



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF TEA PLANTATION IN NORTH BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

West Bengal is the second largest producer of Tea in India. Tea productions are mostly concentrated in the northern part of the Bengal. North Bengal has about 450 tea gardens, mostly spread out in the Darjeeling Hills, Terai, and Dooars region. Today apart from Darjeeling tea gardens even tea gardens from Dooars contributes significantly to the country's total tea Production. However over the years, tea gardens of West Bengal have undergone a severe crisis in due to globalisation and intense competition from the other competitive tea markets of Sri Lanka, Kenya and China. It has underwent stiff fall in prices during early 2000's which had severe impact on the tea plantation states all over India and the tea estates of North Bengal is no different, resulting into frequent shutdown of the tea gardens hitting worst on the lowest section of the tea garden employees who works as a daily wage tea garden labour. The study aims to identify on going major issues and challenges of the Tea Industry of North Bengal and also study the consequences of the tea garden crisis on tea garden workers livelihood.

KEYWORDS: *Dooars, Tea garden labour, Globalisation Tea Crisis.*

INTRODUCTION OF TEA INDUSTRY IN INDIA

Tea has its origin from China as the term tea has been derived from the Chinese dialects t'e, chia or cha. Tea is an essential morning beverage in several parts of the world. Tea cultivation began in India during the British colonial Rule and still remains the largest producer of Tea in the World. The Economy of West Bengal depends on three T's viz. Tea, Timber and Tourism. The major tea growing regions in West Bengal are Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars. Darjeeling tea is renowned all over the world in terms of its quality. Next to Assam, West Bengal is the second largest tea growing state accounting to 22 per cent of total production of the country. Tea industry in West Bengal is about 146 years old. Tea cultivation was first started in Darjeeling hills. Darjeeling had its first tea garden in 1856 in the form of Alubari Tea Garden opened at Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company. By the end of 1874, there were no less than 113 gardens with 18888 acres under tea cultivation. The names of some gardens which came up during this time are Makaibari, Pandam, Ging, Ambote, Takdawn and Phubsering. All these gardens were situated in the hills but at the same time experiment for tea plantation in Terai region were also being carried on. In 1862 the first garden to come in Terai region was Champta tea garden situated near Khaprail by Mr. James White, many more gardens began to come up in the terai regions.

Location Profile of Dooars

The Himalayan foothill of North Bengal is known as Dooars or Duars with the great natural beauty and is rightly considered as the gateway of Bhutan, Sikkim and the entire North East of India. The word Dooars has no political implication but only geographical relevance. It can be divided into two parts namely Western Dooars which falls within the district of Jalpaiguri,

formed in 1869 after the annexation of Bhutan Dooars from Bhutia in 1864-1865 and the Eastern Dooars comprising the portion of Assam annexed earlier. The economy of Dooars includes three T's Tea Timber and Tourism. The main industry in this region is the Tea industry which was first planted by Britishers with the immigrant labourers from the Chotanagpur, Santhal Parganas and Nepal. Various tribal communities from these regions inhabited the most backward regions of this district and engaged in the tea plantation. The main tribal population engaged in the tea plantation industry comprises of Oraons, munda, Santhals, malapaharia, lohar, lodha along with other community like Nepali community are engaged in the Tea plantation industry. Because over four generations of people have made a living on such plantations, the tribal community make up the majority of the population in the Western Dooars.

Tea Industry in Dooars

The plantation sector plays a very significant role in country's wellbeing. Besides being an important source of revenue for various states/UTs, it is an important contributor to foreign reserves of the country and tea industry is one of them. India has a significant share in the international market with a 12 per cent share of world tea exports. Indian tea industry considered to be among the finest in the world. The main tea growing regions are in Northeast India and in North Bengal. India is the second largest tea producer in the world and world's largest consumer of tea, with about three-fourths of the country's total produce consumed locally which reached 220.84 million kg of tea. India is home to wide variety of teas including CTC tea, Orthodox tea, Green tea and Organic Tea. India has expanded its tea production in recent years, with 1344.40 million kg produced in 2021-22 which showed 61.37 million kg increase over 2020-21.



