

CONCLUSION  
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Tea is one of the important and widely consumed beverages in the world. Tea, for the first time, had been consumed as a medicine and later it became popular beverage worldwide. The Botanical name of Tea is “Camellia Sinensis”. India is the largest consumer of tea and occupied the third position in export of the tea (after Kenya and China) in the world. First time tea was used for commercial purpose in 1830. Now a day, India is producing about 1233.14 million kgs of tea which is four times greater than 1974 when India used to produce 255 millions kgs of tea. The significant contributor of tea production in India are Assam, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala. Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars are main contributors in production of tea in West Bengal.

The tea industry is labour intensive industry using more labour to capital ratio. For the labours, apart from daily wages/salary, social security is one of the important issues in the event of accident, old age, and sickness etc. In India, there are number of social security laws such as Employees’ Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1952, Minimum Wage Act 1948, Employees Compensation Act 1923, The Maternity Benefit Act 1961 and Payment of Gratuity Act 1972. Social security which are being provided by the employer to workers in tea industry specially plantation workers are not satisfactory. Living and working conditions of workers are so bad, they just became the object of discrimination in the hands of employers or the owners of tea industry. The irony of the situation is that there are presence of stark poverty, chronic hunger, and exploitation alongside the greater contribution of labours in the generation of huge profits of the industry. As indicated by the Darjeeling Chamber of Commerce, tea industry in Darjeeling generates an average revenue of **Rs. 450 crore** annually, equal to that of the tourism industry in the hill.

Workers have seen wild spurning of labour laws which has made a boldfaced joke of their rights. As indicated by law, every tea plant workers must get, apart from their daily wage, provident Fund , Bonus, pension (for retired labourers), ration, umbrellas and smocks for working, kindling for cooking, lodging, power, water, medical care and education facilities. The last time the workers got ration in Dhumchipara was in 2011. In Dhumchipara Terai state in Dooars, a poor lady having two youngsters has been decreased nearly to a skeleton because of starvation. These kids who have been getting to be stable because of unending craving and weakness require no less than 750 ml of blood which their family can't bear. Workers say, "They may not live long." Such instances of starvation prompted diseases and passing in the tea-greenhouses of Darjeeling and Dooars are excessively various, making it impossible to cite here. Each tea plant you would visit in free India echoes the cries of workers who have been fortified and compelled to work on paltry wages. Among numerous such are the tea garden of Darjeeling and Dooars whose scenic beauty and unparalleled flavour of tea have gained world reputation, while the condition of the livelihood of workers (particularly tea-plant workers) suffering from continuing misery and insecurity remain unheard and ignored. The region has remained in grip of the predatory claws of imperialism and colonization which has obscenely exploited its resources, both natural and human in the worst forms. It is incorrect to assess the size of this open plunder by figuring in just money related misfortunes as wages and wages. In fact, the ramifications of the denial of the same has spilled out to cause starvation (in many cases amounting to death), malnourishment of

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children, denial of proper education, health care, sanitation and housing, erosion of self-confidence, forced migration for work, sex slavery and human trafficking in the most hazardous industries

Denial of workers' rights, non-payment of minimum wages and benefits is not specific to the tea-industry alone but is rather a persistent feature of work in the highly segment labour-market in India. However, it is need to highlight here the regional aspects of discrimination that are visible in the tea industry. The minimum wage paid to unskilled tea labour in Kerala is Rs.254, in Tamil Nadu it is Rs 209, in Karnataka it is Rs 228, in neighbouring Sikkim it is Rs. 220 while the same in Darjeeling comes to a meagre Rs.112.5. Even the minimum wage paid in West Bengal for MGNREGA is around Rs. 130-151 and for agricultural labourers is Rs. 206 per day. The tea labourers in North Bengal are in this manner made to work for wages which are far below the minimum wage in any type of work. It is extremely insightful with respect to the proprietors to guarantee that low wages are because of low cost being earned from the purchaser of tea leaves produced from these gardens. If so then why are the wages of labourers same in those tea gardens which gets handsome profit in world tea market (for example Rs. 1.1 lakhs for every kg of tea is created by Makaibari tea garden however wage remain still at Rs.112).

