

Chapter 6

Life Style of the Bengali Entrepreneurs and The Tea Garden Managers

The title of this chapter needs explanation. We have already referred to the emergence of the Bengali entrepreneurs, the growth and development of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry and their contribution behind the socio – cultural development of both the Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts. In this chapter we will discuss the life – style of the Bengali tea planters in the context of our study.

The Bengali entrepreneurs enjoyed a great social distinction in the contemporary society of both the Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts. The Bengali Hindus among them were predominantly upper caste Hindus; the Muslim also too enjoyed social distinction and were highly conscious of this fact. However, both of them formed an exclusive group placed on the highest stratum of the contemporary society. The prime mode of transport of the Bengali Entrepreneurs was horses, elephants, palanquins, barge, and motor car and so on. Their financial solvencies were highlighted in many of their activities such as reclining on a couch constructed in a boat and smoking tobaccos hour after hour¹. A well decorated barge was anchored round the clock on the banks of the River Karala behind the hose of distinguished Bengali tea planters of Jalpaiguri town such as Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, Sasi Kumar Nyogi. On the opposite bank of the River Karala, there was a Jalsaghar. Tea planter Jogesh Ghosh along with his constant companion Khudu Neyogi used to enjoy his river travels or even spend his leisure time amusing himself at the musical concerts of his Jalsaghar. Khudu Neyogi was quite efficient in dancing and could keep pace with expert concubines coming from Lucknow, Benaras. However, Khudu Neogi was the Secretary of the Mogolkata Tea Estate ². Palanquin was his principal mode of communication. The bearers were all Beharis. Even to cover a short distance, he took resort to palanquins.

The women folk of the Bengali tea planters family also said to have used palanquins for transport ³. Those tea planters' families of the Jalpaiguri town also had horse – drawn carriages. The lawyers also used these as a mode of communication to attend the court, bar library. In the contemporary period, all honorable posts such as

Commissioner, D.I.G., S.P., D.C. belonged to the Europeans and they used to attend their offices through these vehicles. Every Saturday the hand bill advertising theatre at Arya Natya samaj Hall were distributed from a horse carriage along with music of band ⁴.

Tea industrialist Nalini kanta Rahut was an alumnus of the Presidency College in the then period. He was also said to have attend the college in horse carriage. The extent of his extra vagance was such that some even knick named him as the 'Prince of Rajdanga'. Nalini kanta Rahut started his career in a clerical cadre at commissioner's office. He used to visit the office on horseback. Later he resigned from his job in order to devote fully in the tea industry owned and controlled by his forefathers. The Nawab Palace of the Jalpaiguri town as well as Nawab Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh's house had a Landu (a delightfully decorated horse carriage) which was given away to marriage receptions on cordial request. Sometime, elephants were also be seen on the road and these belonged to the prestigious Nawab Palace of the Jalpaiguri town. People usually used to come out of their households and gathered on streets whenever elephants were seen ⁵. Royal house can rightfully boast of the arrival of automobile in Jalpaiguri town. Tea Planter Ganga Bagchi of Ukil Para became the proud owner of motor vehicle. In the year 1923, among the Bengali tea planters Gopal Chandra Ghosh owner of the Gopalpur Tea Estate was the first to purchase motor vehicle for his tea garden. In order to make the supervision work so easy, a Rickshaw was bought at the Gopalpur Tea Estate ⁶. A good number of aristocratic foreign vehicles such as Ford, Austin were used to adorn the main entrance of the household of the Bengali tea planters. It is worthy to be mentioned here that the Bengali tea planters of the Darjeeling hill maintained a segregate life style in comparison with the Bengali tea planters of the plains. During the winter season, the planters of the Darjeeling hill used to travel right across to Calcutta in their own foreign made costly vehicles ⁷.

In the mid of 20th century most of the houses of the Jalpaiguri town had tin sheds. Some concrete buildings also started coming up. At that time, the buildings of the tea planters were all concrete structures. In this list also figures the royal house of Raikot Para, the house hold of Umagati Ray. He was the then Congress President of the Jalpaiguri district and later owned the Coronation Tea Company from the Kalyani group. However, the household of planter Rahim Baksh of Din Bazaar area, the house

hold of the Marwari tea industrialists such as Daga, Kalyani, Maheswari are indeed deserved to be mentioned here. In the residential areas, in order to move from one house to another the way got to be used through the boundaries of the houses. The way leading to the house of tea planter Sasi Kumar Neyogi, Joy Chandra Sanyal passed through the premises of the Devpara Tea Estate along with the boundaries of tea planter Ramesh Chakrabarty and through the house holds of other tea planter such as Sasi Banarjee, Taranath Ghatak. The Devpara Tea estate's Head Office was adjacent to the house hold of tea planter Ramananda Daga at Ukil Para. The localities which were densely populated mostly had this system ⁸.

The Bengali tea planters left their mark in the field of sports and culture. And they were also renowned as accomplished hosts. Their distant relatives or people from their native village came to their houses at any time without any hesitation. They took shelter there and the tea planters themselves helped them to get some employment or engagement. To cite an example we can utter the name of Nawab family, Ghosh and Roy family of the Jalpaiguri town. Nawab Rahim Baksh and his son – in – law Nawab Musharuff Hossain used to provide shelter and employed his remote relatives coming from Kumilla to their own gardens. In this respect it is important to mention here that the prestigious Nawab family of the Jalpaiguri town had near about thirty tea estates under their possession across the whole Terai – Dooars and the Assam. Nawab Rahim Baksh helped in setting up the first Bengali club 'The Jalpaiguri Institute' and everyday in the evening used to play cards with his friends from the Hindu community. Mukhleshwar Rahman also engaged Muslims from his native village to his own gardens. Every day in the morning he had a get together at the living room of Bishnu Prasad Mitra and they elapsed their time by smoking tobacco and discussing material issues. The households of Sanyal's, Ghosh, Ray remained unbarred for their relatives. They were also famous for accommodating students who came from different places and got a roof over their head in order to continue their education. They did not have to pay any expense for food and lodging.

The Bihari musclemen (Palwan) mainly did the job of guards and domestic help. The odor of sweet smelling tobacco filled the room ⁹. Whenever someone came to meet with those Bengali tea planters either from gardens or from other areas, at first he was greeted with tobaccos irrespective of class, caste and creed and after that discussion on relevant issues took place. Next came a dish full of

homemade sweets and cold water. But now the custom has been changed to greeting the guests with tea and cigarettes. Whenever the Directors went for supervision of their own tea estates they were welcomed cordially by the staffs of the garden. In this occasion, the laborers' could not participate. They remained aloof from all type of amusement programmers. These white cold birds as the European planters used to call them, viewed the Directors as their Lord. Here, we could easily hear the echo of the European Plantation system. Likewise, the European gardens, the Indian gardens also maintained a strict policy to run their estates as they believed, co – friendly relation with labourers could hamper the management of the garden. Question may arise from this perspective that why the nationalist thinkers only raised their voices against the European managed tea estates in regard to the exploitation of the labourers, not the Indian gardens where as labour persecution was also there at a staggering rate. Perhaps love and affection lagged them to write down in detail anything against these Indian owned tea gardens. We hope this untouched area of research will be explored in future and will bring such an unexplored area of labour persecution into lime light.

