it has been seen that the education status of the adibasi girls in very low. Among the cases of twenty there are only four cases of school goer girls. The girls who attend school in most cases have to leave

school at the age of 10 to 12 years and become the mother's helper. From the case studies it is seen that age of the school going girls are upto 12 years. It is also seen that only the daughters of the permanent labourers get a chance to attend school of the three cases of school goes girls from Soongachi Tea Estate all are the daughters of permanent labourers. Of the cases from Matigara Tea Estate there is only one case of school goer girls whose parents are too permanent labourers. Though it is not expected that all the permanent labourers send their girls to school. The case of Rukhmini Mohali is a typical example of this where the girls parents being permanent labourer of Matigara Tea Estate do not send the girl to school due to prejudices. Another thing is clear from the study that the education among the girls is mostly seen among the adibasi groups with superior status viz. the Oraon, Munda, Naik than that of the Lohar, Mohali, Turi, Baraik. While the economic participation of the girls is seen mostly among the second group. Regarding discrimination against the girls there is not such ethnic differences. It depends mainly on the outlook of the parents, the number of child as well as girl child in the family, the presence of girl child among them, the economic condition of the family and so on. The greater the number of boy child the discrimination is more pronounced. Hanking after son also lead to more intense discrimination. The girls having their own income enjoy much freedom and also some voice in the family. The school going girls enjoy certain respect but the girls having only the burden of household responsibilities are the worse sufferer. Almost all of them say that they are not satisfied with their life.

General Observation Discussion and Conclusion

I

In the forgoing chapters I have analysed the situation of girl child in adibasi plantation society. Before drawing any conclusion it is necessary to reiterate some of the main points of this study. The objective of the study is to see the social structure and social institutions of adibasi plantation society, the value of children among them with special emphasis on girl child; the attitude of this adibasi society as well as the parents towards the girl child since birth; their health, nutrition, education and employment status, religious participations, game, sports and leisure, socialization process and so on. Emphasis is given to probe into the distinctive feature of discrimination against the girl child, girl child labour and girl child abuse; the impact of this discrimination and abuse on the girl child. The measures taken by the Government of India, for the all round development of the girl child has been discussed with the emphasis on examining howfar these measures are implemented in the adibasi plantation society; Finally I have tried to find out the changes that have come to the life of the present day adibasi girl child.

United Nation Convention define 'child' as the human being below the age group of 18 years. The girl child is the child of female sex. Due to certain environmental and cultural reasons girls attain puberty much before 18 years and very often loss child hood due to early marriage and pregnancy. So in many legislation the identifying age of a girl child is kept at or below 14 years. Early childhood is a vital period of one's life and development but the girls since this time become the victims of gender discrimination, the most all pervading forms of institutionalised discrimination deep-rooted in our culture mainly because of some socio-cultural, historical, religious and economic factors. The patriarchal dominance lead to son preference on the other hand encourage the discrimination of female child from her birth and make her 'a lesser child', and a 'prisoner of her gender'. 'Gender' is the socio-culturally determined identity of male and female differ from 'sex' which is only a physical and biological distinction. There are three view points to explain the universal tendencies of gender biasness namely Marxist, Cultural and Feminist. One quarter of Indian population approximately comprises girls upto the age of

19 years. The total number of the population (of girls) are 190.8 million (1997-Year book). The child sex ratio shows at every stage of childhood the boys outnumbered the girls which also increases with ages. Female foeticide, infanticide and death of girl child due to negligence is prevalent all over the country. Girls are less nourished, given food with lesser calories and getting health care when their condition gets worse. Age specific death rate is high among them. Marriage of girls in an early age is another bad thing which may create child widow, weak child, sick mother and even the death of physically immatured mother. Education status of Indian girls are very low and enrolment in school especially in secondary and higher secondary level is very low specially among the rural areas. The girls are withdrawn from school to work in the households and also outside as wage earner. The socialization of girl child from her very childhood is done in such a manner with so pronounced discrimination that she grows up as a lesser child with a great degree of submission, low self confidence and low self esteem. Child abuse, especially the abuse of girl child is a common phenomena now a days despite of the several laws enacted to prevent them from abuse. Any kind of abuse, may be physical, sexual, psychological, violates the right of the victim's healthy and integrated development which is harmful for her and for the society too. Government of India have initiated several plans and programmes for the overall development of the status of the girl child though their actual condition has been changed very little. The Status of tribal girl child is quite better than that of their non tribal counterpart. She does not see gloom face at the time of birth but discrimination occurs since she becomes her mother's helper at home. Her health and nutritional status and educational status is very low since her childhood she has to work outside as bread earner. The system of 'bride price' indicate her superior status in their society to some extent.

Tea is one of the oldest, cheapest and the most popular beverage in India originally came from China and developed as an organised industry under the patronage of the British rulers who accidentally found some wild tea plants growing ⁱⁿ the Assam hills in early 1820-23. Tea is made from the young leaves and unopen buds of the tea plant 'camellia sinesis' in wet (45" per annum) and warm climate and need a huge and settled labour force. Factories are necessary for the tea gardens attached to it because the green leaves plucked should be processed within 24 hours or ^{it} decays. Legally 'Plantation' means any land used for growing tea, coffee, rubber or cincona

which covers an area of 25 acres or more and on which 30 persons are employed or employed on any day of the proceeding 12 months. Experimental tea cultivation in India was under taken by the then British Government in 1834 with the help of Chinese artisans and tea maker by some crude processes. Tea seeds were sent to the hilly areas with some possibility and several committees were appointed to survey the possibility of successful tea cultivation which found the hills of Assam as the most satisfactory one. The development of tea plantation sector in India took place with the development of global economy improvement in the means of transport and communication that widen the scope of international trade. This industry in the initial stage have faced several crisis of investment, scarcity of labour and so on which could have been overcome through time and inventions. Tea plantation in Assam was started under the government patronage but by 1839 a private enterprise, Assam Tea Company enter into this business. Production increased gradually with the increase in the acerage under tea plantation. At present Assam is the largest producer of tea in India. Beside Assam, Tripura of North East also produces some amount of tea with a ineligibile percentage added by Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Monipur of the Northern States small amount of tea is produced by Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa. Tea plantation of southern state was initially unsuccessful but later tea in the elevated area of Malaber coast and Nilgiri flourished quite rapidly. The Tea Board Statistics show in 1995 land area under tea in Assam was 234580 hectares with the yearly production of 399133 kgs. In other Northern and North eastern states it was 345788 hectares of land under tea with the yearly production of 567976 hectares. In southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka the land under tea was 76125 hectares in 1995 with the production of 185949 kgs. per year (J. Thomas 1996). West Bengal is the second largest tea producer in India. The appearance of West Bengal in the tea plantation map of the country is quite late. The first tea estate in West Bengal was started in 1866. In this state tea plantation is located mainly in the bills and foot hills (Terai) of Darjeeling district and Doars of Jalpaiguri District. Since 1856-57 Tea Industry in Darjeeling took off in commercial basis. Before this it was existed here in experimental forms. The industry flourished in this district very rapidly between 1866-1874. Tea plantation in Terai region started in 1862. In Dooars of Jalpaiguri Tea Industry took commercial shape in 1874-75. Its growth was very rapid in the 1880's. Tea Industry in North Bengal experienced several

ups and downs with the march of time. At present according to Tea Board Statistics 1992-93 the number of Tea Estates in Darjeeling District is 147 of which 82 is in 'Terai', 'Doars' of Jalpaiguri can be proud of its 163 tea gardens. In 1995, 13850 hectares of land of Terai was under tea with the yearly production of 25594 kgs. In Darjeeling hills the land was 19100 hectares with the yearly production of 10403 kgs. In Doars 100650 hectares of land was under tea with the yearly production of 124308 kgs.