In the last decade more than 1400 tea labourers have died because of intense malnutrition and starvation. Recently in January 2013, 95 labourers of the bolted out Dheklapara Tea Estate in Dooars sent a letter to the Chief Minister of West-Bengal looking for her "request" to kill themselves since they were experiencing intense starvation. The tea workers therefore are forced to keep them in anguish till they die of hunger and malnutrition. Studies demonstrate that 70% of the general population of the closed tea gardens suffer from chronic energy deficiency III stage. In the garden influenced by starvation demise, it was discovered that workers and their families have Body Mass Index (BMI) indistinguishable to those populations affected by severe famine.

Mass casualization of workers is another issue in view of which even the base minimum services (health, ration and lodging) that the tea estates need to give under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. But unfortunately these welfare facilities can be accessed by majority of workers. Though, the cost of first flush (the costliest group in the tea creation cycle) is intentionally kept a secret by the owner with the intension that labourers don't raise their interest for higher wages. The International Labour Organization (ILO) too in its 2005 report unmistakably weeps over the miserable situation of tea specialists. It expresses that the Tea Board which is the managing expert of the Tea Industry has neglected to satisfy its stipulated work. They have ceaselessly disregarded wage and provident reserve defaults of tea homes, while depicting this emergency just as an advertising bungle. The ILO report likewise presumes that there is plot between the grower and the State which is featured by the non usage of the Tea Act, 1953.

The Supreme Court's order dated 06.08.10 completely guides the Government of India to do its statutory obligation under Tea Act 1953. The Act orders the Central Government to assume control over the administration/control of the tea undertaking/units

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(under section 16 B/D/E) and take steps thereafter to ensure that the interests of the workers are well protected and dues are all paid in time. Sadly the constitutional duty to uphold the ruling of the highest court of the country has not been carried out neither by the Central Government nor by the State Government. In spite of this the administration has even begun to privatize a modest bunch of tea gardens which was worked under its watch.

In one of Report of BBC which tries to depict the picture regarding the condition of workers working in tea plantation. Plantation owners in India are obliged by law to provide and maintain "adequate" houses, and sanitary toilets for workers. Yet homes on the tea estates were in terrible disrepair, with leaking roofs and damp and cracked walls. Many toilets are blocked or broken. Labourers said their homes were not repaired in spite of requests to management, often over many years. The drains are open and unlined and numerous stopped up with effluent. Some time, cesspits are flooding into the living zones of individuals' homes. Numerous homes have no power, and on one estate workers had to drink rainwater piped from a stream. A director on a bequest possessed by the world's greatest tea maker, McLeod Russel, conceded there is "a gigantic build-up of repairs". The chief portrayed conditions for a few laborers as "not satisfactory" and said the estate has only 464 toilets to serve 740 homes. The leader of the Assam branch of the Indian Tea Association, which speaks to tea makers in India, also accepted that conditions appeared to be well below standard.

Many workers live in dismal housing, but Indian law says decent housing and sanitation are part of a tea worker's pay. Tea workers in Assam earn 115 rupees a day, just over £1 (\$1.50), significantly below the minimum wage (177 rupees in Assam). This combination of appalling conditions and low pay on tea plantations can be deadly. Studies have confirmed levels of malnutrition on tea estates are very high. Nine out of 10 patients from tea plantation are malnourished, as indicated by the medicinal executive of Assam Medical College. Professor AK Das says ailing health makes tea laborers and their families helpless against infections caused by their unhygienic living conditions. "Illnesses of destitution" are normal, he says, with bunches of patients coming in with looseness of the bowels, respiratory tract contamination, skin lesions and serious diseases like TB and meningitis. He portrays a sad cycle: children come in so weak from malnutrition they struggle to recover from curable illnesses, and then quickly relapse after they are released from hospital. Therefore, Prof Das says, tea labourers' kids and their folks are fundamentally more inclined to bite the dust of their ailments than different patients at the clinic.

And the BBC found other abuses. One girl, who said she was 14, was picking tea at the prestigious Doomur Dullung estate. She said she had been working full time for two months. Doomur Dullung is owned by one of the oldest tea companies in the world, Assam Company, and supplies Twinings, Yorkshire Tea, Harrods and Fortnum and Mason. Two other children said they had been employed full time on estates owned by Assam Company since they were in their early teens. The UN rules on child labour say no child under 15 should work full time.

