



STUDY ON CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS OF TEA PLANTATION WORKERS (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NILGIRIS DISTRICT)

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ABSTRACT

As one of the world's popular beverages, the population of tea is immensely important. But the living conditions of many tea plantation workers in India are not given nearly as much importance. It is very significant to know the problems of the industry in this area and finding remedies to the tea plantation workers would go a long way in solving the great number of issues to the workers involved in Tea plantation. The tools that are used in this study are simple percentage method and Likert scale analysis. The suggestions reveal most of the respondents have agreed to the problems and challenges that they have faced and it has also concluded to provide adequately improved benefits to the Tea Plantation workers.

KEYWORDS: Tea, Problems, Benefits, Adequate measures.

INTRODUCTION

As one of the world's popular beverages, the population of tea is immensely important. But the living conditions of many tea plantation workers in India are not given nearly as much importance. Tea is the most preferable average by millions of people across the globe. Tea plantation is located in Darjeeling, Assam, North Bengal, Mysore, and Nilgiris. The Tea industry in India has given occupation to the major work force in which Nilgiris takes major part. Out of total 172000 hectares under tea cultivation in South India, Nilgiris individually accounts for about 90000 hectares and these results in produces tea of about 30 million kg of tea annually which is nearly 60% of the total population. The total earning of the foreign exchange through Tea Industry is equivalent of Rs.2300 cores but it is regretted that the tea plantation workers are still getting below the minimum wage of Agricultural workers.

The wage of the tea industry labour has increased numerically since 1947, there has been no increase in real wages. It is thus very significant to know the problems of the industry in this area and finding remedies to the tea plantation workers would go a long way in solving the great number of issues to the workers involved in Tea plantation. The work timings in the tea estates are from 8 am to 5 pm in

standard Indian time. The legally permissible lunch interval is 12 – 1 pm. But during the season of high growth of tea leaves, the workers are ordered to report for work nearly 12 hours from 6 am to 6 pm or even sometimes it exceeds to 7 pm with a very short lunch break without any rest intervals. The legally permissible temporary leave and medical leave are not granted.

In some places, if leave beyond the granted leave are taken due to ill health without medical certificate, then 5 days wages are deducted from the salary. Every year hundreds of tea plantation workers are affected from water-borne diseases, like Gastro-Enteritis. There is no drinking water facilities and drainage systems in most of the plantations. Most of the workers are suffering from Anaemia and Tuberculosis, where malaria is widely spread. It affects the children and the women mostly. Leech bite and Snake bite are the major problem in the plantation field but no proper medical treatment and prevention measures are totally out of clutch. Wild animals are often seen in the plantation field and no proper security measures are provided.

The death ratio due to the above said bites and the wild animals is consistent. The health system is not effective. Most of the tea workers are tribal, schedule castes and repatriates. So, they are not able



to protect against the atrocities and to enjoy the special status as they are crushed. For tea plantation workers whose forefathers were indentured immigrants and were born and brought up inside the tea gardens and dismissal means not only the loss of livelihood but threat to their general existence.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyse the socio-economic status of the Tea plantation workers.
- To analyse the problems and challenges of tea plantation workers in Nilgiris district.
- To find out and analyze the working conditions of the plantation labour.
- To find out and analyze the maximum welfare measures available in the Tea- Industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic. It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing you to identify relevant theories, methods, and gaps in the existing research. A good literature review doesn't just summarize sources – it analyses, synthesizes, and critically evaluates to give a clear picture of the state of knowledge on the subject.

- **S. Senthil Kumar & Dr. C. Vellaichamy (2020)**, The research of the study highlights the health, safety and welfare measures provided and also to recognize the level of benefits given

to the tea plantation workers by the tea plantation estates. The cultivation of tea is essentially based on the tea plantation workers and the study is to analyze about the problems of tea plantation workers in Nilgiris District. The consequence of considering these factors is analyzed and recommended as per the results conditional from several tea estates resides in Nilgiris District.