However, let us go back to the same point from where we started. During the tour of Directors in their own gardens the employees were also invited for dinner. The Directors treated them as their friends and relatives. Such as in 1922 when Mr. Evers, along with his wife came to visit Gopalpur garden they were cordially welcomed and arrangements were made for their staying at tea estate's own inspection Bungalow which came into existence in the year 1918. In 1925 the Member of the Board of Revenue, K.C. Dey and his wife came for inspection of the garden and they were put up in the same Bungalow¹⁰. Nevertheless, whenever some dignified personage came to the town it was the own house of the tea planters where they stayed instead of Government bungalows. To cite an example we can say that when C.R. Das along with his wife Basanti Debi came to Jalpaiguri town, Jagadindra Deb Raikot with outmost interest made arrangements for their staying at Raikot Household. In addition to that, after becoming the President of India, Rajendra Prasad came to Jalpaiguri town and he finalized his tour programme in the house of Satyendra Prasad Ray, the then renowned tea planter and Member of Parliament. In the contemporary period, the Government Guest House and Bungalow's did not have adequate arrangements and quality up to the mark. Such was the situation that there was no vehicle even for the VIP tour of the Deputy Commissioner. Hence they had to

take resort to availing the huge Hudson vehicle of tea planter S.P. Ray. The Honorable President, however, stayed at the Bungalow's of Madhu Tea Estate belonging to the Ray Group in 1950's¹¹.

Voluntary donations were one of the main ingredients of the life style of the Bengali entrepreneurs. They were very cordial and open minded. They extended their helping hand to many poverty stricken families and if it was a respectable family and was hesitant to accept help publicly, these tea planters helped them by sending sacks of rice, money in envelopes in the dead of night, so that others might not get any hint of it. The key to success of these first generation Bengali planters were strict discipline. They were also very punctual and strived to complete any work within the specific span of time. If anyone arrived a minute later, he was not allowed to meet. Tea industrialist S.P. Ray opened his chamber at sharp 5.30 in the morning. Even in the utmost winter days, the time table was never changed. Three personal assistants worked from morning till 10'o clock and they did heterogonous type of work including sending responses through letters and typing. Whenever he went out of town, he was accompanied by one typist and two attendances. His work made him travel through the whole country, but never visited Europe or America. He was truly a work alcoholic and did not have any time for going to abroad leaving his work. This kind of discipline and punctuality were not available in their third or fourth generation. They never paid importance to their work rather remained busy in leading a fully extravagant life. This indiscipline attitude indubitably set the Sun of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry of Bengal.

The first and second generation Bengali tea planters had to construct so many funds in order to help the poor and meritorious students. For example S.P. Ray was said to have built Sharat Jamini Fund in memory of his mother at P.D. Women's College, Tarini Prasad Ray Fund in memory of his father at A.C. College of the Jalapiguri town. In short, to help others was like a natural phenomenon of the first and second generation Bengali tea planters¹². Their living rooms were always had a gathering of large number of people round the clock. No one was allowed to leave without taking food. The expanse only for tea in Jogesh Ghosh's household amounted to Rs. 300 to 500 per month. The kitchen remained open throughout the whole years for the relatives and visitors coming from outside and the expanses amounted to 1200 – 1500 per month. People from different vocations such as washer men, milkmen and

barber received land from their property in order to construct house. Priests were engaged in hereditary lines and food and lodging of every one of them was arranged free of cost ¹³. It is interesting to mention that in spite of doing so, they never set aside themselves from their family business and hence, the gardens were still under the possession of the first or second generation Bengali planters even despite strong opposition faced from their European counterparts.

Their dress code was an exhibition of aristocracy. The tea garden owners and lawyers preferred baggy trousers, black piece of suits and a tangled white covering hanging from shoulders and a hat in red and black hue resembling almost like that which was worn by the Poet Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyay. The golden fob chain used to peep along the lines of bottom holes. A French cut or a nice trimmed beard was an example of high class society, yet exceptions prevailed. The traditional dhuti were also adorned by these aristocrat Bengali tea planters. A knee light loose trousers along with dhuti and pump shoe were the traditional dress of a good number of Bengali tea planters in the contemporary period ¹⁴.

The densely covered forest of Jalpaiguri district was famous for its diversified hunting reserve. It was the habitat of a large number of animals. Hence it was the main focal point of hunting to both the Indian and the Europeans. There were also some tea planters of whom hunting was a favourite past time and their main hunt was the Royal Bengal Tiger. Here, we find much similarity between the Indian and European tea planters. But we never heard that both of them jointly went for hunting. However, the tactics coined by their counterparts were also followed by the Bengali tea planters. Whenever they failed to target a tiger, they contended themselves like the Europeans by hunting a wild boar or a deer. A hunting expedition was usually fixed two to three months in advance. The local forest Department and the administration used to identify the place for setting up the camp and also spot the hunting ground. However, in order to reach the hunting spot elephant ride was the most viable option. A raised platform was set up in 3 – 4 trees in the core area of the forest. Three to four hunters armed with rifles and carrying troche, water, food and other necessities used to wait for the hunt on those platforms. Renowned hunters were also invited in those expeditions and this was a matter of great respect for them ¹⁵. In those days, carrying license for hunting was obligatory. In order to oil the rifle and maintain it, experts were said to have called from Calcutta. However, after independence issuing such

licenses had been discontinued. After the end of hunting the corpse of the wild animals were said to have send to Jaipur where the structure of the animals were stuffed with foams and administered with chemicals for preservation. Later, these were sent back to the tea planters and were gorgeously exhibited in their drawings rooms. The Bengali entrepreneurs of the Darjeeling hill used to wear hides made from hides of tigers and also used the hides to sit on it while reading some books. For example, tea industrialist Pashupati Banarjee was said to have maintained a library comprised with numerous precious books. Dear horns, nails of tigers lined the stair case within their rooms. The Happy Valley Tea Estate of the Darjeeling hill maintained a museum of such staffed animals. They also had a rich library. A number of European tea planters used to share views with the forerunners of the Makaibari, Happy valley Tea Estates in this library ¹⁶. Moreover, it was also a debating house to the Brahma Samaj leaders of the hill as well. The museum was a special visiting point to the wards of the white tea planters of the Darjeeling hill along with their Memsahib's. Even after independence, this trend was continued as well. Along with copious beautiful scenic spots of the Darjeeling hill, the museum and the library figured as special spot figure in the list to the tourists. It is important to be mentioned here that tea planter Amiya Banarjee and his friend Surapati Bhattacharta together made a film in 1940s namely 'Ramkhoka' at the beautiful scenario spots of the Happy Valley Tea Estate ¹⁷. Unfortunately, after the transfer of the ownership of the Happy Valley Tea Estate to other Indian the condition of both the museum and the library became deplorable as a whole.