Table 1. World Tea Production 2020-2021

Country	2021(Million kgs)	2020 (Million kgs)	</>Over 2020
India	1343.06	1257.53	85.53
Sri Lanka	299.34	278.49	20.85
Kenya	537.83	569.54	-31.71
China	3063.15	2986.02	77.13
Others	1211.81	1177.37	34.44
Total World Production	6455.19	6268.95	186.24

Source: Tea Board of India 2021-22

In India tea is cultivated in 15 states of which Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the major tea growing states. They account for 98% of the total production. Other traditional states where tea is grown are Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Karnataka. The non-traditional states that have entered the tea map of India include Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Sikkim. Within West Bengal apart from Darjeeling, tea garden from Dooars contributes significantly to the country's total tea Production. According to the Tea Board of India Reports tea production are 237.47 quantities per million kilograms in the current year 2022-23 which contributes to 17 per cent of the total tea production of the entire nation.

Table 2. Dooars Tea production from 2018 -2023

Dooars	Qty(in M.kgs)
2018-19	227.08
2019-20	240.25
2020-21	228.42
2021-22	235
2022-23	237.47

Source: Tea Board of India

But the biggest importer of Indian tea, the Soviet Union, collapsed, throwing the country's tea sector into a deep crisis. Nonetheless, domestic tea consumption has grown more quickly over the last ten years than tea production, which has remained consistent at a rate of about 15 to 20 million kg per year. Domestic demand has increased but the inability to enhance the production has resulted into drastic decline in the recent period and the same time decision of the government to allow cheaper tea imports from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has only deepen the crisis(Bhowmik 2002).¹ However, since economic liberalization in the 1990s, the tea industry has faced numerous obstacles like poor yield, ageing bush, poor garden management, owner disputes; high debt oriented funding strategy and lack of overall development perspective. The pandemic of 2021 has made the tea industry's present state harsher. There are numerous perspectives on tea garden's issues and challenges. Following are some of the factors for illness, lockdowns, and closures:

¹ [Unfolding Crisis in Assam's Tea Plantations: Employment and Occupational ..By Deepak K. Mishra, Vandana Upadhyay, Atul Sarma].

Increasing Competition from International Market

Since inception tea has been internationally traded commodity. Due to the interplay of various global and local factors like overproduction, fluctuation in global tea prices, increasing competition with countries like Kenya, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and reinforced cartelization of tea companies both at the auction, centre and international market is leading to the restructuring of Indian tea industry. As a result the higher burden on the owner and the management, low productivity of workers, increasing social costs of production and fall in tea prices are some of the reasons given by the management for the overall tea crisis. This crisis have manifested through closure and abandonment of tea estates since the year 2000. Since 2004, 21,000 permanent workers were affected by the closure of 22 plantations in Dooars and Darjeeling (*harvesting hunger, 2014*)

In the recent years adulteration of Indian premium tea or fake teas from Nepal and Bangladesh has been another cause of concern because it has reduced the value of the premium tea from Darjeeling and Dooars region. Apart from it age old bushels, declining productivity and higher social cost highest cost of production and low productivity are the main reason for declining competitiveness in International Market.

Rising Production Cost

Costs of production for tea plantation industry mostly consist of cost of cultivation at grower's level and cost of processing at factory level. Cost of production of tea production varies from one region to another. In fact India has the highest cost of production as compared to the other tea producing countries. Another Cost of production which has always been controversial is Social Cost of Production. Tea plantation industry is labour intensive industry and in order to obtain best return in terms of tea production it is very important to keep the human resources employed. In this line as per Plantation Labour Act 1951(PLA ACT) planters have to bear this cost over and above the wage cost. This Social cost is an important parameter to influence the average price of tea annually. However profit out of the current price of tea fails to meet this cost putting high burden on the tea garden owner. As a result frequent lockdowns, unpaid dues make tea garden unattainable in the long run.



Failure of Price Realisation and Poor Performance of Tea Industry

The parliamentary standing Committee on Commerce in (2012) reported significant reasons for advancing tea crisis. India is the highest cost producer among all tea producing nations while price realisation has remained stagnant. Producing high-quality tea might be considered as a remedy to the industry's six-year price falls that occurred between 2000 and 2006; nevertheless, export prices have not significantly increased since the fiscal year 2013. Due to lack of export, planters have to rely on domestic market. Planters need to operate at low equilibrium however maintaining this equilibrium gets increasingly tough due to diminishing corporate interest in tea. Top marketers such as Tata or Unilever have either exited or cut exposure to the tea business substantially. Neither Fresh Investment nor Merger is rewarding. Smaller entities are most affected by limited access to resources. Planters say barely a fifth of the 195 gardens in the plains of West Bengal, suffering from low yields and high cost production are in profit. As of August 2014, nearly 30 per cent of the Assam gardens defaulted PF obligations attracting strong punitive action, which will clearly create problems in future. It is often believed that a tea garden once sick is rarely revived.² Unfolding crisis of Assam tea plantation points out that core of the poor performance of the tea industry lays the failure in raising productivity at an appreciable rate. Even though huge entry of the small size garden have radically changed the structure of tea industry however the solution lies in the old and medium size garden since they are trapped in low replanting, low yield and at the same time older and larger plantation have failed to invest sufficiently to plant new bushes. Indian estates have very low rates of replanting and

