

Chapter-9

Summary and Conclusion

9.0. Summary and Conclusion: Tea is an essential popular drink in our daily life which is produced only in some countries in the world. In India, it is produced in state of Assam, West Bengal, Kerala and Tamilnadu and imprint on important contribution in the regional and national economy. Since tea industries share the highest employment among all organized industry. Where 50.00 per cent of women are employed and recruited in tea gardens on a family basis. In earlier, the tea plantation was development in Assam due to favourable climatic conditions and gradually developed in the rest of the country i.e. West Bengal, Kerala and Tamilnadu. In West Bengal, tea plantation developed in hilly tracts of the Himalayas, Terai and Dooars, and first developed in hilly tracts of Darjeeling in 1856 (Alubari tea garden by Darjeeling Tea Company). On the other hand, tea gardens are developed in Terai near Khaprail in 1862 and in Dooars at Gazoldhoba in 1874. For developing tea plantation a large portion of '*Khash land*' or jungle was transformed into tea plantation after industrial survey in 1911. Due to a labour-intensive industry many labourers were required for planting and maintenance of tea. As local people were not interested to work in tea plantation because of nominal wages rate hence cause labour crisis and formed a labour recruiting agency for recruiting labourers and their target was economically poor section of society of different part of the country. In the tea gardens of Terai and Dooars recruited tribal labourers by luring sufficient materials and better livelihood. But in Darjeeling hills mostly Nepalis were found a multi-ethnicity of people with their distinctive originality and identity in tea gardens. Whereas labourers were recruited from Bihar, Orrisa, Madhyapradesh and Plateau region of Chotonagpur. The Oraon, Munda, Malpaharia, Nigeria, Kharias were recruited in Terai and Dooars but in Darjeeling hill, Kiratis, Tamang, Gurung, Mangar, Brahmins were recruited. They were paid in two ways i.e. Cash and kinds (food grains, fuel) with sufficient facilities such as housing, drinking water, electricity, foodgrain and Fuelwood to settle down. In Plantation Labour Act (PLA), 1951, 1956 (Amendment) much welfare provisionals such as health and welfare, working hours and relaxation in works, employment of child and adolescents and annual leaves with wages, even labourers also allotted medical facilities, recreational facilities, educational facilities, canteens, creche and other basic amenities for working 48 hours and 27 hours work for adult and Adolescents or child respectively per week. If workers work excess numbers of hours of a normal working day (i.e. more than 48 hours) in any week., that is counted as overtime works and entitled twice rate of ordinary wages, although not allotted to work

for more than nine hours of any day (i.e. more than 54 hours) in any week. On the other hand, the employment of child and adolescents are strictly prohibited in the Plantation Labours Act, 1951, unless a certificate of fitness issues by certified doctors. Whereas one day for every 20 days and 15 days is allowed to take leaves with wages for permanent workers and Adolescents and may enjoy maximum of 30 days holiday. In spite of many welfare provisions in PLA, 1951 for workers they are not getting such kind of welfares because of they are illiterate and ignorance. Most of the people in the tea garden are tribes (86.70 per cent) constituting 50.20 per cent nuclear families because provision of food grains supply to permanent workers and their 2 dependents children and of households having small family size (below 4 members). Their literacy scenario is very miserable only 68.45 per cent people are literate and educational attainment is very poor, where only 30.58 per cent and 6.07 per cent attain at the primary and higher secondary level respectively. The occupational diversification is not found. Among tea garden workers, 21.26 per cent and 18.02 per cent workers are permanent and *Bigha workers*. Some of the people are engaged in constructional workers, driving and petty business. The family expenditure pattern is very low as most of their earning expense in food and drinking rather than other expensed areas. Since drinking habit is common even children also drink during ceremonies and festivals. So most of the male members are drunk and spend money without thinking. Women govern family expenditures indirectly they consume nominal food i.e. rice, roti and vegetables and rarely take animal protein as they are getting low wages. They get subsidize ration of food grains under the Khadyasathi (35kg/ month) scheme, yet many households did not get food grains of their allotted amount. In PLA, 1951 and 1956 there were provisions a provision of housing, but insufficient housing are, the housing space is not large and hygienic as many adults live within the same room. Most of the houses are semi pucca, where the floor is made of cement and wall and roof other than cement (i.e. tin, chatai, triple and fringe). People living in company quarters are mostly unhygienic, worst, weak and repaired after long time by the garden authority. Due to large family members, people built an annexation to company quarters for residing which is also unhygienic, windows are not sufficient in the rooms. The cook in the attached room (*Baranda*) even within the living room and open space throughout the year using fuelwood in ordinary *Chullah*. The sanitation condition is also deplorable and people are not aware of sanitation knowledge, mostly defecate in the open jungle and near to *Nala* and did not wash hands after latrine. Only 28.70 per cent households