As the tea industry in North Bengal flourished since 1860's onward a huge labour force was needed to carry out the operation of this labour intensive industry at its different levels. The then scanty and disperse population of North Bengal failed to meet the demand of enormous supply of cheap labour. As a result and also as a part of colonial rule semi aboriginal people were imported from outside the state to serve the industry. These people were from different tribal groups viz. Oraon, Munda, Santal, Bhumij, Kheria, Lohar, Asur, Turi, Barik etc. of Chotonagpur plateau of Bihar and its adjoining region of Madhyapradesh and Orissa. Traditionally these people were of agricultural or atrisan background. They came in the fold of the strict three tyre bureaucratic structure of tea industry. Initially the immigrant labourers were recruited by 'Arakati' or 'Sardari' system though the agents who draw them from their natal place by advance paying. With the expansion of tea industry in North Bengal by 1959 the recruitment from outside the state were stopped by act. By this time the planters could recruited labourers directly from the previous ones who immigrated with family and settled down in and around the plantation creating a surplus condition. In plantation the daily wage labourers perform all types of manual works in field and factory. Depending on sex generally light work is given to women^{and} children. In West Bengal they have to work in between 37 to 47 hours in a week. The tea garden labourers are given wage (Hazira) according to the task (Thika) given to them for a time period. In 1994-95 the daily wage of the adult workers were Rs. 21.80 in the big gardens (500 hec) of Doars and Rs. 17.87 (500hec) Terai and hills of Darjeeling while the children gets Rs. 11.02. Besides wage they enjoy some other job facilities like free quarter, fire wood, ration, medical facility education facility for the children etc. The immigrant tribal labourer groups externally forms a more or less homogeneous group termed by the local folk as 'Modesia'(i.e. native people) by which the adibasi people initially referred to their tribes men before the local folk who started calling the whole group by this name. Internally the Modesias are highly differentiated with

their distinct socio-cultural traits, language, religion and customs. They may have some similarities due to their same place of origin and same traditional occupation yet the great similarity they have is the illiteracy, ignorance and dire poverty which make them backward socially and culturally in every aspects of their life. The structure of the multi-ethnic plantation society is very complex and unique where different ethnic groups has daily, friendly and face to face interaction being engage in same economic activity. Here several social process are in operation, several groups and subgroups are formed through the process of assimilation, amalgamation, as well, based on religion, traditional occupation, place of origin and so on. The different ethnic groups arrange themselves in caste like hierarchy on this basis and their commercial relation follow this hierarchy, though not so rigidly in today except in community participation. In plantation the adibasi labourers live in 'Bastee' i.e. the labour settlements allotted by the management, communicate in 'Sandri' i.e. broken Hindi mixed with Bengali and mostly are 'Saosar', animist, by religion. Their family get nuclearised with the authority resting upon the earning male member of the working couple. Their kinship obligation in homeland get staking and new relationship grew up within plantation with increasing local as well inter ethnic marriage. Marriage, commonly endogamous, appears more a social contact based on individual choice than social sacrament. Law and order of this society rests upon the unofficial garden panchayat. Large scale women participation in plantation as wage labourer raise their status in society. Besides plantation work these people also engage in agricultural activities as share cropper in and outside plantation and also in petty business. These people living in the remote gardens of North Bengal are very much unaware of the political scene of the country. At present trade unionism entered among them but these unions are much concern about the issues like increase of wage, bonus etc. Immigration, adoption to new socio-cultural setting, occupation mobility from traditional agriculture to industrial bureaucratic organisation of plantation changes almost all the aspects of life of the Modesia labourers which is of a great sociological importance.

The two gardens studied in Terai and Doars are of two types. Both are old while the Doars garden is the older (1879) bigger (1052.10 hec) well organised, well equipped than that of the Terai garden (1932; 124.46hec) with higher yearly production of 15 lakh kgs. in comparison to 140 thousand kgs. of the Terai garden. Both of these gardens produce CTC type tea. Both

of the gardens have well organised bureaucratic management under which groups of staffs (Bengali and Bihari caste group) work. The third and fourth categories are formed of sub-staffs and labourers from different adibasi groups of Oraon, Munda, Kisan, Sabar, Santhal, Baraik, Turi, Mohali, Dhimol, Lohar, Naik and other tribal groups who are in small number. The Mundas are high in number in Terai garden with Naik, Lohar, Mohali, Oraon are considerable groups. The Oraons are dominant in the Doars garden. Santhal, Sabar, Sonar, Rajwar, Dhimol, Bhumij are seen exclusively in the Doars garden along with the other common groups. At the time of investigation as per official records the number of permanent labourers in Terai garden was 214; male 109, female 119. In Doars garden the number of labourers was 1513; male 876 and female 568. The labourers of multiethnic community live side by side in labour lines scattered in and around the garden. Except the Bihari no such ethnic clusterization is pronounced. The garden authority provides quarter to its permanent labourers which is more developed in the Doars garden. Here all the labourers' quarters are pacca and have electricity and 65 percent of these are twin quarters while in Terai garden 50 percent quarters are pacca. In both of these gardens well are the source of water both drinking and bathing, though in Doars garden tap water is also available. Sanitation and sewage system in both of these gardens are very low. The Terai garden has only a small health centre while the Doars garden has a 25 bedded hospital. Both of these gardens have a medical team each, to help the labourers in problem. In both of these gardens among the adibasis Sandri is the common 'lingua franca' as seen in the other Terai and Doars gardens and they are the followers of 'Saosar' religion mixed with some traits of Hinduism. Besides the Biharis and the Nepalis are Hindu and speak in their respective languages. Both of these gardens are old enough and its labourers are the second or third generation of the earlier immigrants. Most of them are born and brought up in the respective gardens except some women came from neighbouring gardens or basti due to marriage. Marriage is monogamous and endogenous. It is a rule though polygamy and inter tribal marriage is seen in both of the gardens. No legal divorce is reported while either one of a couple may leave the other and the children as he / she wishes. Literacy picture in both of these gardens is very low. In Terai garden only 25.05 percent of the labour population are literate and most of them are child and adolescent population. In the studied part of the Doars garden the percentage is 24.15 percent. Most of the literates are the child at the age group of 7-14 years and the adolescent. More than 60