maintenance of tea bushes. This situation is worsening as both the labour absorption and bush replanting declined after 1997 (mishra et al 2012). In fact, Kerala and West Bengal had the oldest bushes and lowest productivity indicating that productivity is not necessarily related to labour at all (CEC 2003).

The production system of tea and poor labour wages

Another paradoxical condition leading to the price crisis in the tea industry lies in the structure of the tea industry itself. The production system of the tea consist of four actors namely retailers, auction broker, the estates / plantation with their management and the tea workers themselves. The mismatch between retail and producers price is the one of the reason of the crisis. The plantation price of tea has continued to be low despite the rising retail price of tea. As the global tea prices began to stabilize in 2008 it were global tea conglomerates and not tea producers or workers who emerged as the main beneficiaries and tea producer in India began to see cuts in their overall profits margins with less money making it back to the plantation and the workers. All these changes have profound implication for the labour that depends on the tea sector for their livelihood. Evidence derived from various studies on wages of the tea plantation does show the collected bargaining mechanism actually never improved the real purchasing power and hence livelihood of the workers. As compared to the other organised sector labour wages, wages of tea garden workers are the poorest. Moreover, labour wages of the tea plantation region of West Bengal have been worst as compared to the tea plantation region of the rest of the Country.

Table 3: Daily Wages of Major Plantation Districts of India

SL. No.	Plantation District	Effective Date/Period	Effective Date/Period	Daily Wages
1	Assam	a. Brahmaputra Valley b. Barak Valley	22.02.2021	205.00
2.	West Bengal	a. Dooars b. Terai c. Darjeeling	01.01.2021	183.00
3.	Tripura		01.05.2017	105.00
4.	Tamil Nadu		Oct 21 to Dec 21	a.396.83(Nilgiris) b.347.57 (Wayanad, Anamalai)
5.	Kerala		01.02.2019	414.68
6.	Karnataka		23.12.2017	357.16
7.	Himachal Pradesh		April,2020	275.00
8.	Uttarakhand		July,2020	330.00
9.	Sikkim		5.09.2017	300.00
10	Bihar		Jan,2020	175.00

²<https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahLUKEwi1yZb4k8PYAhWKN48KHh2PD4AQFggnMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.thehindubusinessline.com%2Fopinion%2Findias-tea-industry-crisis-needs-urgent->

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Frequent shutdown and dilapidated condition on Tea garden workers Livelihood

Since ages Darjeeling and Dooars have given India the largest and finest share of tea. However in return, the life of the workers of tea garden is still in despair and poverty. Since mid-eighties and after globalisation North Bengal tea industry can be divided into three parts, the comparatively healthy tea industry of Hills, the problem stricken tea growing areas of Terai and the crisis teas industry of Dooars where the incident of closure is the highest. According to the Fact finding Committee 2003: “ The term ‘Closed’ was used for those gardens that were abandoned by the management after following due process of law, by giving a notice of lock out to the operating unions and Labour department . The term ‘Abandoned gardens were those garden where the management followed no such process or cite law and order or financial problems for leaving the gardens and ‘reopened gardens’ were those where the old management or a fresh set of employers had come forward to run the garden once again , after discussion with the government and the union”. Only few tea gardens recovered which were closed during 2003-04. This phenomenon of frequent lockdown of the tea gardens had huge impact on the livelihood of tea garden workers of Assam, West Bengal and Kerala. Though Kerala was able to reopen tea gardens by putting the concept of workers ownership however West Bengal had no success.³

Companies lack of professional or technical expertise in running tea gardens.