During the festivals and various occasions the premises of the households of the Bengali entrepreneurs became a place of congregation of people coming from different regions. This custom was also followed by the native Jotedars and Zamindars as well. However, people poured in large numbers from the remote corners of the village to participate in the fair organized by the tea planters. The Muslims and Hindus both participated in Durga Puja and Maharam without any narrowness and prejudices. Various types of cattle and pigeons were used to immolate on the three days of the Durga Puja. Along with it there were arrangements of night long musical concerts. On the days of occasion hotchpotch and mixed vegetable items were cooked in large cauldron. Fire smoldered in the huge wovens and religious scriptures were chanted. Marriage, academic success of wards, profits in tea business – these

objectives were said to have sanctified through enchanting of hymns. Those things which were achieved through blessings of God were devoted and it was again reaccepted as something which was a gift from the supreme to its creation on this earth.

The kitchens of these Bengali tea planters household were used to made adequate provisions to feed not only their relatives but also persons who came from their own native land daily. During the season of harvesting nobody was allowed to leave the household without having a filling meal. The staffs from the gardens or from other tea companies who came to the town with some work had to share the table and participate in the launch or even dinner with the members of the tea planter's family. Whenever the Directors went for inspecting the garden the staffs were invited to supper and they were treated as their own relative or friends. On the days of occasion there was no difference between the Directors, clerks, Manager and so on. Every one shared an equal stature. However, this type of fraternization was not available in the European owned tea gardens. Exceptions were there but were very scanty¹⁸.

Next to that arrangements were made for organizing Durga Puja, Dol yatra in Bengali owned tea gardens and expenses were met for this purpose from the garden's own repository fund. Sometime donations were also given from the Director himself. Those who were unmarried or those who were married but their families lived to some place away, were provided with their food in the garden's own rest house. Even the garden owner sat with them in the same table while taking meal. The expenses of this were borne by the company itself. Nobody had to pay for this¹⁹.

The news of the garden's owner coming for inspection spread like wild fire. They usually came with motor vehicles or Lorries along with friends or relatives and had various commodities with them such as sweets, fish and meat, vegetable and so on. The reason for this was that every now and then they made arrangements of feasts for the staffs of the gardens. And such huge quantities of food items were bought with them. In between these the inspection work went on in its usual course. The marriage ceremony of the wards of the Bengali entrepreneurs was an extravagant and opulent display of aristocracy. At times the arrangements of feasts in the household of the Bengali tea planters surpassed even the arrangements of the royal house. The groom and its party were cordially welcomed and a huge ceremony was performed for

welcoming them – the joy was in one word limitless. Skilled artists were invited from Dacca and musical concerts were organized. After the concert was over the artists were paid handsome remuneration. Even ten days before the marriage ceremony, the household of the Bengali tea planters used to buzz with friends, relatives and other revered guests. After the marriage ceremony for three consecutive days the poor and the needy were provided with liberal help. Such opulent wedding ceremonies were very rare in Jalpaiguri town in the contemporary period. Whenever they visited any place on account of business or travel, arrangements of singing of hymns were made in the evening. After the programme ended sweets were distributed among the audience. Moreover their names and address were also noted down in order to inform them for further religious gathering. The reason behind this was that whenever any occasion came up there was a system of sending invitation card to them. Along with it money orders were sent to meet the travel expenses. During their travels, the Bengali tea planters carried hundred of tea packets. They also had a habit of inviting friends frequently. Deliciously cooked food was served to them in huge quantity. The cordiality was such that it was many times beyond expectation and capacity of the invitee ²⁰. The owner of the house shared the table along with the guests and item after item were served. Sometimes food was served keeping in view the status symbol. It is also to be noted that sometime guests did not always share the table with the owner or with his family. Only the owner of another garden or someone very dear person enjoyed this privilege. They used the dinner table for this purpose and the women folk of the family helped in serving the food. In case of other guests food was generally sent to the guest house where they put up. It is mentionable that the Bengali entrepreneurs of the Darjeeling hill had their dinner within 8.30 to 9.00 P.M. they did not have the habit of going to sleep after that. They spent some time gossiping and then went to sleep. The dinner set they used were specially imported from abroad. Bread was bought from Calcutta's Firpo Market (Today's New market) till 1950 by train and after that by aero plane. The quantity was three to four pound per week. Scented rice was served either in lunch or dinner. The breakfast menu included pudding made from six eggs in half liter milk with it two pieces of bread and butter. The everyday menu of lunch was stew, boiled meat, boiled vegetables and two to three pieces of bread. In the evening they used to enjoy fried puffed rice or light snacks ²¹.

The Bengali tea planters preferred in marrying off their daughters within the precincts of the town and as such the number of relatives swelled. In some exceptional cases, their daughters were married off to Dacca, Pabna and Mymansingh districts of undivided Bengal. The children of them for the purpose of education came to the maternal houses at Jalpaiguri town. The main institutions where they could get educated were such as FDI School, Jalpaigiri Zilla School, Sadar Girl's High School, Ananda Model School, Sonaula High School, A.C. College, P.D. Women's College and so on. There was no objection in providing accommodation to those children coming from their native villages and staying at their maternal houses at Jalapiguri town. Tea planter Tarini Prasad Ray of Babupara married the daughter of tea planter Gopal Chandra Ghosh of Raikotpara. The later and his son Jogesh Chandra Ghosh were extremely financially solvent and an aristocratic family. On the other hand, Tarini Prasad Ray was also a renowned lawyer and one of the pioneer tea entrepreneurs in the contemporary period. Tea industrialist cum Zamindar Prasanna Deb Raikot married off his daughter to a landlord family of East Bengal. His son – in – law Sourindra Kiran Basu after completing his dentistry course from America came to Jalpaiguri and started a chamber in the first floor of the present Kohinoor building. Princess Pratibha Debi and Sourindra Kiran Basu used to stay in the household of the Raikots. Sourindra Kiran Basu was the elder brother of Jyoti Basu, the former Chief Minister of West Bengal. J.D. Raikot did not get his daughter and son married within the Jalpaiguri town. During the time of Sarajendra Deb Raikot and Khiredendra Deb Raikot, it was quite a practice that their daughters along with their families stayed in the Raikot household months after months. Tea planter Keshab Chandra Ghatak of Ukilpara married off his two daughters at a village in Pabna district of the undivided Bengal. The elder daughter was married to tea planter Trailakyo Nath Mallick. He was a lawyer who became renowned within a small span of time and was consequently a well – to – do tea industrialist also. He was said to have built a house at kadamtala, Jalpaiguri town. He was attached with a good number of tea companies of the then Jalpaiguri town. In this context, it is deserved to be mentioned here that in the first half of the twentieth century there were 89 Head offices of various tea companies n the then period at Jalpaiguri town. However, Trailakyo Nath Mallick married off his daughter to a village of Dacca and his grandson and daughters used to stay in the maternal house for education. Tea industrialist Rajendra Kumar Neogi married off his daughter with Rakhal Neogi, the auditor of the Khyerbari Tea