There was also a disregard for health and safety on some tea estates. On one estate owned by Assam Company workers were spraying pesticides without the protective

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equipment required by law. These workers said although protective equipment was given out once a year, it would wear out within a couple of months and was not replaced. They reported symptoms including breathing difficulties, deafness of the hands and face, a consuming sensation on the skin and significant loss of craving. On one McLeod Russel domain, workers were spraying chemicals without any protection. Teacher Das said he consistently observes patients experiencing genuine reactions pesticide introduction. McLeod Russel said the security and living states of specialists is the organization's need. It said defensive gear is without given to labourers, they are prepared in its utilization and that standard spot checks are directed to guarantee consistence.

Though tea industry in India contributes very much to the economy of India and it brings handsome amount of money to owner of tea industry. Tea industry is one of the established industries in India and enjoys the status of one of the best organised industries in the country. It occupies a critical place and assumes a noteworthy part in the national economy. Darjeeling Hills has been producing finest quality of tea around the world getting the most astounding cost. Beginning on a commercial scale in 1856 the present zone under Tea Gardens is 19239 hectares creating 11-12 million Kgs. of tea every year. India has around 563.98 thousand hectares of area under tea production, as per figures in Table no 3.1 for December 2013. Tea production is led by Assam (304.40 thousand hectares), West Bengal (140.44 thousand hectares), Tamil Nadu (69.62 thousand hectares) and Kerala (35.01 thousand hectares). According to estimates, the tea industry is India's second largest employer. It employs over 3.5 million people across some 1,686 estates and 157,504 small holdings; most of them women. Owing to certain specific soil and climatic requirements tea cultivation was confined to certain parts of the country only. Major tea growing areas of the country are in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The area in which tea is being generally grown low are Karnataka, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya a, Mizoram, and Bihar. Tea plantation women workers are one of the most marginalized in this globalized village. Socially, economically and culturally they are being excluded from the mainstream. They are the main target of deprivation and exploitation.

The Darjeeling tea industry at present employs over 52 thousand people on a permanent basis, while a further 15,000 persons are engaged during the plucking season which lasts from March to November. More than 60 percent are women and the employment is on a family basis.

The tea industry has a critical and unique place in the Indian economy. Tea is the nation's essential drink, with just about 85% of aggregate family units in the nation consuming tea. India is the world's biggest producer and consumer of tea, representing 27% of the world tea production in 2003. India's consumption on beverages and processed foods accounts for 8% of food expenditure in rural areas, and 15% in urban areas. India is likewise a important tea exporter, with around 12-13% of world tea sends out. Further, certain assortments of tea (for instance Darjeeling) are grown only In India and are in great demand across the world. Darjeeling tea has the shine of flavour and fine shading that set them apart from every single other tea.

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In spite of its importance, tea industry of India is going through a crisis phase since 1990. The industry has witnessed many structural changes during recent years, which include emergence of small tea growers in the place of large plantation and introduction of bought leaf factories (BLF). The present crisis has led to the closure of many tea estates (e.g., 20 estates in Kerala, 30 in West Bengal, about 70 in Assam have been closed down since the late 1990). It is estimated that more than 60,000 plantation workers have lost their jobs since 2002 and livelihood of another tens of thousands are threatened. Workers of the running estates are facing wage cut, tougher picking demand, job insecurity and the casualization of work, appalling living and working condition etc. In early 2005 the tea industry witnessed major companies withdrawing from production and concentrating on the packaging/ retailing sector (e.g. Tata Tea, Hindustan Lever Limited etc. In India). They intend to focus on brand building business and on exploring the market substantially, rather than on the plantation business, which is a low margin segment. In the market, the rising competition at domestic as well as international level has lead to the crisis of tea industry of India. 2006, although countries like Sri Lanka, Kenya and Indonesia are growing fast in their export and higher price realization, during the same period. Export of tea from India to some of the major importing countries like Russia, UK, and USA are showing a sharp decline.

The large buying companies use their market power (as they have their own network of sales and marketing all over the country and export tea after blending) to push down price and take the advantage of depressed market to pay low prices; they are clearly taking advantages from the present situation. Hindustan Lever Limited, Tata Tea, Williamson Magor, etc. are such powerful buyers having enormous influence on the market and price of tea in India in general and Assam tea in particular. These big tea companies which are in monopolistic competition in consuming countries always try to stabilize prices. The longer transaction time and higher transaction cost (like warehousing charges, transportation cost, brokerage charges etc.) are some other problems with the auction system. It takes about 35 days for the entire transaction processes to complete.