According to the 51st Annual Report (2004-2005) of Tea Board of India, a total of 118 tea gardens were reportedly closed between the years 2000-2005 that had affected 68,442 workers. In many of the tea gardens, owners do not declare the garden closed but conveniently abandon them. These companies owe huge dues not just to the workers in terms of Provident Fund and gratuity dues but also to the respective state governments and concerned banks. Study conducted under CEC (2007) also reveals the reality of closed and abandoned tea gardens of West Bengal. It was suggested that none of them have experience in running tea gardens or reputation in the industry. They lack professional or technical expertise to run the garden successfully in the long term. These companies did not know how to face competition in the international market when markets opened up significantly after 2000. They siphoned off much of their profit while investing very little on the sustenance and expansion of the gardens and often do not care to respect the provisions of the Plantation Labour Act and have appropriated the Provident Fund due to workers. They have even succeeded injecting corruption into managerial staff and section of trade union leader thus compelling workers to remain captive of these so-called leaders. According to 63 Annual reports (2016-17), 13 tea gardens are closed, out of which 10 tea gardens are located in West Bengal and 3 Tea gardens are located in Kerala.

³ <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kolkata/over-30000-trapped-in-abandoned-tea-gardens-in-north-bengal/article6159331.ece>

Study on SICKNESS (2015) reveals that the formation of the Trade unions in the tea gardens has further aggravated the issue of frequent shutdown of the tea garden. The presence of the trade unions in the tea gardens of North East India has distinct legacies of their own. INTUC is the largest trade union in the country which is present in Assam and it has marked its presence ever since the days of national movement. Trade unionism in North Bengal is comparatively younger and got its inspiration from the communist revolution going on the contemporary world on the eve of independence of the country. There basic concern was mainly welfare of the workers. The new economic policies of the central government were opposed by the trade union of the West Bengal in fact they strengthen the voice of the workers against the management in demand for higher wages from time to time. However when these demand were not met, the union declared strikes that further pushed the ailing industry into crisis as the industry loses valuable production thus undermining the scope of earning profit. At the same time management, whose intention where to shut down the garden used strikes by the union as a reason for losses and lack of payment to the workers.

Challenges of Dooars tea garden workers due to crisis in Tea Industry

With the start of new century problem of 90's crisis have resulted ultimately to the sickness of the tea industry of north Bengal. These problems were economic, social, political and environmental. Due to sudden loss, owners of the innumerable tea estates of the region packed up abruptly leaving the worker unpaid. Resulting into joblessness, desperation, hunger, poverty, malnutrition among the workers and their family. The state General Secretary of UTUC said that there are 14 closed tea gardens in Jalpaiguri and two closed garden in Darjeeling. In the closed tea garden basic facilities like drinking water, electricity, public distribution system and the hospital amenities have been withdrawn. As per government data, between 1st January and 31st march 2007, the number of death in North Bengal tea gardens was 571. Of these 402 were deaths of those who were less than 60 years of age, 317 were male and 254 were female, 62 were children less than 10 years of age. In June 2007, the trade and industry Secretary of the government of West Bengal admitted that poverty was the cause of a high number of deaths in tea gardens of West Bengal. According to him, the highest number of death was reported from kalchini tea garden, which was 68.

This crisis have not just affected the owners of the tea estates but the workers and their families are concerned, they are thrown into worse-off situations of extreme vulnerability especially women, children and the aged. Studies also show that 70% of the people in closed tea gardens are in the advanced stage of chronic energy deficiency (Biswas 2005). The condition of workers even in the so called “good” tea gardens is no different as the poverty regime is ubiquitous under the low- wage system. According to the National survey of tea workers closed, reopened and open tea plantations of the



Dooars region, malnutrition exist in the entire garden surveyed. Based on daily calorie intake 42.5% of the closed garden populations classified as below poverty Line (BPL), followed by 40% BPL in sick gardens and 30% BPL in open gardens. An IUF study reported malnutrition of workers on 15 reopened plantations. Using WHO criteria for body mass index (BMI), the survey found that workers in the reopened gardens were in the state of “Starving communities” or at “critical risk for mortality from starvation”. (Cited in harvesting hunger 2014).

A survey conducted in the closed gardens revealed that welfare schemes, the public distribution system and basic amenities such a safe drinking water, healthcare, primary education and electricity were practically non-existent (Chaudhury 2007). Lack of basic infrastructure like medical, education and other facilities and overall earnings have resulted in death due to starvation, suicides and have compelled children to drop-out from Schools. (Brewing misery). According to West Bengal Plantation labour Rules, (1956) hospitals in the tea growing areas of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri must have a Garden hospital serious illness(Rule 21). A plantation employing 1000 or more should provide a hospital with at least 15 beds while a plantation with less than 1000 may share a hospital with another in the region. Furthermore, Rule 22 says that free medical facility must be provided to all workers and their families irrespective of the number of workers however there are no Group hospitals in the Dooars and Terai regions and majority lacked hospitals with bed. According to Synopsis of Tea Garden Survey, North Bengal (2013), Out of 273 Tea estates only 166 estates have hospital. More over the welfare measures of the central government are not reaching those workers. Out of 273 Tea estates only 16, only 22 tea estates are under AAY scheme.