Company. Tea industrialist Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty married off his two daughters to a village of Pabna district of undivided Bengal. The sons of Anath Bandhu Roy used to stay in the house of Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty at Jalpaiguri for education.

The daughter of tea planter Sasi Kumar Banarjee of Ukil para was married in Calcutta. She passed away at a very young age leaving behind her daughter. Tea planter Biraj Kumar Banarjee and Santosh Kumar Banarjee, worthy son of Sasi Kumar Banarjee as per their sisters wish bought the girl child to Jalpaiguri town and nourished her as well as good. They were her maternal uncles and they called her by the name Kajri. She was widely known to others by that name. Again as per her mother's wish, Biraj Banarjee married off Kajri to Jiten Mukherjee, a person of clean image and provided accommodation in their household to both of them. Among the four daughters of Tarini Prasad Roy of Babupara, the eldest two were married off to Calcutta. The sons of both of them stayed at Jalpaiguri and after matriculation exam went to Calcutta for higher studies. The younger daughter of T.P. Ray remained unmarried. Tea industrialist Rahim Baksh married off his two daughters at Jalpaiguri town and his two son – in – law used to stay at his own home namely 'Nawab Palace' at Jalapiguri. After the marriage of her daughters Begam Fayjennesha, wife of tea planter Musharruf Hossain made arrangements for their staying in Nawab palace. Tea industrialist Musharruf Hossain later opened a tea garden in Goalpara, Assam by her name. However, the husband of their daughters used to look after the property of the Nawab family and the functioning of the companies. The grandson and daughters spend their childhood in the Nawab Palace of Jalapiguri. This narration, no doubt, helps us to understand that why the Jalpaiguri town was known as a 'Groom Petting Town' in the contemporary period²².

The upsurge of the Bengali renaissance which engulfed Calcutta in the nineteenth and twentieth century also took long strides and reached Jalpaiguri town in no time. It is true that the nineteenth century Calcutta could boast of many luminaries and in this respect the Jalpaiguri town did not lack behind as a large number of social reformers, keen educationalists and education stalwarts accounted for a large section of population of the Jalpaiguri town. Being a tea industry centered town, Jalpaiguri attracted some great names of Bengali literature in various times. Such recurrent visits, truly speaking, by literary experts did not happen in case of other towns of North Bengal. However, in spite of their hectic economic and political activities, the

Bengali tea planters kept themselves always busy with various literary activities. By the end of the nineteenth century a concerted effort in the direction of literary practice could be perceived. The first and foremost contribution of the Bengali entrepreneurs in literary field of the Jalpaiguri town began with the creation of Debating Club which came into existence under the auspicious leadership of two noble Bengali tea planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh and Jogodindra Raikot in the year 1917. Its chief aim was to arrange literary discussion and cultural debate on heterogeneous subjects²³. The Arya Natya Samaj which owes its origin in the year 1902 under the tutelage of Sasi Kumar Neyogi was founded with the aim of arousing national consciousness among the residents of the town as well as in developing a cultural environment around the whole town²⁴. The publication of 'Trisrota' from this institution, the birth of Bandhab Natya Samaj in the year 1924 as well as 'Janamat' bore the testimony to this fact in regard to the Bengali Hindu tea planters²⁵. The Muslim tea industrialists also did not lag behind in this sphere. 'Mihir' and 'Sudhakar' published from Dacca under the patronage of tea planter Rahim Baksh is worthy to be mentioned here²⁶.

Another important slide of the life style of our Bengali entrepreneurs was to arrange musical concerts. Its main aim was to further the cause of music in the then society of the Jalpaiguri town. A large number of people came from various nook and corner of the town as well as from the adjacent villages, poured there to enjoy the concert. Moreover, in order to carry out extensive musical practices, connoisseurs of music used to visit Jalpaiguri town off and on from every nook and corner of the country. They used to stay for months and their prime objective was to further the cause of music. References should be made to Jogodindra Raikot who initiated two musical competitions namely 'Chhatra o Prakton Chhatra Samiti' (Association for the running and ex – students) and 'Chhatra Samiti' (Association for the students) in the year 1932 and 1934 respectively with the same objective²⁷. Tea industrialist B.C. Ghosh founded the 'Jalpaiguri Sangit Samaj' and 'Jalpaiguri Kirtan Mridanga Siksha Niketan' at the town²⁸. The dancing and singing school named 'Chhandam' came up at Arya Natya Samaj under the leadership of tea industrialist S.P. Ray. After the demise of Sarajendra Deb Raikot he encouraged and also assisted Samarendra Deb Raikot to establish "Sarajendra Deb Raikot Sangit Sadan" (music school) in the fond memory of his father²⁹.

In the 1940s the tea gardens were scattered habitat in the middle of the dense forest and were almost devoid of any means of transport. No reliable means of communication were available and people had to walk miles after miles to reach their destination. Life was always at a risk as these forests were inhabited by savage animals³⁰. Even in the middle of this, the staffs (Bengali Babus) of the tea gardens continued their untiring efforts to create some situation for entertainment. They were always striving to bring some exception in the dull and monotonous tea garden life. Theatre was one of their leisure past time. It also reflected their cultural life. In order to arrange a theatre, it was not an easy task at that time. Still by the untiring efforts of the tea garden staffs they succeeded in the organization of theatrical activities. In this attempt they got the assistance in any form from the garden owners especially the Bengali industrialists. As they could realize that in order to enhance the production as well as to run the garden smoothly it is indeed desirable to bring some exception in the dull and monotonous tea garden life of their staffs. Hence, they extended their helping hands to them by establishing wooden stages in their gardens for the pretext of organizing theatrical activities. Literary to say, the Bengali tea industrialists made it a prime feature of their life style to attend in the theatrical activities performed by the staffs of their gardens.