But in last year due to the agitation in Darjeeling by the Gorkha Janmukti Morch has destroyed the revenue of Darjeeling it very much affects the economy of Darjeeling and India also. The Darjeeling tea industry is propping for harder days ahead. The inconclusive shutdown in the Darjeeling hill, which has crossed 80 days, is costing the tea business beyond all doubt, with the tea industry staring at a collective revenue loss of ₹400 crore. While on one hand the cash flows are under pressure, the need for paying bonus once operations resume, could exert further pressure on the companies, denting their bottomline, industry experts said

Almost 50 percent of the aggregate 8-million kgs of Darjeeling tea produced crosswise over 87 estates every year is exported. The business has officially lost about 70 percent of its production, a majority of it being from the most prized second flush tea. The second flush crop extending between May to July – brings maximum price for its distinguish colour and flavour.

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Darjeeling is a small district situated in the extreme north of India's West Bengal in the Himalaya foothills. Different types of tea which are generally cultivated in India, the most notable one comes from Darjeeling. Darjeeling Tea is considered the world's finest tea. The region has been cultivating, growing and producing tea for the last 150 years. The tea produced in the region and having special characteristics has for long been known across the globe as 'Darjeeling Tea'.

In Darjeeling tea is cultivated in total area of 17,500 hectares engaging 50% people of district and there are 87 total tea gardens in Darjeeling and total numbers of permanent workers are 55000 and temporary workers are 16000 which are producing around 9.5 million kg of tea in Darjeeling annually. Workers in tea industry play very dominating role in making the economy of Darjeeling prosperous. In Darjeeling hills total production of tea has varied between 8-11 million kilograms in the last one-decade or so. "Substantial part of the annual production of Darjeeling tea is exported. The leading buyers of Darjeeling tea are *Germany, Japan, the UK, the USA*, and other *EU* countries.

The total numbers of tea gardens in Darjeeling are 87 out of which 24 gardens have been selected for survey purpose from varied areas. The 10 or 12 persons randomly selected from each of the 24 gardens. However for the final analysis, 20 gardens are short listed.

The total production in 20 gardens is 171114 kgs in Darjeeling region out of the 3832.78 totals hectors of land. Out of 20 gardens Mission hill tea garden producing the largest amount of tea in comparison to another tea garden. While Kumai tea garden is in second number this is producing 11 per cent of total tea production. Pandam and Mullootar tea gardens are producing smallest quantity of tea in comparison to another 18 tea gardens.

Total number of workers who are working in 20 gardens in Darjeeling is 9827, out of this 6144 are female workers and 2320 are male workers. This data clearly shows that the contribution of female workers in industry is much higher than male workers.

Regarding the implementation of social security in Darjeeling survey done by the researcher shows that Provident Fund, Gratuity, Maternity Benefit and Accident Benefits are being provided but Pension and Employee State Insurance Benefits are not being given. And in case of other facilities medical and housing facilities are being rendered and education, transport and recreational facilities are not being given. And regarding statutory welfare facilities washing facilities, drinking facilities, first aid box, rest shelter and creches are being provided but canteen and recreational facilities are not being made available.

Tea industry generally employed more 50% female workers so that their participation in the production is higher in compare to male workers. In a nation where the work support of ladies is eminently low, this extent is relatively substantially higher than the investment of ladies in different exercises in the economy. Subsequently it demonstrates the participation of feminized work in the tea plantation. Owner of the tea estates also gives preference to the lady workers at the time of appointment because they can be easily controlled and supervised at tea plantation or estates. Increasing number of women workers in the plantation industry shows their substitution for male and non adult labourers. Around 1.18% is annual growth

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rate of women workers in tea Industry from 1961 to 2007 in compare to male labourers. It can also be observed that in absolute terms the total number of workers employed in tea plantations has rising over the years from 9.4 lakhs in 1950 to 12.5 lakhs in 2007 but the annual compound growth rate in employment from 1950 to 2007 shows a very marginal increase of 0.75%. All tea industry workers especially women workers need to work only the legally stipulated 8 hours and for additional work double wage is to be paid. And for the health purpose there is need to appoint lady doctor and qualified nurse in the garden hospital. Health awareness is also very low among the women workers due to their lack of education. So it is necessary to make literate to the workers on the need for keeping the household clean. Women workers must be educated to take food which is needed for health and their body.