Migration and Human Trafficking

Since the Liberalisation, frequent change in the status of the tea garden have a huge impact on the tea garden workers and their family member particularly children belonging to socially and economically marginalised tribal and non-tribal communities. Child labour in and out of the plantation is prevalent at a huge scale. CWM (brewing misery) study have identifies different category of child labour: inside the plantation namely in the plantation work or in other work and secondly outside the plantation for wage. Child labour inside plantations is either assisting parents in fulfilling productivity quota during lean season to avoid wage deductions and in assisting parents with household chores and childcare mostly performed by girl child. Child labour outside plantation, among the girl child are mostly as domestic workers either employed locally else trafficked to large cities whereas among the boy child are employed as helpers in shops or work at construction sites or at factories. Under PLA and the child labour act, a person completed 14 years of age can legally be employed as a worker in a plantation. Despite the recent amendment to the PLA (Plantation Labour Amendment) Act 2010 that prohibits child labour in plantations (Section 24), the incidence of child labour in the tea plantation of north Bengal is extremely high.

In most of the tea gardens of Dooars hunger, poverty and unemployment, problems like illiteracy, drop-out, malnutrition

and diseases are rampant and the combined effect of such vulnerabilities has further contributed to trafficking of Children and women in large proportion. The prevailing economic hardship, social backwardness, absence of life supporting facilities, dearth of viable employment alternative and geographical isolation all have collectively created an environments of catastrophe and disgust in the plantation sector. One direct consequence of these is the large-scale migration of adolescents' too far away destinations often with obvious knowledge and support of their parents, friends and relatives. (Ghosh 2013). When the Garden is abandoned or declared sick there is a mass exodus of migration even leading to flesh trade, prostitution (Ghosh 2013) and there is hardly any monitoring of such illegal activities in the Garden. Sudip Chakroborty(2013) also pointed out that due to backwardness of the dooars region of north Bengal are becoming the hunting ground for trafficking specially girl child pushing her into slave type domestic work else sex worker. Given the poor economic condition of the workers and their families have resulted in the trafficking in all cases allowing traffickers to strengthen their networks across different gardens and localities thereby making North Bengal a major source and transit zone for human trafficking in the region (Ghosh 2012).

The study conducted by action aid on June 2016 on 20 Tea Gardens of Alipurduar district in West Bengal shows that prevailing condition of the living condition of the tea plantation workers have been forcing many children to undertake various risks in absence of adequate support system. Reports also shows that because of the uncertainty of the tea garden, irregular jobs like daily labour, transport labour, stone collection and grinding at nearby bed, collecting and selling firewood, daily worker under road contractor, job under MGNREGA etc. are not sufficient to provide livelihoods to thousands of destitute workers. Therefore, migration to distant places like Delhi, Bangalore, Kerala, Kashmir, even to cities like Dubai in the middle-East countries in search of any kind of jobs is regularly reported. Huge cases were reported of missing family members. The major reason behind trafficking are considered to be Poverty, Unemployment, lack of awareness, promise of better job/comfortable life elsewhere, broken family, poor wage, large family, illiteracy, false promise, drop out, earn more money, greedy parents, peer group influence, domestic violence, attraction of silver screen and entertainment medias. At the same time no action by police or local authorities/protest, lack of facilities, alcoholism etc. are causes of trafficking in the area.

Failure in paying Dues of Provident and Gratuity funds

Responding to the concern of crisis of 2002-2003, the Ministry of Labour, Union of India appointed an inter-ministerial Committee on plantation labour and report was published on end of 2003. This showed that out of 4819 registered plantations, 1367 were defaulting in payment of workers dues, the largest default occurring in the plantations in Kerala, Assam and West Bengal. The committee warned that the default position would further deteriorate particularly in Kerala, West Bengal and Assam. Report OF International Labour Organisation on 2005 “100, 00 permanent workers were affected by state closures across the entire country”. ILO even noted that central government had adequate power under the tea act, 1953 to grant



relief to the workers however tea board continued to look at the plantation crisis purely on the marketing end and failed to fulfil its regulatory role as enshrined in the tea act. The tea board ignored the wages and provident fund defaults of the government'. Government of India through the tea board invested lump sum amount for the period from 1.4.07 to 31.3.12 got up gradation and product diversification scheme however it was not applicable for the sick garden neither much was done for the payment of workers dues⁴.