good sanitation facilities are present under Sachha Bharat Scheme. The source of drinking water is dug well, tube well. Pipeline and tap. Even people collect water from a distance of 0.5 km and source of drinking water is also unhygienic. So they are suffering from various water borne diseases. The sewage facility of the households is not so good. In most of households (47.00 per cent) drainage is not present. Households dispose waste materials near the residence and in open land and formed an unhygienic environment. The social condition of tea garden workers is not good. Since they are mostly tribes and their educational attainment is very poor and also they are deprived and ignorant Christian tribals women possess a better condition than another religious group. Religiously many people transformed into Christianity because of getting better facilities from Church. The Churches are located within the tea garden where they interact with each other with religious norms and sentiments and also various social issues and become more aware. Most women (52.80 per cent) are illiterate and among literates, only 13.30 per cent and 3.30 per cent attain at primary level and graduate level. Only 9.60 per cent women get materials facilities (such as scholarship, hostel, books, clothes and cycle) during study, yet they face constraints related to family, personal, social and school-related, moreover 41.90 per cent faced an acute problems of poverty, large family size and lack of parents' awareness and finally, they are deprived of educational facility but now they are aware of their childrens' future. No one prefer that their children should work in tea gardens in the future. Most women especially Christian prefer their childrens' education in private nursery schools and Christian missionary schools for better education and punctuality. The children aged 5 years go to schools specially ICDS centre and primary, SSK regular where mid-day meals attract them and prime influence on their education. Women expect a decent job (private or govt.) for their children in future for this they earnestly want their children to study as much as they want to study for securing a better job in future, whereas only 7.70 per cent women prefer that their children should work in tea garden with fixed salary and benefits in future. In the tea gardens, learners of govt schools are benefited from materials (i.e. books, clothes, bags, shoes and cycle). Only 0.10 per cent replied their children are benefited from free studentship. As they are economically poor and physically weak, they are suffering from malnutrition, starvation a lot where they raise an objection about facilities. Same medicines are supplied for different diseases and even expire medicines are also given. Women are illiterate and unaware of reproductive health, in this situation ASHAs and ANMs health workers take a vital role to generate

awareness among of women. Wome are traditional orthodox, afraid in maternity health check-up, the remote location of the health centre. So, due to the great effort of health workers recently most of the deliveries are normal and institutional, only 5.22 per cent women deliveries are cesarean and mother gets some benefit after institutional deliveries under JSY. They are not satisfied with transportation facilities because shared personal cars hired by them during deliveries. While women immunized their children from health centres in case they are unable to reach centres then health workers visit door to door. Most of the women (75.00 per cent) give birth to the first child after one year of marriage, only 17.78 per cent give birth the first child after two years and the birth spacing of the majority of women is 2-3 years. Although in practising family planning they are lagging due to poverty and illiteracy. Awareness about family planning and its preventive measures are created by health workers. Even they also practice modern sterilization named IUCD. Some women also got married (27.00 per cent) before legal ages (18 years) because lack of awareness, illiteracy and poverty. But now they are aware of child marriage and its offenses as awareness is creased by NGOs and Govt organizations. They want to their children to be married. Most of the women prefer social marriage (58.00 %) than love marriage (14.00%). The inter-caste marriage is also common in tea gardens due to love marriages. Even inter-religion marriages are also found in the tea gardens. Most women prefer widow remarriage of the study areas. Most of them not support the dowry system because of their bad economic condition, they earnestly follow rules and religious sentiments. Within tea gardens, due to shortages of homestead areas and separate worship places are not found Jishu Christ and a temple pillar of Jishu Christ are found in some junctional points within the tea gardens. Although 12.21 per cent Hindu HHs, have a separate religious place reported in 42.50 per cent TGs of the study areas which also kutchra worship places although most of the HHs (52.30 per cent) performed religious festivals i.e. 3 times and above and visited sometimes religious places during religious festivals within the tea gardens. Since women indirectly control the family expenditures so, major decisions related to family welfares are also taken by them. Although in most of the TGs (47.50 per cent) women take decisions moderately. But they need to take permission for moving out in the day, night, to visit relatives and parents home, in participation of religious festivals, to attend fairs, community rituals and NGOs activities. Women's' visiting intensity in essentials places also (P.O, Bank, B.D.O, DM, Health Centre, Children Schools, Religious places, Police station and interesting

places) not frequent. The high and moderate visiting status of women found in 22.50 per cent and 40.00 per cent TGs. Although due to business at work, most women go to their parent's home quarterly and half-yearly, on the holidays. Their exposure to mass media is very poor. The housewife stay at home, women watch TV sometimes but tea garden workers did not have sufficient time for watching TV whereas listening to Radio, watching movies and reading newspapers is very negligible in the study areas. Most of the people of Tea gardens believe in superstitions, traditional doctors, evil eye, tabiz even in witchcraft and traditionally practices tattoo. Because of ignorance and illiteracy, their political awareness is very poor, political awareness is found in 35 per cent and they also cast votes regularly, participate in speech programme and political meetings. Beyond male's participation, they also participate in an election campaign during Panchayet and they get information in political spheres by watching TV and personal interactions. Although they are mostly satisfied in the working performance of State and Central Government. They are not much aware of 'Cha Adalat' for solving problems related to workers with tea garden authority. They also face some discrimination at workplaces, common gathering, hotel, shop, transport, religious occasion, and festivals even in religious places due to poverty, illiteracy and low castes.