The tea industry has a critical and unique place in the Indian economy Tea is the nation's essential drink, with just about 85% of aggregate family units in the nation consuming tea. Since its starting, the tea industry has assumed a crucial part in the financial existences of individuals in Darjeeling by giving direct employment to a large number of families and auxiliary employments to numerous people in chest-tea, plywood, tea bundling and other tea-related exchanges. Commercial tea production has been the mainstay of livelihoods and economy in the Darjeeling hills for over 150 years in other word it is the backbone of economy and Livelihood of Darjeeling.

### **Suggestions:**

The tea industry has great prospects as it has huge demand in the national and international market. Therefore attention should be given for the improvement of tea industry. Improvement of tea industry is essential because of various reasons. This sector generates employment opportunities and the utilization of tea in the nation is expanding quickly. Without the satisfactory spotlight on the advancement of the tea industry, unemployment in the nation will increase and the administration should spend foreign currency to import tea. It has been watched that the tea industry isn't being given satisfactory consideration either by the government or owner of the garden. The development of the tea industry is strongly linked to the wellbeing of tea plantation workers' communities. Considering the importance of flourishing tea industry in India, the study recommends following interventions by respective stakeholders:

#### ***Tea Garden Authority:***

- Tea plantation authority should give consideration to invest in the plantation in order to increase production of tea. Land under the ownership of tea plantation workers which was distributed for cultivation ought not to be taken for the extension of tea plantation.
- Administration ought to strictly follow labour laws. Wages and labour benefit ought to be given as set out in the labour law. Improvement of educational and health care facilities ought to be given more priority with the purpose to create a empowered and sustainable tea garden community. Tea garden management could arrange monthly meetings with workers in order to form stronger workplace relationship. Child labour



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ought to be restricted Children ought not be involve with work at tea plantation in any way so they can get education. Teach members of tea workers families should be given the opportunity to work in tea gardens in positions that utilise their academic qualifications. Tea garden authorities could share profits with tea plantation workers, which could have a positive effect on motivation therefore, productivity of workers.

- Childcare facilities should be provided in all tea plantations. Tea garden workers must feel comfortable to send their children to crèche in order for crèches to be set up.
- There are a few services which are generally provided such as training for worker leaders by the Department of Labour and various NGOs in welfare, education, water, sanitation and hygiene. Workers however have limited access to the services due to the restriction of tea garden authorities. Access to these services should be ensured.

### ***Initiative of Government:***

- There should be frequent visit by officials of the Department of Labour in tea garden with the purpose of inspect the nature of labour standards. Officials could identify gaps and difficulties in ensuring decent working conditions in the tea plantations as per the national labour laws and ILO standards.
- Labour welfare centre should manage regular training so that the bargaining capacity of both workers and union leaders is increased.
- The Labour Court should be established in each district. Any change in existing laws and formation of new laws relating to tea plantation workers should be based on effective dialogue amongst the Government, tea garden authorities and tea garden workers.
- The tea plantation authority denies the right to own land by showing leasing documents issued by the Government. The tea community is always under fear of eviction by the tea garden authority. The Government ought to lease the cultivable land to tea community people who are already using that land.
- The Government should have control over the domestic market of tea by imposing some restrictions on the import of tea so that locally produced tea is consumed. Restrictions on the import of tea will increase both quality and quantity of locally produced tea.
- The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments should be very strict. So that there should be regular and frequent visits by labour inspectors. So that they could contribute to better observation of workers' labour rights in the tea gardens. For effective inspection of labour rights issues, all the vacant posts should be fulfilled.

### ***Non government Organisation and Civil Society Organisations:***

- NGOs and civil society actors should be active related to the issues faced by tea plantation workers. They should have dialogue on issues regarding labour rights of tea garden communities at policy level. Activities by NGOs on education, water, sanitation, hygiene, population control, micro credit and awareness raising campaigns should be strengthened with the support of tea garden management.

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- Researchers and journalists ought to take an advocacy role to promote the adoption of policies, which strengthen workers' rights.
- National labour union should take initiative to connect tea plantations labourers in their activities and also help to raising tea labour issues nationally and work as pressure group for ensuring decent working conditions in tea gardens. They should also provide training to tea plantation union leaders in order to strengthen their bargaining capacity.

### ***International Organisation and International Labour Federations:***

- Social dialogue between employers and employees would allow labourers to raise their demand and possibly achieve better observance of their rights. The ILO and international trade union federations could arrange training sessions and provide logistical support to tea workers' unions in order to increase capacity building.
- The ILO should support the Government in adopting policies, which strengthen labourers' rights and in enforcing of labour laws.