
Socio-Economic Dynamics Of Tea Garden Workers Of Darjeeling: A Case Study Of Moonda Kotee Tea Garden

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Abstract

The history of tea cultivation in India dates back to the 1830s when the British colonial rulers introduced its plantation in the country. The major tea growing region of the state is concentrated in North Bengal. Darjeeling district is the state's northernmost district and its tea is enlisted in the list of world's finest tea. Several studies have been conducted over the years covering various aspects of tea cultivation. However, there is still a need to research the living condition of the tea plantation workers. Recent studies have revealed that Darjeeling tea industry is passing through a period of stagnation and its workers are facing myriad problems in their daily life. The rationale of this paper is to highlight the need to refocus on understanding such day-to-day challenges that the workers in a system run by managerial executives face. Hence, it aims at providing answers to such escalating questions that may be found embedded within their social and economic livelihood. Using simple random sampling method and selecting a sample of 200 permanent workers the socio-economic conditions have been thoroughly studied.

Keywords:- Tea plantation, Socio-economic condition, Descriptive statistics, Likert scale.

Introduction

China, India, Kenya and Sri Lanka are the major tea producing countries of the world and in 2018 the global tea production amounted to 5897 million kg. India holds second position in terms of tea production and the country produced 1321.76 million kg in 2017 which increased to 1338.63 million kg in 2018, according to 65th annual report of tea board of India. Darjeeling tea emerged as a commercial product during the late 1850's and early 1860's. However, it owes its origin to Sir Arthur Campbell, a British officer who for the first time planted tea experimentally; in Beechwood, Darjeeling in the year 1841. The areal extent of tea plantation covers the hilly tract of the district as well as the plains (Tarai and Dooars) and it offers direct employment opportunities to more than 50,000 individuals in 52 tea gardens as per District Census Handbook (2011). It is not an unknown fact that the tea gardens of Darjeeling continuously face the major challenge of getting closed down. The political movement for a separate state in the recent past is a glaring example to the point when massive lockdown prevailed in many tea gardens. Apart from that poor management of the tea estates, change in the ownership, labor unrest owing to lack of development prospects etc. are some of the threats that this industry has to surpass. It is due to such reasons that the study of socio-economic condition of the tea garden workers cries for attention.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: Several works have been done on socio-economic condition of tea garden workers. The most recent study on the same is that of Dr. Hemasrikumar and R. Arthi (2019) on Majnoor block in the Nilgiris which they have analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics. They have found out that the living standard of the tea garden workers is miserable. Hussain Sohrab et. al (2019) have studied several

indicators of socio-economic life of the plantation workers of Lubachhara Tea garden of Sylhet in Bangladesh and have brought to light the pressing suggestions and recommendations for the betterment of the life of the plantation workers. Md. Afzal and Md. Alam (2019) have done a nearly all bounding study of the tea estates of North Bengal by selecting 13 tea estates from every tea producing region of the Drjeeling Hills, Terai and Dooars region. The work of Khawas Vimal (2006) needs to be mentioned as he has covered social, economic, political as well as labor in analyzing the condition of living of tea plantation workers. Rai Pratima Chamling (2019) has studied Balasan tea estate and has highlighted the role and responsibilities of labor union alongside the socio-economic indicators. Sukhranjan Debnath and Prof. Prallad Debnath (2017) have brought to the fore similar issues in Meghlipara tea estate of West Tripura.

STUDY AREA: Falling under the Jorebunglow Sukhia Pokhari administrative block, Kurseong sub-division; Moonda Kotee Tea Estate is a village covering an area of 584.78 hectares which came into existence in the year 1862. The literal meaning of the term “Moonda Kotee” is “Abode of Moon”. The Darjeeling Organic Tea Estates Pvt. Ltd. runs Moonda Kotee T.E. along with 13 other tea estates of North Bengal (viz. Ambootia, Chongtong, Happy Valley, Monteviot, Mullootar, Nagri, Nurbong, Sepoydhura, Sivitar, Rungmook Cedar, Rangaroon, Pandam and Aloobari). The village, as per the 2011 census, has a total population of 3972 (1989-male population and 1983-female population) residing in 693 households with the population density of 7 persons/ sq. km.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY: This research paper is written with the following objectives-

- i. To understand and analyze the socio-economic condition of the study area.
- ii. To make an analysis of welfare amenities of tea garden workers.
- iii. To make some suitable suggestions to improve the existent negative condition in the study area.