percent in women of both of the gardens are illiterate. Among the tribals there are the lack of culture of education, seriousness and consciousness of education as well. Besides these poverty sicken people hardly afford their basic necessities Education is a fancy to them. Still among the parents of present generation some, sense of consciousness regarding their ward's education have been arose. The Dooars garden also provide free primary education for the wards of the labourers; the Terai garden has no primary school of its own but the Kadamtala Primary School, adjunct to it, may serve the purpose to some extent. The willing parents sent their wards to this school. So in both of these gardens percentage of literacy among the children and adolescent are comparatively high. Plantation work is done in both of these gardens in two shifts with a weekly holiday which is on Sunday and Tuesday in Doars and Terai garden respectively. The labourers get daily basis payment on the day before weekly holiday. In Terai garden it is 29.15 Rs. and in Doars garden it is Rs. 32.30. At the time of investigation there was 215 permanent labourers in Terai garden of which 53.48 percent was women. Beside the permanent labourers there also live some people in seperate households who get job in the garden in pick season while in the slack season they work outside as jugari, ricksaw puller and so on. But in the Doars garden there is no such household of temporary labourers. The authority take the dependents from the permanent labourer's household in pick season. Child labourer is also present in both the garden though the authority deny their existence. CITU is the prevailing trade union in both of these gardens though the labourers mostly are unaware of their political rights and duties. They attend union meetings and gatherings, give the subscription mechanically and the union generally fight for the short term issues like regular payment of salary and bonus. The adibasi labourers have a cordial relationship with each other and inspite of their ethnic differences behave like single universe. The notion of purity and pollution is not so pronounced in these days, as was in past except community participation. Through regular and intense interaction each group have affected by the customs of others. Local 'haat' i.e. weekly market is the main link of the labourers to the world outside the garden. The status of women is not raised satisfactorily inspite of being bread earner. They enjoy some freedom than their caste counterparts but as their status with their male counterpart is compared it is quite low. They are exploited both in home and working place and is burdened with a lot of works and responsibilities without adequate authority.

Children are equally valuable in all societies and so also in adibasi society, where they are considered as the 'Gift of God'. Tribal society traditionally had no such son preference as experienced in the society of the caste people, neither showed any gloomy face to the new born girls. But in tea gardens living side by side with the caste people the innocent adibasis too have adopted the ugly idea of 'son preference'. Now son to them is considered as 'future helper', he may not take care of them in future still he would live before their eyes; he is considered as the asset of a family; 90 percent of the respondents of both the gardens opine that in an ideal family there must be both boy and girls but almost all of them says a boy child is a must for a family. In the gardens no such pronounced discrimination between the boy girl child exists, except in case of education. Here the girl children are over burdened with household activities while the boys enjoy too much free time. In Matigara tea estate the total number of child are 349 of which 50 percent are girls and in the studied part of Soongachi Tea Estate there are 360 children and the girls constitute 55 percent. 92 percent of the respondents prefer family planning to cope with the 'high price' of essential commodities. The family back ground of these children are very poor. From their parents they have inherited dire poverty, ignorance and illiteracy. The children whose parents both are permanent job holders enjoy a comparatively good condition than the others. In most cases they get a chance to go to school and do not need to go out for earning; those children whose either parent is a permanent labourer their condition is quite better but the condition of the ward of the temporary labourer is worst. They do not even get food regularly. Study is more than a dream to them. Even they have to earn by working within the garden as child labourer or outside. Child rearing is the duty of mothers who do it with the help of the elderly women in family or neighbouring. Mostly women in tea gardens work as labourers and it is hard for them to take proper care of their kids. In Soongachi tea estate there are 12 creches to look after the kids of the working mother upto 2 years. While in Terai tea garden there is no such facility. Here mother generally keep their kids under the care of their elderly siblings, often take them to the garden tying them with cloths on their back. Health picture in both of the garden is not very good. There is lack of consciousness of both personal as well as environmental hygiene. The sanitation system as well as sewage of both the gardens is very low. There is also lack of hygiene training. The children play on mud and dust in bare feet and very often without dress. They suffer from skin diseases. The close

living with domestic animals lead to some contagious diseases to them. Dysentery and diarrhoea is common to them along with iron deficiency, anaemia, worm infection and malnutrition among the children. Both of the gardens have medical facilities which record that the girl children are rarely taken to them than that of the boys. Education status of the tribals are very low; though among the tribal children it is quite high. Of the children at the age group of 7 - 14 years 43.42 percent children of Terai garden is literate while it is higher (51.67 percent) in Doars garden where there are three primary schools within the garden. But this percentage is high only upto primary level (35.16 percent in Terai garden and 37.32 percent in Doars garden). This percentage is very low among the girls (13 percent in Terai; 26 percent in Doars garden) who very soon have to stop their education. The tribals traditionally have no culture of education. They are not at all serious of the education of their ward. Girl's education, to them is meaningless. They think that girls have to rear child, prepare food and pick up leaves; none of these need education. In many families girls stay at home to look after their younger siblings and cattles as well as to do the household works left by their mothers while their brothers enjoy school life. The adibasi girls are over burdened with domestic works from dawn to dusk. Collection of fire wood, cleaning huts, utensils, washing cloths, bringing water, look after the cattles and the younger siblings are their normal duty. Those who are studying go to school after doing these. The unfortunate ones who stay at home very often prepare the lunch of their family when the mothers are at work. Some also work as wage earner in the local construction works as daily labour. Though this situation is absent in Soongachi. But in both of these gardens very small percentage of children (5.32 percent and 12 percent in Doars and Terai garden respectively) work in plantation too. Though light activities are given to them like light digging, cleaning of nursery beds, cleaning the bushes or nullahs, picking up the seeds of shed trees and the stalks etc. But all these rob their childhood from them. The performance of religious rituals are the job of the elderly male members of a tribal family. The younger ones only observe these. The younger girls often show 'deep dhup' to god and goddess; some often fast on Siv Puja. Some worship Tulsi. All these they adopted from their caste neighbours. The respondents report that the tribal girls have very little leisure. They lose their childhood even in their childhood. Leisure is lesser among the girls of working mother. In little leisure these poor children

play indigenous games like chupa-chupi, kunda-kundi, dom-dom, kitkit etc. The comparatively aged one of 12 - 14 years spend much time in gossip. The children of all ethnic groups are friends together. All the elderly people of a locality are called by the name, 'kaka' 'dada', 'mama', 'mamis' 'bhatu'. Child abuse, especially the abuse of the girl child is a common crime in our present society. The adibasi plantation society is not free from it. Female foeticide and infanticide is not reported in either garden. But depriving the girls of minimum health care and nutrition, depriving them of their right of education, over burdening them with household activities and sibling care thus rob their leisure and childhood are some crude forms of abuse too. No incident sexual abuse has been reported in the gardens though the working girls are always become afraid of being scolded by the sardar at their work place due to late and lack of fulfilment of the assignment given. The abuse and discrimination affect the girl child a lot. 70 percent of my respondents report that they have to be boys because being girls they enjoy lesser freedom, respect, care and comfort than that of their brothers. They grow from their childhood with lesser self confidence, self respect and low esteem. The ignorant and innocent adibasi labourers living at the remote part of North Bengal know nothing about the plans and programmes initiated by the Government for the development of their girl child. No such effort is seen to make them aware of the benefit they can get either from the garden authorities or Government agencies or the existing local NGOs. So the girl child among the adibasi plantation labourers are still in total darkness. As far as the comparative study regarding the position of girl child in the two gardens of Terai and Doars is concerned it is more or lessly same. The only difference is that as the Doars garden has three primary schools within its premises here the enrolment of girls upto primary level is comparatively high then that of the Terai garden. The percentage of girls children working in plantation is comparatively low in Doars garden. Here girls need not go out of the garden for work. Here in this garden (Doars garden) there are a number of creches so the burden of sibling care is also less on the elder sisters. Though the other things are almost same in both of these gardens. In Matigara Tea Estate the male child form 49.84 percent of the total child population. It is 43.32 percent in Soongachi Tea Estate. The status of boy child is superior to the girl regarding health and education. The boy child enjoys more health care than the girl and also the more nutritious foods. Of the total literate adibasi children of Matigara Tea Estate (43.42 percent) 29.05 percent is male child. It is 24.82 percent out of 51.67 percent of Soongachi

Tea Estate. They enjoy their childhood without work burden and get a larger share of family affection.