Whenever a theatre was due to be staged in any garden, the entire locality was buzzed with the news. Rehearsals continued for months together and the garden staffs who were to participate practiced hours after hours in order to achieve perfection. Some time the Bengali tea industrialists also participated with them in this practice session and jointly performed. To cite an example, the famous tea planter Nalini Kanta Rahut performed in the drama named 'Pather Seshe' written by the staff of Thanjhora Tea Estate in the character of 'Durga Sankar'³¹.

However, relatives, family members provided them with the most needed inspiration. There was dearth of modern equipments, yet they managed to create a suitable set with the very little sources available. This sort of picture could not be seen especially in the European managed tea gardens as the white tea planters attributed much emphasis on production rather than recreational activities. Whatsoever, this interception could not set aside the European gardens staffs from such a recreational environment. In this respect the recreational activities performed by the staffs of the European managed Gaikata and Banarhat Tea Estates deserve to be mentioned. In the

whole Dooars region, they reached the high water mark in the field of theatre. The sets consisted of such artistic designs such as waves in the river, two – storied building and so on. Artists were called from towns in order to create the sets. Arrangements were also made for audio part of the theatre like chirping of birds, clattering of horses hoofs and so on. Historical, mythical, social plays were frequently staged and at a later stage like Bisarjan, Raktakarabi by the poet Rabindranath Tagore were also enacted. The labourers were also used to pour in large numbers to watch the theatre. The Manager, Assistant Manager also witnessed the theatre ³².

The Chuapara Tea Estate of kalchini region had a staff club which organized theatres and it was a source of excitement in the whole region. It started its journey in 1930s and with the passage of time it acquired a distinct position in the cultural atmosphere of the tea garden employees of eastern Dooars. Various types of plays were staged there. The tea garden workers of the adjacent gardens such as Bhatpara, Mechpara, Rangapara, Radharani used to come here to watch the performances and even some time to participate ³³. The then owners of the Radharani Tea Estate the Sinha's loved to arrange such sort of recreational activities in their gardens. Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury, the founder of the tea estate was the central figure of inspiration in this respect. In 1930s he used to bring numerous dramatists from the then Kolakata in order to provide lesson in this field to the garden workers ³⁴. Arrangements of rehearsal were mainly made at Chuapara Club but it was also done at different garden by term. The head clerk of Chuapara Tea Estate Birendra Chattapadhyaya was himself an accomplished actor. He also exercised competence in directing plays. In 1940s those who enacted the roles with him were Dhiren Banarjee, Rama Banarjee. The typist of the garden Shakti Sen enacted the roles of women character. On one such occasion famous actor Chabi Biswas was himself present at the dramatization of 'Dui Purush' and he highly praised the staging of the play. After taking make up and disguise, it was just not possible for an onlooker to differentiate whether he was a man or women. This also creates some problems. In 1945 – 46 staging of drama was going on in full swing. The audience was packed with capacity and the Managers were also present. In the middle of this colourful atmosphere, Assistant Manager Mr. Vaipon was charmed by the beauty of an actress. After the end of the drama he, step by step, came across the green room and invited the actress to his bungalow. The club member and the artists had to try very hard in order to

convince him that the actress was not a woman; rather he was man who was a subordinate staff of his garden ³⁵.

For the organization of theatre the employees of the garden had to visit the residence of the garden owners in the Jalpaiguri town now and then. The Bengali tea planters used to provide them monetary help in this ground. It was not only tire some but also time consuming, yet they never lacked interest and excitements. Such theatres were also organized in the Buxa – Dooars Club of the Kalchini Tea Estate, Central Dooars Club of the Palashbari Tea Estate. Biraj Kumar Banarjee, the owner of the Palashbari tea garden and his sons played the major role in this respect. In 1960s the members of this club along with tea industrialist Biraj Kumar Banarjee staged a drama at Suryanagar, Alipur and received high acclamation and award. In the organization of cultural function, the Nimitjhora tea garden was also a step ahead. Tea industrialist Rajendra Kumar Neyogi played an important role to foster the cultural spirit in the garden which was laid down by his father Sasi Kumar Neogi. He was said to have bought elegant dramatists from Kolkata times without number in this garden. He also sometime enacted the main role along with the employees of his garden in several dramas. To commemorate his cultural endeavors, the staffs of the garden laid the foundation of an auditorium hall ‘Rajendra Smriti Bhawan’ in 1960s which bore the name of tea industrialist Rajendra Kumar Neogi. During its inauguration programme numerous cultural personages such as the famous Rabindra Sangit singer Suchitra Mitra, Soumendranath Tagore graced the chair ³⁶.

Malangi Tea Estate of Hasimara also did not lag behind in this sphere. Sudhakanta Basu, local Post Master Sailesh Biswas, Head Clerk Amal Bhawal were the main source of inspiration. Sudhakanta Basu himself discharged the duties of make – up artists. Amal Bhawal played the role of a women character. Their theatrical activities received esteemed recognition whenever they invited to stage a play at Subhasini tea garden ³⁷. From the beginning the tea planter Ghosh family of the Jalpaiguri town nourished a cultural atmosphere at the Subhasini tea garden. Tea industrialist Jogesh Ghosh and his two worthy sons B.C. Ghosh and D.C. Ghosh were much familiar to all on account of their literary and cultural pursuits ³⁸. In this respect, they did not deprive the staffs of their garden and were always ready to help them in any form to further the cause of cultural activities. The workers of the Sarugaon tea garden used to cover eight to ten miles to take part in the rehearsal. But there was no

other risk except the wild animals. The theatre provided them with varied experiences. Some actors who participated in women's role had to purchase some ornaments at their own expense. Instances are also available that women audience purchased new ornaments just to attend the theatre. At the initial stages the ingredients for makeup of Dalgaon club like painting, artificial ornaments, dresses and so on were bought from Calcutta but later on such arrangements were made at Jalpaiguri town only. While organizing theatre disagreement on various matters also arose such as who was to enact the role of a hero. But these differences of opinion did not continue for a long time and matters were amicably settled. Some trifling matters were also prevalent such as the actor taking part in the role of a woman character was not agreed to wear under garments (Shaya). Again in the scene of conflict one actor hit the other so hard that the victim had to remain bed ridden for a couple of days.