- **Dr. Sangeeta Boruah Saikia (2019)**, The study reveals that the small tea growers are facing different problems related to getting benefits from supporting organization, availability of finance, sustaining production, processing and marketing of tea leaves, etc so, a new study on problems and prospects of small tea growers.
- **Selvakumar Marimuthu, Jeyaselvam.M, Sathyalakshmi V, Mohammed Abubakkar Siddique. R (2019)**, Tea plantation in Tamil Nadu is mainly concentrated in Nilgiris district due to favourable agro-climatic conditions. In tea industry, Employees are played a vital role for production of tea and running the tea industry in a proper way. In that case, the researcher has chosen the working conditions of employees in working tea industries of Nilgiris district.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methods of data collection	Both Primary and Secondary data
Sampling design	Convenient sampling technique
Area of the study	Nilgiris District
Sampling size	150 respondents

STATISTICAL TOOLS

- Simple Percentage analysis
- Likert scale analysis

- TAN TEA, INDCOSERVE, CHAMRAJ, GLENDALE, HIGHFIELD

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In spite of detailed analysis made in the present study, this study is not free from limitations. The following are the important limitations:

- The study is purely based on the views of 150 respondents only and hence the results may not be universally applicable.
- The geographical area of this study is confined only to Nilgiris District
- The study is period specific (December 2020 to March 2021).
- The survey is collected from various Tea estates such as:

FINDINGS

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE

- ❖ Majority (55%) of the respondents are Male.
- ❖ Majority (42 %) of the respondents belong to the age group between 22-35 years.
- ❖ Majority (63%) of the respondents are Married.
- ❖ Majority (30%) of the respondents are engaged in the work of plucking leaves
- ❖ Majority (41%) of the respondents have 6-10 years of experience.
- ❖ Majority (55%) of the respondents earn between Rs 5000 – Rs 10000 of their wages.



- ❖ Majority (63%) of the respondents are from nuclear family.
- ❖ Majority (54%) of the respondents are permanent in their jobs.
- ❖ Majority (35%) of the respondents are from higher secondary education.
- ❖ Majority (70%) of the respondents are Immigrants.
- ❖ Majority (57%) of the respondents work 7-10 hours (per day).
- ❖ Majority (49%) of the respondents travel by the factory vehicle.
- ❖ Majority (37%) of the respondents pertain to work for other reasons.
- ❖ Majority (62%) of the respondents are under direct contract.
- ❖ Majority (47%) of the respondents face other problems such as individual vengeance, delay in payment of wages, disagreements among workers.

LIKERT SCALE ANALYSIS

- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.89 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree there is stress in their work.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.81 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree to their satisfaction level with the subsidies received from the Government.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.80 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree that there are no overtime flexibilities in work.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.84 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree that they don't have their adequate facilities to do their work.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.58 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree their holidays are not satisfactory.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.87 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree to the accomplishments in their work.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 4.12 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree that their environment is not safe.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.85 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree that they don't have a well-equipped environment.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.72 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the

Respondents Agree that their working hours are not comfortable.

- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.58 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree that their shift system is not good.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.70 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree that they don't have their Adequate facilities to protect from dust and fume.
- ❖ Likert scale value is 3.63 which is greater than the mid value (3). Hence majority of the Respondents Agree that they have their Adequate safety measures to protect from insects and animal attacks

SUGGESTIONS

- Educational status is very poor and separate wing has to be formed to improve the skill in technical and non-technical field.
- Proper working hours with reasonable break has to be amended and weekly holidays should be mandatory.
- Separate sanitary good condition washrooms are required and first aid boxes, 3-4 medical check-up per year are also needed.
- Two major and short intervals are necessary for the workers.
- Drinking water, bore well and tanks should be planned properly to a locatable distance.
- Written Contract will safeguard the labor and provides all Legal safety.
- Health insurance benefits must be provided to the plantation workers.

CONCLUSION

The study is an attempt to focus on Tea-Workers in Nilgiris District who are paid very less and least beneficiary measures are given to them. Workers in the tea plantation estates usually have a long-term commitment towards the tea plantation estates and this commitment goes on for generations. The safety condition in work place is not much satisfactory in the tea plantation estates in Nilgiris district. Minimum wage should be provided to them and it should be sufficient to lead their life as the Workers have rights to get their wages. Health, Safety and Welfare facilities have to be inspected by the labourer welfare departments. The findings help to identify the challenges and problems faced by the plantation workers with a view to give them the better standard of living by uplifting their socio-economic conditions. Hence this study concludes that as being the cultivators of one of the world's popular beverages, tea plantation workers need to be adequately equipped by the concerned authorities to improve their economic and living conditions.



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