By analysing the case studies of the girl child of the plantation labourers it is obvious that the situation of the girls are not at all good. They are overburdened with work, mainly with the household activities and sibling care. They have to work from dawn to dusk. This is true for those who attend school as well as stayed at home or work to earn money. Generally in this society girls are seen in four situations. The girls, the smaller ones at the age group of 3-6 years just eat, play and sleep without any work or study. Those at the age group of 6-14 years have the tough time. Very lucky few of them studying at school. They are mainly the daughters both of the parents of whom are permanent labourers. Yet they can not take their study fully but have to fulfil certain household duties after which they get a chance to go to school. Their parents too are not conscious of their study and they are under a continuous threat of dropout. In Doars garden the percentage of school goer girls are higher than in the Terai garden. The next category includes the girls mainly at the age group of 12-14 who work to earn money. In the Doars garden these girls work only in the plantation while in Terai garden some of them work outside the garden in neighbouring constructional works. In plantation they work light type of activities at a very low wage (15/- in Terai and 18/- in Doars garden) as casual labourer. The girls, who have no economic participation nor have to attend school, ^{their} condition is awfully miserable. They have to do all types of household activities, to take care of their cattles and siblings in absence of their parents. They do all the thank less jobs. They don't have the honour of the school goer girls neither they have the freedom like the job holders. Another particular thing is noted in both of these gardens is the peculiar grouping among the girls. The working girls group together ^{and} are generally more dashy; enjoy certain freedom. They spend a part of their wage or go outside the garden to see movie or to village market with the girl and boy friends. The school goer girls being the most privileged group enjoy some kind of respect from the elderly women too. These girls try to confine their friendship among themselves. The last group live their life without any pleasure but with burden of duties. In the study it has been seen that the education status of the adibasi girls in very low. Among the cases of twenty there are only four cases of school goer girls. The girls who attend school in most cases have to leave school at the age of 10 to 12 years and become the mother's helper. From the case studies

it is seen that age of the school goer girls are upto 12 years. It is also seen that only the daughters of the permanent labourers get a chance to attend school. Of the three cases of school goer girls from Soongachi Tea Estate all are the daughters of permanent labourers. Of the cases from Matigara Tea Estate there is only one case of school goer girl whose parents are too permanent labourers. Though it is not expected that all the permanent labourers send their girls to school. The case of Rukhmini Mohali is a typical example of this where the girl's parents being permanent labourers of Matigara Tea Estate do not send the girl to school due to prejudices. Another thing is clear from the study that the education among the girls is mostly seen among the adibasi groups with superior status viz. the Oraon, Munda, Naik than that of the Lohar, Mohali, Turi, Baraik, while the economic participation of the girls is seen mostly among the second group. Regarding discrimination against the girls there is no such ethnic differences. It depends mainly on the outlook of the parents, the number of child as well as girl child in the family, the presence of boy child among them, the economic condition of the family and so on. The greater the number of girl child the discrimination is more pronounced. Hankering after son also lead to more intense discrimination. The girls having their own income enjoys much freedom and also some voice in the family. The school goer girls enjoy certain respect but the girls having only the burden of household responsibilities are the worst sufferer. Almost all of them say that they are not satisfied with their life.

II

Traditionally Indian Society idolizes sons who are considered ritually and economically desirable and ensure the continuation of lineage and family name. On the other hand girls are looking upon more of a burden and liability and is likely to be given a meagre share of family affection and resource out of the belief that the investment made on her bring no return instead when she gets married a sizable dowry has to be given to her which is considered to be a draining of family resources. The girl child in poverty stricken rural and tribal households is twice disadvantaged. Children depend entirely upon adults for access to resources which are all denied in relative terms more often than not. The girl child contends with not merely deprivation due to poverty but also discrimination on the basis of gender. Her survival is threatened right from conception. Female foeticide and infanticide continue

to be widely prevalent. Girls are given food of lower caloric value and smaller amounts while the rich foods are reserved for boys. They are also weaned earlier. Girls are severely malnourished as compared to boys. They suffer from iron deficiency, infection more than the boys and receive significantly less response to illness in terms of hospital care and medicines and have higher death rate too. The higher the birth order of the girl child the more likely she is to suffer from all these discriminatory factors. The factors are compounded by greater work burden upon the girl child due to additional domestic responsibilities as well as low waged casual work in unorganised sectors, greater lack of education and awareness and low social status and self esteem.

India is the largest producer, exporter and consumer of substantial amount of CTC and Orthodox tea in the world. Of the Indian States Assam ranks first and famous for its strong liquor tea while the tea of West Bengal, the second ranking state, specially of Darjeeling hills is famous for its flavour. Of North Bengal, the tea producing region of West Bengal, Darjeeling hill can boast of its high quality tea. Tea produced in Doars of Jalpaiguri is larger in quantity though its quality is not as good as Darjeeling hills. Tea gardens of Darjeeling hills and Terai are not as large as the Doars gardens. These are generally in between 200-400 hectares while the gardens of Doars are mostly above 400 hectares. In Doars of Jalpaiguri land under tea in 1995 is 100650 hectares which is 19100 hectares in Darjeeling hills and 13850 hectares in Terai. The production is higher in Doars being 124308 kgs. in 1995 as against 10403 kgs. in Darjeeling hills and 24494 kgs. in Terai. Though yield per hectare is almost same in Terai and Doars. It is 1948 and 1935 kgs. respectively and in Darjeeling hills it is only 545kgs. Plucking season is same in both of Terai and Doars which begins with early rain in May and ends in late November or early December while highest yield is during the month of July and August.

The society of tea plantation labourers in Terai and Doars are more or less same. The gardens of these areas are mainly manned by immigrant adibasi people of Chotonagpur plateau, Bihar, Orissa. and Madhya Pradesh while the Nepali immigrants and the Lepchas are the main labour force of the gardens of Darjeeling hills. It is hard to differentiate the adibasi society of Doars and Terai gardens. The main differences are the Doars gardens being larger and comparatively older are more well organised with strict work

schedules and wage structure and are provided with better infrastructural facilities than that of Terai. Trade unions are also more well organised here. Though the adibasi labourers in both the areas are actually under the shadow of ignorance, innocence and dire poverty.

