

PREFACE

As a nation we can be proud of the notable achievements of the Indian tea Industry. Its significance is immense and its impact multidimensional. The industry has, over the years, been making continuous and conscious efforts to consolidate its position, as a major player in the Indian economy.

Once a British dominated industry, it began to gradually change hands after 1947, when doyens of the Indian business community took over its reins and made it's functioning transparent and well organized.

The foothills of Himalayas occupy a prominent position in the Tea Map of India. The tea growing areas in the district of Darjiling is known as Terai, which is the area under study. This study is dedicated to the tea workers, pioneer planters and past and present professionals of the tea industry who have over the centuries laboured unsung in remote, inaccessible areas, braving hostile conditions, to bring us our ubiquitous "Cuppa".

For a number of years the industry has been unable to generate sufficient resources to plough back into the gardens, undertake long – term developmental investment, and meet the challenges posed by new competitors and new technologies, or for that matter develop dynamic and new marketing strategies. Indian tea is losing ground in the international market and its buoyancy in the domestic market. Upgradation of research facilities, existing factories and plantations is desperately needed if the industry is to regain its competitive edge. Remedial measures need to be taken urgently, otherwise the industry will end up as a part of our glorious past rather than being a living, dynamic presence in our emerging future.

The work commences with the first chapter, which deals with the physical background of the study area. As tea is an agro-based industry the physical component such as geology, relief, Drainage, climate, soil and vegetation are very important for tea cultivation. This Chapter deals with all physical aspects of the study area.

The second chapter deals with the history of tea gardens and tea industries of West Bengal as well as India. This chapter also deals with the

management of different ages of bushes. Such as management of young tea, mature tea and others. History of labour participation and migration has also been discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter deals with the different types of land use pattern in the tea gardens of the study area. The pattern of land use in tea is different from the other rural land use pattern of West Bengal.

The fourth chapter deals with the different types of tea processing methods such as Orthodox, C.T.C. Oolong tea and green tea and its production in the study area. This chapter also analyses cost of production, methods of marketing etc.

The fifth chapter deals with the demographic characteristics of the study area i.e. the population and their growth, compositions, workers participation in the tea garden, different types of religion level of education and age – sex structure of labourers.

The sixth Chapter deals with the availability of socio – economic amenities of the worker. Workers incomes, dependants, wages, are also discussed in this chapter.

The seventh chapter deals with the interaction between management and workers that is the working conditions, the factory and the trade unions in the tea gardens.

The eighth chapter deals with the identification of the general problem regarding tea gardens and tea industry. The problems can be divided into four types. Physical problems mainly deal with flood, droughts and insecticides. Social and economical problems deals with the worker individual life land management and other management problems are rising day by day.

The ninth chapter deals with the review of earlier, strategies introduced in the tea industry and its implementation in the studied tea gardens. This chapter also discussed the role of different tea organizations in the development of tea gardens and tea industry after independence.

And finally the tenth chapter comprises of the problem based development strategies, suggestions and conclusions.