Ramjhora, Kadambini, Gopalpur tea gardens owned and controlled by the Ghosh family of Jalpaiguri town in the contemporary period also organized theatres on yearly basis. The garden management and some time the Bengali tea planters provided their own vehicles so that each staff could come to the theatre along with their families. In the year 1952 the M.G. Enterprise of Kolkata dramatized the play 'Ramakrishna' at the wooden stage of the Gopalpur tea garden. The Ramjhora tea garden also made arrangement for the evolving stage at a later stage. The cultural function at this stage of the garden on the occasion of the birth anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore created huge enthusiasm in this region. Suchandra Mitra and Uma Das of Tashati tea garden enacted in the dance drama 'Africa' by poet Rabindranath Tagore. Such was their excellence that the audience and even the then Directors, Managers and other important personalities were spell bound. Tea industrialist B.C. Ghosh was said to have sent them to Calcutta for the pretext of attaining better training in dance. In the year 1965 the workers, staffs of the Ramjhora tea garden arranged a theatre on the occasion of centenary jubilee of poet Bankimchandra's Durgesh Nandini. The acting skills presented there were of a very high order³⁹.

The employees of Dimdima tea garden created a cultural stage at their own enterprise and also with the assistance of the management. The names to be mentioned in this regard are Sibprasanna Majumder, Bimalendu Sanyal and other staffs of the garden. The wife of the European Managers also extended their hands to

arrange the equipments of the stage. It was perhaps for the first time in Dimdima tea garden that male and female actors enacted the role jointly in the theatre. This type of example is very hard to find out in other industrial sector of West Bengal.

The Kathalguri tea garden owned and controlled by the tea planter Roy family of Jalpaiguri is another milestone in this field. Bhupendranath Bakshi, the head clerk (Bara Babu) of the garden had a core relation with the owner of the garden S.P. Ray. Both of them endeavored at their apex level to reach the high water mark of literary activities in comparison with the other gardens of the Dooars region. This competitive attitude was much felt in regard to the gardens controlled by the Ghosh family of Jalpaiguri town. Perhaps it was the off shot that had begun during the regime of Tarini Prasad Roy and Jogesh Chandra Ghosh. Their worthy successors like Satyendra Prasad Roy and Birendra Chandra Ghosh, Debesh Chandra Ghosh maintained the trend not even in business but also in cultural field also. However, under the enthusiasm of tea planter S.P. Ray the actors and actresses of the Star Group, Kolkata enacted in the drama Karnarjun, Subhadraharan at the revolving stage of the garden. It is also interesting to note here that a number of good dramatists came from Kolkata and spent the major phase of their life by getting job at the garden for their artistic skills. Mahendra Gupta, Lila Majumder and Bili Majumder of this garden should be important to cite out. All of them took part in the drama “Shahjahan’ and were highly applauded by the audience as well. Kalinidi, Kankabatir Ghate, Raghubir, Shahjahan, Ulka were some of the plays which were skillfully staged. To watch the dramas the workers came in large number. The employees were seen wondering among the audience with a cane in their hand while drama was being staged. This was just to keep the audience disciplined and to prevent an unruly behaviour. The manager, Assistant Managers and native Directors also remain present there. These inter – action, free – mixing was a source of integration among the people of that region.

Dramas and theatres set its foot on the Terai region under the patronage of Bengali tea planters. In 1930’s the play ‘Pather Seshe’ written by Nishi kanta Basu Roy was staged at Thanjhara T.E. on the occasion of Durga Puja. During its inception, a cultural environment was said to have formulated around the whole garden as because it was set up by Nalini Ranjan Ghosh, the then revered tea industrialist, social worker and the Member of Parliament from Jalpaiguri

Constituency. He used to visit the garden along with his own family on the very special day of Durga Puja Ashtami to pay homage and also take part in the worship. The renowned tea planter Nalini kanta Rahut of Jalpaiguri town took part in this drama and enacted the character 'Durga Shankar'. In the mid 1930's Naba Natya Club was founded at Bagdogra and the names to be mentioned here in this regard are Purna Chandra, Mitra Manager of Sannyasisthan T.E.; Prabadh Chandra Sarkar, owner of Bengdubi T.E.; Mohit Haldar owner of Kamalpur T.E., Hrishikesh Sikdar, the then head clerk of Paharghumia T.E. and so on ⁴⁰. The dramas were staged on a temporary wooden structure at kamalpur T.E. The audiences were mostly people from neighboring tea estates and they used to come in bullock carts ⁴¹.

Along with theatre it was the game of football which was a source of recreation to the employees of tea gardens in the whole Dooars region. The major role was played in theatre by Chalsa, Meteli and Bagrakote tea gardens. In order to unite and start trade unionism the employees of the Damdim tea garden took initiative but they could not succeed on account of the rigid mentality of the European Managers. Clause 144 was implemented so that they could not hold any meeting. However, this is a different matter. Now let us further return to our discussion from where we started. In the 1960s such enthusiasm received a setback but in 1970s traces can be identified to some extent. Such as in the 1970s under the direction of Deb Kumar Basu, an employee of Chuapara Tea Estate boys and girls of the garden staged some renowned plays with success such as Bisarjan, Raktakarabi, Muktir Upay. Deb Kumar Basu also enacted in a drama with Gita Dey, a renowned personality of Star Theatre of Kolkata.

In the middle of different diversities, the tea garden employees continued their cultural pursuits. But time and tide waits for none. The tea business flourished and there was an all round development. The limited and concentrated life of tea garden received the magical touch of modernism. The number of tea garden employee's increased and modern culture provided with sources to enhance the sphere of recreational activities. Quantity has increased but quality has been compromised. Such passion, such interest, such effort to create something new has become quite insignificant. T.V. has acquired the centre stage of recreation to the employees. The stages which came into existence with years of efforts and sacrifice now stand in ruins. They are standing in solitary state in some remote corner of the

garden, unheeded and unobserved. The responsibility of such dismal picture of the present state of tea garden lies with profit motive of the new owners which is the main driving force of the tea industrialists. Cultural aspects have been compromise for the predominance of business mentality. Cultural activities have reached an all time low in the gardens and it's almost on the verge of extinction.

A large number of culturally renowned personalities, hailing from these gardens showed bright in the horizon of art and culture of Bengal such as Debesh Roy, Samaresh Majumder who started the early phase of their life in the tea gardens. Poet Samaresh Majumder's father was the Head Clerk (Bara Babu) of the European managed Gairkata Tea Estate. But the numbers are decreasing gradually over the years and have become almost negligible. And such the present situation in the gardens must owe some responsibility for the degradation of art and culture of North Bengal.

Another important milestone of the life style maintained by the Bengali entrepreneurs was their affection to the game of football. They provided all sort of assistance to foster the spirit of this game not even in urban area but also in the tea garden as well. In spite of their hectic social, political activities they kept themselves always busy with the game of football at their own plantation also. In this regard, the name of tea industrialist S.P. Roy is deserved to be mentioned here. He was also a keen sportsman and he spared no pain to see that all the employees could have a field of their own so as to end up a hard day's work by enjoying themselves in the open for a couple of hours before they were driven back to their own quarters when darkness fell.