In the foregoing paragraphs a brief and comparative discussion of the two gardens will be made. In few lines I shall point out the similarities as well as the differences the two gardens have.

As far as the similarities are concerned, both of these gardens are old enough with well organised bureaucratic structure of management both in field and factory attached to the respective gardens. Both of these gardens have a huge residential labour force. The garden authority provide free residential quarters, drinking water facility, medical facility, ration of food grains and firewood etc. as per their own level. The different immigrant adibasi groups form the major part of the labour force in both of the gardens while the different Nepali and Bihari caste people form a negligible part of it. These multiethnic groups live side by side without no such pronounced ethnic clusterization. In both of these gardens Sandri is the lingua franca and Saosar is the prevailing religion while Marriage is an important thing of the labourers' life. In both of these gardens consciousness of the labourers about their personal and environmental hygiene is very low along with their educational status. A strong affiliation towards home made alcohol is seen every where CTC type of tea is produced in those two gardens and in both places CITU is the prevailing trade union while its members are very little conscious about their duties to it.

As far as the differences between the two gardens are concerned these are quite a few. The Soongachi T.E. of Doars being older bigger and much well organised then that of the Matigara Tea Estate of Terai has much greater turn over. The setting of the two gardens are also different. The Doars garden occupies a vast land in the hills and foothills of Mal Police Station. It has a number of sectors and the ^{at}quality of tea it produces is much greater quantity than that of the Terai garden. On the other hand Terai garden being the smaller one occupies some acres in the east and western side of the river Balason of Matigara Police Station. The Doars garden has much greater infrastructural facilities than that of the Terai garden. It provides ^spacca quarter with electricity to all of its permanent labourers while the Terai garden authority provides ^spacca quarter to only a part of its permanent labourers. The Doars

garden also provide tap water to its labourers' quarters, beside well facility while the Terai garden has some well which are ^{the} only source of water in labour lines. The Doars garden has a number of creches for the kids of the working mothers and three primary schools of their own while the Terai garden has no such facility. The Terai garden has only a small health centre while the medical facility of the Doars garden is better as it has a hospital of its own. Here in the Doars garden some exclusive adibasi groups are seen besides the common adibasi groups of Terai and Doars. They are Sabar, Santhal, Sonar, Malar, Rajwar, Dhimol, Porja etc. Another major difference in between these two gardens is that the Doars garden with a huge labour force pick up temporary labourer in the peak season from among the families of the permanent labourers while in the Terai garden groups of people live in the labour lines in thatch huts who work as temporary labourers when the authority need their job. No such temporary labour group live in the Doars garden.

As far as the situation of girl children of these gardens is concerned there also exist some similarities as well as a few differences which are outlined in the following paragraphs.

The plantation labourers of both of the gardens give much value to the children. In their society, the status of a childless woman is much lower than one who has her own child. A same thing is seen in both of these gardens that is the newly adopted trait of 'son preference' by the adibasis from their caste neighbours. Children from their parents get poverty and backwardness and in most cases earn money by working. Child rearing is mostly the mother's duty but now a days after the initial stage the working mothers rest this burden on their elderly girls who actually become her helper too in her household activities. Discrimination is seen equally in both of these gardens regarding fooding and clothing and also in case of medical treatment. Negligence of girl child in every sphere of life is common. This is much greater where there are 2 or 3 girl children and no boy child. Out of frustration the parents mainly the mother abuses the girls. Education picture among the girls is low along with the high percentage of working girls.

The main difference seen among the girls' position in the two gardens is in the field of education. In the Doars garden there are three schools within the garden premises so there is an inclination among the parents to send their girls to these free school atleast upto primary level. This is possible

here because of the existence of a number of creches in the garden where the mother can keep their kids and the girls get free from the burden of sibling care. But in the Terai garden there is no primary school of the garden except the local schools outside. The labourers too get afraid of sending their girls to school outside the garden. Another difference seen the position of girls of these gardens is the percentage of girls working in plantation is low in the Doars garden than that of the Terai garden. Here the girls do not need to go outside the plantation for work as seen in Terai garden. No other such pronounced difference is seen in the situation of the girls in the two gardens.

By analysing the case studies of the girls of both of the gardens a clear profile of the girls is gathered. It is clearly seen that the girl child's condition is not at all good in this society. In most of the cases their family accept them though initially almost all of the parents wanted a boy. Being in intense poverty the parents cannot fulfil the basic needs of their child while in most cases discrimination really exists in the allocation of these scanty resources. The girls suffer much due to the burden of the household activities which ruin their childhood. She may be a student, may be a working girl in most case she has to do a lot of works in home. This is mainly because here the mother are working women too. Here the girls get very little time of their own development.

My study of the tea plantation society has some similarities as well as differences with the existing studies of some eminent scholars in this field. Work organisation in tea plantation of North Bengal is very strict and strong. My observation from Terai and Doars gardens in this respect very much fits to that of Kar (1984-85) as he studied it in two tea gardens of Assam. It can be said that the social situation of adibasi plantation labourers is almost unchanged for the past few years. My observation of Matigara Tea Estate of Terai very much matches to Bhadra's (1992) observation of Chandmani Tea Estate. Just as Soongachi Tea Estate of Doars shows almost same picture as Bhowmik (1981) observed in Sonali Tea Estate. The status of the women workers still not raised satisfactorily inspite of being bread earner. Bhadra (1992) too observed it in Chandmoni. Analysing the socialization process of the girl child in the gardens studied I too agree with Bhadra that from childhood girls are socialized in their role of male dependency which continues even after marriage and even when they have a family of their own. The health culture of plantation society of North Bengal still is very poor. My observation

suits very much to that of Bhadra (1997) and just as Bhadra I have also seen in the gardens that the adibasi labourers have no aversion to modern medical treatment as they get it easily in their respective gardens. My observation regarding the status of adibasi girl child differs a bit to the observation of Dashora (1995) as she opines that the adibasi girls are well come at the time of birth and discrimination arises when she become the mother's helper. But as I observed among the adibasi plantation labourers of North Bengal, the new born girls in this society also see glumface at the time of birth. Most of the parents admit that they have a hankering after son. In most cases discrimination does not exist regarding fooding and clothing but as far as education and work burden is concerned discrimination is high. But I am agreed with Dashora's comment that the girl child is the worse sufferer of economic disorder of tribal society and is always at the shrinking end of population, poverty and environmental spiral.

III

Superficially it can be said that the status of the ^{tribal} girls are better than that of their non tribal counterpart since there is no child marriage. The traditional tribal society does not consider it bad or 'curse' to have birth of a girl child. They neither have any custom to differentiate between boy and girl at the infant stage. The tribal society has love and respect for the girl child. She can select partner by choice. There is Bride price instead of Dowry; all indicating her high social status.