Because of labour-intensive industry, women shares high employment in tea gardens. Although casual and Bigha workers are more than permanents workers, casual workers are engaged mostly in peak season and earn Rs. 132.50 per day and get almost Rs.3000 per month, whereas averagely 2-3 members in each family are engaged in tea gardens works. Income most of the households (61.40%) is Rs.500-1000 monthly for tea leaf packing throughout the year. They are engaged in pruning, weeding and packaging of tea boxes also. They earn double in peak season, even efficient and skilled women plucked tea leaves up to 100 KG per day. But in the lean season, tea gardens authority reduce the fixed plucking amount due to the unavailing of tea leaves. In the tea gardens, child labour is also common in peak season. The workers are paid weekly and fortnightly on the day of the periodic hat. But the service women get a monthly salary. As they are 2-3 generation workers of the tea gardens and they have much experience of working for 25-29 years in tea gardens. The majority of them are engaged in the job after getting married (75.30 percent). Due to meager wages, they are not satisfied with earning. Permanent workers get some benefits (i.e. ration, PF, gratuity, medical facility, bonus, and other materials) but they are not satisfied with their job. But casual workers

are not satisfied at all in working in tea gardens. There are some alternative sources of income of tea gardens people such as livestock farming, Dairy farming etc. Although very few households have cows, buffaloes as domestic animals but poultry, pigs are found in most of the households of the study areas.

Since workers earn a very nominal wage, so most households' income is less than Rs. 5000 yearly from livestock, whereas a few households income come from business (2.70 per cent) which is more than Rs. 15000 in a year. They also earn from dairy farming beside tea garden wages by selling milk and its products. On other hand, they mostly consumed poultry rather than selling. The tea garden people also practice agriculture on lease agricultural land, mostly they produce paddy and they follow traditional ways of cultivations using bio-fertilizers (54.69 percent) and irrigation from a shallow well, river water, and *Nala*, although production is not so much. The tea gardens' women also take a loan from microfinance of *Bandhan*, SHGs and other sources for income generation activities such as animal husbandry and business, they also use loan money for building houses built and repairing. Although their amount of loan is not so large yet it is burdensome for them. Even some households (44 per cent) are debted and borrowed money from friends, relatives and others. Women are also engaged in NREGA (56.25 per cent) and worked in road construction, clearances of *Nala* drain and Pond digging. Although 100 days works are not satisfied under NREGA in study areas, where only a few percentages of households (2.26 per cent and 0.35 per cent) worked 60-75 days and more than 75 days respectively. Although most of the workers have not received RSBY cards for injured and accidents and they received their wages from the Bank and Post Office. For future they save money in LIC, Bank and Post Office during peak season but are not aware about other government saving policies. Being employment in organized industry, they support trade union but ignorant about know the name of their trade union because of illiteracy. They know the only political affiliation of their trade union and just satisfied with the functions of the trade union.

The overall socio-economic condition of women in the study area is not so satisfied because of their ignorance and illiteracy (APPENDIX-XXVI). The moderate-high socio-economic condition of women is found in only 11 tea gardens (27.50 per cent) such as Marapur TG, Meryview TG, Mohorgaon and Gulma TG, Ashapur TG, Atal TG, Gayaganga TG, Sayedabad TG, Belgachi TG, Dagapur TG, Putinbari TG, Sukna

TG, Manjha TG, Trihana TG, Kamala TG. On the other hand, 25.00 per cent tea gardens named Sannysithan TG, Denguajha TG, Joypur TG, Satish Chandra TG, Vijaynagar TG, Hansqua TG, Jayantika TG, Kiran Chandra TG, Ord terai TG, Kamala TG where women's socio-economic condition is moderately low. Low socio-economic condition has been reported in 10 tea gardens such as Raipur TG, Gangaram TG, Taipoo TG, Saraswatipur TG, Shikarpur TG, Fulbari TG, Matigara TG, New Chamta TG, Kamalpur TG, Motidhar TG. Finally, for uplifting women's overall condition, awareness should be created about the different women's development schemes and programs and need full supervision for the implementation of such schemes and programs at the grass-root level. To make them aware about the different social and economic problems faced by the people among people of tea gardens especially women, regular awareness programme should be arranged, where tea gardens authority and local communities may take a vital responsibility. Focused should be on child education, health, and hygiene, alternatives income-generating activities for their better livelihood. Finally, it is necessary to fully implement the PLA, 1951 and 1956 (Amendment) where workers' benefits of plantation are provisionalized. They should be made aware about their basic rights in their working field. Finally, government and non-government organizations should look and take necessary action for pushing these deprived and disadvantage tea tribes towards the mainstream of society.