So, along with theatre it was the game of football which was a source of recreation to the employees of tea gardens in the whole Terai - Dooars region. Starting from 1940s and continuing up to sixties an urge for games and sports was quite observable in the tea gardens of Terai – Dooars. Among all the sports, football was the most popular and held a position of high esteemed. Not only the labourer and employees of the garden, but also the European as well as Indian Managers did not hold them back in providing assistance for promoting the game of football in the tea garden area. In short, it received a new lease of life during this period.

The Bengali tea planters, bearing other factors, were a step ahead of their European counterparts regarding entertainment and football. It is really hard to say whether the employees of the garden were inspired by the British who went to the football club every weekend but it is a historical fact that the tea garden employees established Damdim Friends Union Club in the year 1925. Among all the games and sports, football was the major one and was able to create interest in a massive scale among the tea garden employees of this region. The huge turnout of the audience in the football field testified to this fact. Whatever be the type of the match, the Bengali tea planters, their Managers and other staffs came to see the match along with their own families. In addition to that the labourers also witnessed the match and as such every inch of the football field was filled with audience. The excited audience provided inspiration to the players by various means. After scoring of each goal, such was the level of excitement that the referee had to wait for a couple of minutes to restart the game as the crowd invaded the field and expressed their joy by dancing at the middle of the field. This was an analogous picture to be seen in every football ground around the whole tea garden of this region. The football game in Damdim Friends Union Club started getting importance since 1943. This club arranged Gajendra Memorial Shield in which teams of various tea gardens as well from every nook and corner of the Jalpaiguri district took part. The Friends Union Club of Jalpaiguri town enjoyed the glory of winning this shield twice. But in knock out and league tournaments, only the teams from tea gardens could participate. The football team of the tea gardens belonged to the Ray group such as Needum, Amritpur, Atiabari, Diabari, Kalabari displayed remarkable skills on football field. They had the ability to provide challenges to the European garden football team such as Tashati, Nangdala, Damdim, Bhatpara and so on⁴².

DR. R.N. Sengupta of the New Glanco tea estate was a keen sports lover. Under his inspiration, a number of oldest football tournaments owe its origin. Samad the famous player of the contemporary period played a number of matches with the team of New Glanco tea estate. Next to him came Binay Sen, the Manager of Good Hope Tea Estate. Under his guidance, the football team of Good Hope garden showed monstrous challenges to the Jackson Medical team, the then superlative football team around the whole Dooars region. Tea industrialist S.P. Ray used to attend every inter-garden football tournament and present there until the end of the match. Moreover,

he used to bring good football players from Kolkata in order to make his garden team paramount across the whole region. The football team of the Atiabari garden played the matches in the name of Bani Sangha. This team comprised with a good number of players from the soccer team of the then Kolkata such as Dhrtiman Gupta (Uwari), Satindranath Basu, Anil Roy, Jagadish Chandra Roy (Arians), Tapan Kumar Guha. This team once won the trophy from Kokrajhar, Assam. The famous football player Runu Guha Neogi started the first phase of his career at the football team of Mathura garden. Later he joined the team of East Bengal, Kolkata⁴³. In this respect, the name of tea planter Jiten Samaddar deserves to be mentioned. He formulated a commendable football team singlehandedly in favour of his own Turturi tea garden. Showing skills in the football field was enough to secure employment in the garden⁴⁴.

Mateli is situated on the border of the Jalpaiguri district. It was a small hamlet whose all activities were centered round the tea garden. The employees from the adjacent tea gardens started the game of football with huge enthusiasm. European Managers and Assistant Managers all played football bare foot. The field at Nageshwari tea garden was the sole football ground in the whole region. In the year 1957 the Young Men's association club started its journey. This revived the game of football in this region and it was rejuvenated in the entire Mateli region. Ramranjan Mandal was the President and Arun Bikash khasnabish was the Secretary of this club as well. In 1958 with the active co – operation of the Manager of the Batabari tea garden Banu Mian as well as the Nawab family of Jalpaiguri town, this club organized an exhibition football match between the renowned football club of Kolkata the Muhamadden Sporting and North Bengal Eleven. At that time the team of North Bengal Eleven consisted of national star players such as Thangaraj, Samad and so on. In the contemporary period the game of football developed at Mateli region at fast pace. The level of skills was also heightened. Some renowned players of the region in the then period were Bishwanath Mandal, Kashi Ghosh, Fatik Ray of Mateli garden; Dharma Mandal, Hiranman Kujur, Sher Bahadur Thapa, Md. Ali, Indra Bahadur Lama, Mr. Brown of Jurantee garden, Mr. Warehouse of Samsing garden, Mr. W. A. Millane of Jurantee garden and so on. However, the local market area and Mateli tea garden formed a team which went to play at Mekhliganj where they defeated the famous football team of Cooch Behar Maharaja. Though football was very popular in Nagrakata region, it did not have the glamour of the football of Mateli region. Yet

enthusiasm, interest and competitive spirit were in equal measure. The garden of the Nagrakata region frequently arranged exhibition matches among themselves but as the interest was very high among the audience so the matches turned from an exhibition match to a competitive one. The doctor of Hilla tea garden Dr. Prasuneshu Bagchi was an ardent football lover. Many tea gardens used to invite him to discharge the duties of referee. The team of Chengmari garden displayed a high degree of skills. The teams which participated in the aforesaid tournament were said to have transported from Lukshan tea garden by vehicles of the tea garden to the playground and after the end of the play they returned back to the Lukshan tea garden. The scarcity of means of transport of the Nagrakata region compelled the organizers to make such arrangements. The football team of Chengmari garden consisted of players from the garden itself and no outsider was allowed. The players list was finalized by the Manager himself which was accepted unquestionably⁴⁵.

In the Banarhat region, the game of football was organized at the ground of Central Dooars National Club of Palashbari Tea Estate. The management as well as the owners of the garden, Banarjee family of Jalpaiguri town, was very much fond of the game of football. Tea planter Mr. Saroj Kumar Banarjee, son of tea industrialist Biraj Kumar Banarjee was a renowned football player of the then period. He displayed a high degree of skills in the football ground. Many tea gardens used to invite him to discharge the duties of referee. Under his guidance, the football team of Palashbari Tea Estate became a superlative one in the Banarhat region. However, the employees of the garden received ample assistance in regard to the game of football from the management. The Manager of Palashbari Tea Estate Naren Banarjee was said to have organized a inter – garden football tournament bearing the name of tea industrialist Biraj Kumar Banarjee at the ground of Central Dooars National Club with great interest and discharged the duties of club management. As adequate aid was provided by the management, so the adjacent tea gardens also participated in the aforesaid tournament. The whole playground remained packed beyond capacity. The huge trees surrounding the ground were overtaken by the audience. Inter – tea garden league and knock out matches were organized. Most exciting and important match was organized on 15 August. Sometime it was played between European Eleven and Indian Eleven. In other times the teams competing were Binnaguri Sub – Division vs. Dalgaon Sub – Division. In some years any renowned teams from Kolkata was invited