But the actual condition is totally different. The adibasi people at the midst of the industrial plantation society are no more innocent rather they have become very much conscious of their economic interest. Living side by side with the caste people for a long period they have greatly influenced with their deep rooted notion of son preference. Though this newly adopted notion of the adibasis have no such ritualistic or transcendental base like that of their caste neighbour but have economical need i.e. the son will be the helper of the parents; who will look after them in their old age. These people have a traditional custom of Ghardamad by which a sonless man with large property can keep his son-in law at home. In such case he has to pay a large amount of Dowry instead of Bride Price. But for the poor plantation labourers it is very tough to afford a Ghar-damad. They rather prefer a son of their own. Besides, with the increasing popularity of love marriage the system of bride price have almost been abolished. So the girl's parents have no such gain

from their girl child. Which on the other hand boost their notion of son preference. Naturally the to day's girl child in adibasi society too see gloomy face since her birth. Though the girls of this society felt no such pronounce threat like female foeticide or infanticide, yet discrimination regarding food, education, work are common. The poor adibasi labourers afford food with very lesser quality for their wards and so also the health facilities. It is seen that the girls are given the least of this lesser share than their male counterpart. She is forced to stay home right from her infancy for helping her mother in household activities and burdened with sibling care when she should have formal schooling. Her labour in assisting mother is always unrecognised and uncounted for. Out her home she has to earn money by labouring. There is higher percentage of girl child labour in tribal society. In most cases she has to give her earnings to her parents. In there early days she has no as much freedom as generally thought. She has little leisure, very little scope to enjoy her childhood. She is the worst sufferer of the economic disorder of their society.

IV

From the forgoing discussion its can be said that the condition of the adibasi girl child in plantation society is far from satisfactory. The Government of India have initiated several schemes recently for the over all development of the girl child. There are also several programmes implemented by the Government of India for the development of the tribal people but none of these have been reached to this remote plantation society of North Bengal. So the need of these days is to take the initiatives from the management of the respective garden, the Local Self Government i.e. the Panchayet and the different Non-Governmental Organisations for the all round development of the girl child in plantation society. For reaching to this end the following mechanisms may be recommended. For the all round development of the girl child the following facilities should be initiated by the respective garden authorities.

- (i) Health care units in the garden should be revamped reorganised and revitalise.
- (ii) The work of immunization and supplementing vitamin dose should be given to priority among with the availability of cheaper antibiotics.

(iii) Programme for safe drinking water be implemented to reduce possibility of water borne diseases.

(iv) To improve the nutrition level of the adibasi girl child, girls themselves should be encouraged to grow fruit plants like papaya, guava, mango near their houses and surrounding. They should be trained to undertake poultry activity so that they can easily get animal protein from egg and fish.

(v) The respective garden authority should open educational institution, especially primary school in the garden. Garden authority should take necessary steps to open secondary girls' school at least one in the respective gardens.

(vi) It is also necessary to recruit the lady teachers to run these institutions and there should be an effective control over the regularity, punctuality and performance of the teacher.

(vii) Reasonable scholarship is to be given to the needy and meritorious students.

(viii) Sufficient incentives should be given to the needy parents to prevent early drop-outs.

(ix) Efforts should be made by the garden authorities or by the voluntary bodies to organise adult education centres separately for men and women. The contents for teaching in these centres should be attractive and useful.

(x) To encourage and motivate the adibasi girls the Media should highlight the success stories of tribal women.

(xi) Proper education on the basis of social and political awareness should be imparted by text books and by extensive use of Audio and Audio-Visual Media.

(xii) The adibasi girl child should get vocational training in school so that in later life she can choose the right course of action and can fight against poverty and can create sustainable economic progress of her society.

Finally, it can be suggested that the parents of the girl child should be motivated by the Panchayat body, social workers and garden people in such a way that they can welcome their daughters happily since their birth and treat equally irrespective to her feeding, clothing, education and allow her to enjoy her childhood properly.

References

- Benerjee S.K.** 1998 'A note on Sandri' in Journal of North East India Council for Social Science Research, April 1998 (22:1).
- Bhowmik S.** 1991 'Class formation in Plantation system', People Publishing Houses, New Delhi.
- Bhadra R. K. and Bhadra M.** 1997 (Ed) 'Plantation Labours of North East India', N.L. Publishers, Dibrugarh.
- Bhadra R. K.** 1997 'Social Dimension of Health in Plantation Workers in India'; N. L. Publishers, Dibrugarh.
- Bhadra M.** 1992 'Women Workers of Tea Plantation in India'; Heritage Publishers, New Delhi.
- Bhadra M.** 1999 Girl Child In Indian Society, Rawat Publishers, Jaipur.
- Bhadra M.** 1991. 'Ethnicity and Inequality among the workers of Tea Industry in West Bengal' in Bhadra R.K. & Mondal S.R. (Ed) Stratification Hierarchy & Ethnicity in North East India'; Daya Publishing House, Delhi.
- Chattaraj, B. N. and Saxena R.** 1990 'Victimization of Children in Social Change Vol. 20 (3) 1990.
- Chaurasia R. S.** 1998 'Ending the Exploitation of Girl's Labour in Women's Link' July-Sept. 1998. Vol. 4, No.3.
- Dash A. J.** 1947 Bengal Gazetteers, Darjeeling, Bengal Secretary Press.
- Deol G.** 1990 'Juveniel Delinquency in India' Social Change 1990, Vol.20(3).
- Dashora R** 1995 'Status of tribal girl child' in Social Change; June-Sept. 1995, Vol. 25 (2&3).
- Desai M.** 1995 'Empowering the family for girl child development' in Social Change; June-Sept. 1995 Vol 25 (2&3)
- Edward J Jay** 1978 'A comparison of Tribal and Peasant Villages in India' in Surjit Sinha (Ed.) Field Studies on the People of India methods and perspectives.
- Gopalan S and Bhaskar V** 1998 'Response of the Government to the problem of Girl Child' in Women's Link July-Sept 1998, Vol. 4, No.3.

- Ghosh S.** 1995 '*Integrated health of the Girl Child*' in *Social Change*, June-Sept. 1998, Vol. 25 (2&3).
- Gopaldas T. and Guzral S** 1995 'Girl Child and environment' in *Social change*. -Sept. 1995. Vol. 25 (2&3).
- Gandrade K. D.** 1995 'Social Development and the Girl Child' in *Social Change*, June-Sept. 1995, Vol. 25 (2&3).
- Griffiths P.** 1967. '*The History of Indian Tea Industry*' London, 1967.
- Ghosh T. K.** 1987. '*Tea Gardens of West Bengal; Critical Study of Land Management*'; B.R. Publishing, New Delhi.
- Hunter W.W.** 1876 '*Statistical Account of Bengal*', Trubner and Co. London.
- Jain D.** 1990 'Improving the lot of working girl child' in *Kurukshetra* 1990, Vol. No. 2.
- Khan I.A.** 1997 'The Plantation Labourers and their level of Economic Interaction' in Bhadra R.K. & Bhadra M (Ed) '*Plantation Labourers of North East India*'; N. L. Publishers, Dibrugarh.
- Kumari Ranjana** 1995; '*Rural female adolescence; Indian Scenario*' in *Social Change* June-Spet. 1995. Vo. 25 (2&3).
- Kar R. K.** 1984-85 '*Work Organisation in Tea Plantation : A case study in Assam*' in *Bulletin of Dept. of Anthropology, Dibrugarh University*, Vol. 13, 14.
- Kapur, P** 1995 '*Girl Child Abuse : Violation of her Human Rights*' in *Social Change* : June-Sept. 1995, Vol. 25, Nos. 2&3.
- Kiran D.** 1995 '*Girl Child in Rural India*' in *Social Change* June-Sept. 1995, Vol. 25 (2&3).
- Krishna S and Chaturvedi D.** 1990 '*Gender bias i India*' in *The Administrator*, Vol. XXV (I).
- Oscar L.** 1969 '*Children of Sanchez, Autobiography of American Family*' Modern library, New York.
- Mukherjee M.** 1995 '*Social background of Child Labour*' unpublished M.A. Dissertation; Dept. of SSA, N.B.U.