Issues related to unfair wages and non- fulfilment of statutory benefits are matters of great concern in the plantation. Frequent

shut down of the tea garden not only affected the younger generation of the workers but also the older section of the tea garden workers as they are devoid of the pension and old age welfare schemes. BMS reports that only a handful of people out of those who have applied for old age pension and widow pension could get a respond. Some applicants have expired too. The official deny pension saying that the applicants have crossed 58 years. Even though the Central government due to the lack of suitable buyer today acquires many of the sick and abandoned tea gardens, however the condition of the worker still haven't change.

Table 4: Status of Closed Tea Gardens

Sl no	Name of the tea garden	Date of closure	No of workers	Current status
1	Dheklapara	11.03.2006	804	The Garden was put up for e-auction by Calcutta high Court on 11 th may 2012, but no prospective buyer was available.
2	Bundapani	13.07.2013	1283	The State Gov. has taken the possession of the land of the closed Bundapani T.E. on 15 th Oct, 2014, on expiry of lease of land.
3	dharanipur	19.10.2013	807	The sate Govt. Has taken possession of the land of the closed Dharanipur T.E. on 18 th Nov, 2014
4	Redbank	19.10.2013	1588	The Sate Govt. took the possession of the land of closed Red bank T.E. on 21 st Nov 2014 on expiry of lease of land.
5	surendranagar	19.10.2013	451	The state Got has cancelled the Land lease of Surrender Nagar T.E by an order dated 14/11/2014 and the land has been taken over by the state Government on 13.01.2015
6	Madhu	23.09.2014	947	Labour unrest due non-payment of workers dues etc.
7	Panighata	10.10.2015	787	Labour unrest due non-payment of workers dues etc.
8	Manabari	21.03.2016	490	Labour unrest due non-payment of workers dues etc.
9	Joybirpara	23-03-2016	636	Labour unrest due non payment of workers dues etc.
10	Kumlai	15-11-2015	1118	Labour unrest due non-payment of workers dues etc.

Source: 63rd annual report 2016-17

As shown in the above Table 4. As many sick and closed gardens are still to receive payment due which have resulted into severe strikes and protests. Frequent strikes and bands have

severely affected worker's day-to-day life. Many of such Tea garden in Dooars whose Gratuity, PF and wages amount is pending for years, as shown below (2016).

Table 5. PF and Wages Dues of Dooars Tea Garden Workers

Garden	Closed since	Workers**	PF dues	Wages dues
Dheklapara	December 2005	804	Rs 72.94 lakh	Rs10 Lakh
Bundapani	July 2013	1,283	Rs291.26 Lakh	Rs. 42.17 Lakh
Dharanipur	October 2013	807	Rs193.48 lakh	Rs. 60 lakh
Redbank	October2013	1,588	Rs 63.93Lakh	Rs 219 Lakh
Surendranagar	October 2013	451	Rs 26.60 Lakh	Rs 79.62 Lakh
Madhu	September 2014	947	Rs462.26 Lakh	NIL

Sources:Union Minister of state for commerce and industry in the Lok sabha and state department (** The numbers of the workers constitute Temporary and permanent worker)

Out 273 properties producing tea, the provident fund contributions from 41 tea farms were non-existent, and 35 tea

plantations still owe money for arrears from their most recent wage settlement. According to the 2013 Synopsis of Tea

⁴ <http://www.hrln.org/hrln/labour-rights/pils-a-cases/561-supreme-court-of-india-grants-relief-to-abandoned-tea-garden-workers-being-ignored-by-government-since-past-one-decade-.html>



Garden, 66 tea gardens failed to provide gratuities to any of their laborers between 2012 and 2013. In order to collect unpaid debt of more than 1500 crores, the tea plantation employees of Duncan filed a petition against Duncan's industries in 2021.

CONCLUSION

Not only do ownership disputes and low yields contribute to the fundamental problems facing the tea gardens, but price realization also plays a part. Indeed, there is no development perspective for the tea industry as a whole. For the tea plantation region, an immediate alternate source of income production is required. Even Nevertheless, the federal and state governments are now heavily involved in ensuring the workers' access to food and financial stability. Collaborative research on weed and pest management in the tea sector is necessary. Management and employee training programs are required. Nonetheless, the area requires a stable source of income, which can only be achieved by encouraging more of tea tourism.

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