to play against North Bengal Eleven⁴⁶. In this region the Ambari Tea Estate had a major role in this field. It was a fully Bengali – owned garden and the Saha family always intended to further the cause of football in their garden also. They had a good habit to send a strong team consisted of excellent players from Kolkata in every tournament. Nripendra Nath Majumder was the key figure in this respect. Showing skills in the football field was enough to secure employment in the garden. Mihir Sen. Bhaben Brahma, Sarajit Dutta employed in the garden in this way. The players were also provided with some extra benefits from the garden⁴⁷. In 1960s an ex football player of East Bengal Soccer Club, Kolkata Majammel Hauque came to Chamurchi tea garden on basis of employment. He played there as a stopper. His shot was so measured. Later he joined in the football of Dooars branch Indian Tea Association (DBITA)⁴⁸. In the Gaikata tea garden football tournament was in vogue. The donor of the shield was an established businessman Rambabu. The European Manager of this garden was equally enthusiastic. Rabindranath Mukharjee and Badal Sarkar were some accomplished players of the garden. Krishnadas Majumder, father of the famous author Samaresh Majumder was also a skilled Goalkeeper. At a later stage Benedict Kujur received name and fame. He was also familiar in this region for his movement to safeguard the interest of the tea garden employees and labourers⁴⁹.

The Buxa Duars Football Shield, started in the year 1927, attained huge attraction from all garden employees of the Kalchini region. The trophy presented to the winning team was silver coated which was bought by Mr. Erakar from England. The Rajendra Smriti Inter – Garden Football Tournament at Nimtijhora Tea Estate bear the testimony of the affection of owner Neogi family to the game of football. This tournament started its journey under the inspiration of Badal Neogi, the worthy son of tea industrialist Rajendra Kumar Neyogi and also with the assistance of the employees of the garden such as Abu Basu, Barin Gabu. It is interesting to mention here that Manahar Tirkey, the ex forest minister of W.B. Govt. was a regular player at the football playground of this garden⁵⁰. The Brajeshwar Sanyal Smriti Football Tournament in memory of the tea planter Brajeshwar Sanyal of Dhawljhora Tea Estate is worthy to be mentioned here⁵¹.

So, from the above discussion what we could perceive that the Bengali entrepreneurs had a dynamic style in their way of living. Though they followed the same strategy like the European tea planters to run their tea gardens smoothly but they

maintained a completely segregated life style in comparison with their European counterparts in respect of their socio – cultural life. The prime mode of transport, dress code was the big example of their aristocratic dignified life style. Voluntary donations were one of the main ingredients of the life style of the Bengali entrepreneurs. They were very cordial and open minded. The key to success of these first generation Bengali planters were strict discipline. They were also very punctual and strived to complete any work within the specific span of time. Like the European tea planters there were many Bengali tea planters of whom hunting was a favourite past time. Deer horns, nails of tigers lined the stair case within their rooms. Hanging of stuffed animals on the walls of the bedrooms also exhibited a side of their high class living style. In addition to that reading some books along with a rich library, attending cultural functions at the cultural institutions of their own town, playing card or chess, participating in debatable issues in regard to national or international affair – all were very important flakes of their leisure time. During festivals and occasions the premises of the households of the Bengali entrepreneurs became a place of congregation of people coming from different regions. People poured in large numbers from the remote corners of the village to participate in the fair organized by the tea planters. The kitchens of these Bengali tea planters household were used to make adequate provisions to feed not only their relatives but also persons who came from their own native land daily. During the season of harvest nobody was allowed to leave the household without having a filling meal. The Bengali tea planters preferred in marrying off their daughters within the precincts of the town and as such the number of relatives swelled. In some exceptional cases, their daughters were married off to Dacca, Pabna and Mymansingh districts of undivided Bengal. The children of them for the purpose of education came to the maternal houses at Jalpaiguri town. There was no objection in providing accommodation to those children coming from their native villages and staying at their maternal houses at Jalpiguri town. Finally, the social obligation towards the employees at the tea estate was always at the back of their mind. Hence, they preferred to provide assistance in any form to their garden employees for organizing cultural programmes or inter – garden football tournaments through which they could get recreation. Nevertheless, the Bengali tea planters sometime enacted in the dramas organized by their garden employees. Moreover, they did not hesitate to take part as a player in the inter – garden football tournaments. This

behavioral pattern of the Bengali tea planters obviously cemented a co – relation with their garden employees.

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37. Pabitra Bhushan Sarkar, *Matir Choya*, Alipurduar 1999.
38. Samarendra Deb Raikot, 'Amar Cokhe Shroddheyo B.C. Ghosh', op. cit., p. 20.
39. Apurba Kumar Mukhoti, op. cit., p. 66.

40. Interviewed with senior and ex – staffs of Bagdogra, Paharghumia, Kamalpur gardens of the Terai region.
41. Dainik Basumati, A Bengali Daily, Siliguri, 26 November 1999.
42. Interviewed with senior and ex – staffs of Dimdima (P.O. Malbazar) garden.
43. Braja Gopal Ghosh, ‘Duars – er Bismtita Pray Football Khela’, in *Jalpai Duarser Jalchabi*, op. cit., p. 64.
44. Interviewed with senior members of the Samaddar family, Alipurduar.
45. Supam Biswas, ‘Ouponibeshik Parbe Bengali Cha Korder Jiban Jatra’, in *Purba Bharat*, A half yearly circulated Bengali Journal, Published by East Indian Society for the Studies of Social Sciences, Alipurduar, W.B. Vol. 1, December 2012, p. 78.
46. Interviewed with senior and ex – staffs of Palashbari tea garden (P.O. – Banarhat, Dist - Jalpaiguri).
47. Interviewed with senior and ex – staffs of Ambari tea garden (P.O. – Banarhat, Dist - Jalpaiguri).
48. Source: office, Dooars Branch Indian Tea Association (DBITA) P.O. Binnaguri, Jalpaiguri.
49. Interviewed with senior and ex – staffs of Gairkata tea garden (P.O. – Gairkata, Dist - Jalpaiguri).
50. Interviewed: Sri Nitai Niyogi, ex – Director of the Nimtijhora Tea Estate, P.O. Alipurduar at his own residence, Jalpaiguri town. He himself patronized the tournament for several years.
51. Interviewed: Bhangruda, ex – Director of the Dhawljhora T.E. (P.O. – Shamuktala, Alipurduar) at his own residence, D.B.C. road Jalpaiguri town.