- Mitra A.K. 1953**, Census of India 1951, Vol. VI Part IA.
- O. Malley L. S.S.** 1907 'Bengal District Gazetteers : Darjeeling,' The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot.
- Narang J.** 1998 'Child Sexual Abuse ; NGO perspective' in Women's link, July-Sept. 1998. Vol. 4, No.3.
- Pal R.M.** 1998 'Rights of the Girl Child as Human Rights' in Women's Link, July-Sept. 1998. Vol. 4 No. 3.
- Prasad V.** 1998 'Health and Nutrition of the Girl Child' in Women's Link, July-Sept. 1998. Vol.4., No.3.
- Paul Chowdhuri D.** 1995 'Girl Child and Gender Bias' in Social Change, June Sept. 1995, Vol. 25 Nos. 2 & 3.
- PRIA 1993** *Participatory Research in Asia*, KRITI, No 3, Jan - June
- Puneleker S.P.** 1995 'Culture, Political economy and Gender marginalization: A case of girl child in India' in Social Change : June-Sept. 1995, Vol. 25 Nos. 2 & 3.
- okaiya*
R/Begum 1998 'The Social Situation of Muslim Girl Child in Rural West Bengal' *ICSSR Research Report*, North Bengal University, Department of Sociology & Social Anthropology.
- Roy S.** 1990 'Constitutional Rights of the Child in India', in Social Change, 1990, Vol. 20 (3).
- Singh D.** 1998 'The 83rd Constitution Amendment Bill, 1997; A slap in the face of the Girl child' in Women's Link, July-Sept. 1998, Vol. 4, No.3.
- Singh A. K.** 1990 'Rights of the Child and HRD in India' in Social Change 1990, Vol. 20 (3).
- Sarma A.** 1995 'Social - Cultural Practices Threatening the Girl Child' in Social Change ; June- Sept. 1995, Vol. 25, No. 2&3.
- Sarma A and Vasudevan S.** 1995 'Girl Child and Media' in Social Change : June-Sept. 1995, Vol. 25. No. 2 & 3.
- Saur D** 1994 'Discrimination Against the Girl Child in India' in Social Action, Vol. 44. No.3.

Seth P. 1995 'Girl Child and Social Change' in Social Change : June-Sept. 1995, Vol. 24, Nos. 2 & 3.

Tandon S. 1995 'Educating the Girl child in Rural Area' in Social Change : June-Sept, 1995, Vol. 25 Nos. 2 & 3.

Unisa S. 1995 'Demographic Profile of the Girl Child in India' in Social Change: June-Sept 1995, Vol. 25 (2&3).

Census of India 1951-1981, Regst. General Office, Govt. of India.

Census of India, 1981, Regst. General Office, Govt. of India.

Census Abstract for S.T. 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991.

Govt. of India Family Welfare Year Book 1990-91.

Registrar General of India; Sample Regst. System Govt. of India.

Selected Educational Statistics 1993, H/O H.R.D; Tea Statistics 1992-93, Tea Board of India, Calcutta; Tea Statistics '96, J. Thomas.

4th World Conference on Women, Beijing; 1995 (Country Paper, India). A draft; Dept. of Women & Child Development, Govt. of India, 1994.

Year Book, 1997.

Appendix I

Some Adibasi Terms

Sandri	English	Sandri	English
Bhai	Brother	Samaj	Society
Chana	Baby (Male / Female)	Luga	Cloth
Bhatiji	Brother's Daughter	Daru	Wine
Bhatija	Brother's son	Sarap	Curse
Bahuria	Brother's wife	Charal	Dedication
Beti	Daughter	Mela	Fair
Putau	Daughter in law	Churin	Female Ghost
Dada	Elder Brother	Bhut	Ghost
Bhauji	Elder Brother's wife	Kulchun	Ill fated
Bap	Father	Chinha	Mark
Sasur	Father in Law	Montor	mystical formula
Kaka	Father's Brother	Bali	Offering
Fufu	Father's Sister	Pahan	Priest
Song	Friend / Girl Friend	Menha	Prohabitation
Kaki	Father's Brother's wife	Murti	Image
Fufa	Father's Sister's husband	Gami	Sraddha
Aja	Grand Father	Bisahi	Witch
Aji	Grand Mother	Jait	Caste
U	He	Gotor	Clan
Gomke	Husband	Bans/Kul	Liniage
Bhoisur	Husband's Elder Brother	Nam	Name
Nonod	Husband's Sister	Dudh	Surname
Deor	Husband's Younger Brother	Knuar	Bachlor
Mo	I	Banj	Barren
Mama	Maternal uncle	Janam	Birth
Aao	Mother	MuhoJhuti	Rich Ceremoney
Nanu	Mother's Father	Ashapati	Conception
Nani	Mother's Mother	Sadgati	Cremation
Mosi	Mother's Sister	Morghoti	Cremation ground
Bhaigna	Nephew	Moron	Death
Bhaigani	Niece	Besh-Hoech	Delivery
Jaik-Gotio	Relative	Dalidun	Dowry
Bohin	Sister	Joni	Female
Beta	Son	Jingi	Life
Beti-Damad	Son in Law	Mohayok	Love
Mita	Spl. Friend	Morod	Male
Umon	They	Sadial	Married Male
Hamere	We	Dhanorgiri	Job
Je-mon	Who (1)	Dohor	Road
Ke	Who	Kheti Jomin	Cultivable land
Gomkain	Wife	Kati	Fire wood
Dersara	Wife's Elder Brother	Soroj	Heaven
Sara	Wife's Younger Brother	Bhaig	Fate
Toni	You	Drunkard	Matoyar
Tohre	You		

Source : Dooarse-er Lokayoto Sabdokosh by K.P. Bhattacharia, 1990)
(All the words are not used in the thesis).

5. A woman has no child of her own — what do you think of her ?
- (a) It is her fault.
 - (b) It is the wrong done by God to her.
 - (c) It is her husband's fault
 - (d) No matter.
6. Should the husband of a childless woman marry for the second time?
Yes / No.
- 6a. If yes why ?
- 6b. If no why ?
7. What is you / your wife ?
- (a) Housewife
 - (b) Wage earner.
8. What is your opinion regarding a woman and why do you think so ?
- (a) She should be a housewife only.
 - (b) She should work in plantation.
 - (c) She should work outside tea plantation.
9. Do you work / allow your wife to work outside tea plantation — and why?
- (a) yes
 - (b) No
 - (c) If there is no job in plantation then - yes.
10. Do you / your husband help your wife / you in household activities ?
Yes / No
- 10a. If yes — Why ?
- 10b. If No — Why ?
11. Do you support family planning.
Yes / No.
- 11a. If yes - why ?
- 11b. If No - why ?

12. Before conception do your husband / you take your/ wife's decision.

Yes / No

12a. If Yes - why ?

12b. If No - why ?

13. Say yes or No.

Do you / your husband allow your wife /you

(a) To work in plantation.

(b) To work outside plantation.

(c) Consult when taking any decision.

(d) Meet outsider and talk to him / her.

(e) Go to haat alone / with friends

(f) Go to health centre alone / with friends

(g) Go to movie alone / with friends.

14. Do you / your husband allow your wife / you to keep her/your income with you ?

Yes / No / Partial

(a) if Yes - why ?

(b) If No - why ?

(c) If Partial - why?

15. Do you prefer early marriage ?

Yes / No

15a. If Yes - why ?

15b. If No - why ?

16. Do you have same feeling for your boy and girl child ?

Yes / No

16a. If Yes - why ?

16b. If No - why ?

17. Do you treat your boy and girl child equally ?

Yes / No.

17a. If Yes - why ?

17b. If No - why ?

18. Do you give them equal food ?

Yes / No

18a. If Yes - why ?

18b. If No - why ?

18c. If you have a single egg to whom do you give it and why ?

19. Do you give your boy and girl dresses equally?

Yes / No

19a. If Yes - why ?

19b. If No - why ?

20. Do you send your child to school ? Give to the write answer.

(a) Send all to school.

(b) Do not send them to school.

(c) Send to school only the boy child.

20(i). Why do not you send your girls to school ?

20(ii). Why do you send your boy to school ?

20(iii). Why do you send all children to school?

21. Do you allow your boy child to work and why ?

(a) Yes

(b) No

(c) Only at home

(d) At home and in the plantation

(e) In the plantation only.

22. Do you allow your girl child to work and why ?

(a) Yes

(b) No

(c) Only at home

(d) At home and in the plantation

(e) In the plantation only.

23. Do you take your children to health centre when they need to go ?
- (a) Only boy
 - (b) Only girl
 - (c) Both
 - (d) None of them.
24. What kind of diseases your children suffer from ?
25. Say Yes / No.
Do You allow your girl to —
- (a) Meet and play with her mates when she wishes.
 - (b) Go outside home when she wishes.
 - (c) Go outside the line when she wishes with her mates / alone.
 - (d) Meet / Play / move with boy friends in and outside the garden.
 - (e) Talk before outsiders.
 - (f) Give her time to play / read.
 - (g) Take her to haat / movie / outside the garden.
 - (h) Think that girls should get equal share of her father's property.
 - (i) Take her decision during any problem. If wage earner allow her a part / whole/ do not allow her to keep her income with her.
26. What do you think of your girl ?
- (a) She should be more obedient.
 - (b) She should be at home
 - (c) She should be calm and quiet.
 - (d) She should be naughty
 - (e) She should be what she like to be
27. Is there any case of child death in your family ? Yes / No.
27a. If Yes - when and how.

APPENDIX IV

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL
ANTHROPOLOGY**

University of North Bengal

QUESTIONNAIRE SCHEDULE - B

(For the Girl Child)

Sl. No.	Tea Estate	Mothertongue
Name of the	Line	Bilingualism
Informant	Dist	Age
Religion	P.S.	Occupation
Ethnic group	Block	Educational Status
		Marital status
		Father's name and occupation
		Mother's occupation (if any).

1. How many brother and sister do you have ?
2. What do you think to whom do your parents love more and why?
3. How do you know that your parents love / donot love you?
4. When do you get up at the morning?
5. What kind of works do you are to do since the morning?
6. Do you have small sib?
Yes / No
- 6a. If Yes - Do you have to look after him / her ?
- 6b. What kind of works you have to do for the kid/ kids?

7. Do you go to school?
- 7a. If Yes - when do you go to school ?
- 7b. When do you read at nome ?

8. Do your brothers go to school when you stay at home?
Yes / No.

- 8a. If yes - donot you regret that you can not go to school like him?
9. Does your mother give you food when your get hungry?
10. What kind of food you eat?
12. Does your mother give you and your brother equal food?
13. Do you get new cloth when your brother get it ? Yes / No
- 13a. If No - why ?
14. Do you work in plantation?
- 14a. If Yes - what kind of work you do?
- 14b. How much salary do you get?
- 14c. Can you keep your salary with you?
- (i) No (ii) Yes
- (iii) Partial
- (iv) If you can keep your salary or a part of your salary with you then what do you do with it?
15. Do you have any time of your own?
- Yes / No
16. If yes, then how do your spend your leisure ?
- (a) In sports / games
- (b) In gossip
- (c) Listen to radio / tape
- (d) See T.V.
17. Do you worship god? Which god and How ?
18. Do you have to observed any ritual since birth? Give the names.
- (a) At the time of birth —
- (b) Few days after birth —
- (c) Rice ceremoney —
- (d) Naming ceremoney —
- (e) During puberty —

19. Say yes / No.

Your Parents

- (a) Allow you to meet / play / move with your mates when you wish / no work / never.
- (b) Allow to go you outside the garden with your mates-both boy and girl / boy / girl / none / *alone*
- (c) Take you outside the garden / ^{at} / health centre.
- (d) Talk before outsiders .

20. Are you satisfied of being girl?

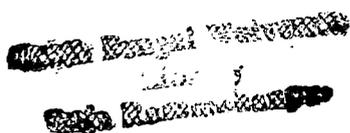
Yes / No.

20a. If Yes - why ?

20b. If No - why ?

FIELD DIARY

- November 1997** : Basic enquiry conducted in Matigara Tea Estate of Terai Darjeeling.
- December 1997** : Basic enquiry conducted in Soongachi Tea Estate of Doars, Jalpaiguri.
- January 1998** : Household Census conducted in Matigara Tea Estate, Terai.
- February 1998** : Adibasi girls and their parents are interviewed with the help of questionnaire schedule.
- March 1998** : Adibasi girls and their parents are interviewed with the help of questionnaire schedule.
- April 1998** : Household Census conducted in Soongachi Tea Estate Doars.
- May 1998** : Adibasi girls and their parents are interviewed with the help of questionnaire schedule.
- June 1998** : Adibasi girls and their parents are interviewed with the help of questionnaire schedule.
- August 1998** : Matigara Tea Estate revisited for some additional information and also for verification of some data.
- September 1998** : Soongachi Tea Estate revisited for some additional information and also for verification of some data.



APPENDIX VI

SOME PROTO-AUSTROLOID TRIBES WORKING IN TEA GARDENS OF TERAI AND DOARS OF NORTH BENGAL

1. Asur
2. Bhumij
3. Chik-Baraik
4. Munda
5. Oraon
6. Santal
7. Kharia
8. Malpaharia
9. Nagesia
10. Mahali
11. Sabar