METHODOLOGY: This is an empirical study that brings to the fore several social and economic issues of one of the tea estates of North Bengal and in order to do so, both the primary as well as the secondary data is used. For collecting primary data, a total of 200 samples pertaining to 200 individual households (whereby no repetition of household was strictly maintained) were selected at a random scale within the study area. With the help of a well structured questionnaire, the respondents (those individuals that are permanent workers in the tea garden) were approached for direct interviews. The respondents included both male workers and female workers. A series of information was extracted from the interview, from general (family information, marital and educational status and so on) to specific (e.g. house type, monthly income, total dependents and total workers in the family etc.). The procured information is ultimately categorized into three broad classifications namely: personal and family details, economic aspects and social aspects. Aside that, secondary sources like the District Census Handbook (2011 Census Handbook of Darjeeling District); Tea Board India Annual Report and other research articles have been properly followed for gathering more information on the same.

The following table presents a detailed picture of the indicators taken for study-

TABLE SHOWING ASPECTS OF STUDY

FAMILY DETAILS	ECONOMIC ASPECTS	SOCIAL ASPECTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Age○ Gender○ Educational qualification○ Marital status○ Head of the family○ Total number of family members○ Total number of male members in the family○ Total number of female members in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Total income of the family from all sources (Monthly income)○ Total number of working members○ Total number of male workers in the family○ Total female workers in the family○ Total number of dependants in the family○ Total male dependents in the family○ Total female dependents in the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Religious composition○ Caste composition○ Housing condition (with special emphasis on total number of rooms in the household, roof type, electricity connection etc.)○ Fuel source

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: A great deal of information pertaining to the social and economic condition of the tea gardens workers have been gathered through the survey report and the discussion of the findings will be made sequentially following the order given in the table above.

Family And Personal Details Of The Respondents

1. AGE OF THE WORKERS: The majority of workers belonged to the age group between 40-49 years accounting to 41.5% and the least percentage share i.e. 6% was recorded for that belonging to 20-29 years of age. This is mainly due to the fact that the literacy rate of the tea garden is high and as such not much of young people are indulged in working in the tea estate. On the other hand, it is noticed that 40% of its workers belong to the category of 50-59 age group which is the age of retirement.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR AGE COMPOSITION

AGE CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
20-29 YEARS	6.0	3%
30-39 YEARS	31.0	15.5%
40-49 YEARS	83.0	41.5%
50-59 YEARS	80.0	40%
TOTAL	200.0	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

2. GENDER: The tea estate mainly prefers female workers. They are needed in doing the very important job of plucking tea leaves. Whereas, the male workers are preferred for other activities than tea plucking; hence, the number of female workers are always high in comparison to that of the male workers. Out of the 200 respondents, 119 were female and 81 were male. The female respondents accounted to 59.5% of the sample and male accounted to 40.5% of the same.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR GENDER COMPOSITION

GENDER TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
FEMALE	119	59.5%
MALE	81	40.5%
TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

3. EDUCATIONAL STATUS: According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate of this tea garden is 76.31% which is higher than that of West Bengal (76.26%). As per the data collected, 42% were illiterate, 24% attained elementary school and 31% have attained high school. The percentage share of the workers that have attained Higher Secondary education was 2% and that of graduation was 1%. Comparing the data for educational qualification of the workers to that of the data of the ages of the workers, it is clear that about 40% of the respondents fell in the category between 50-59 years of age group. Thus, that has given large percentage share of illiterate workers.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE SHOWING EDUCATIONAL STATUS

EDUCATIONAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
ILLITERATE	84	42%
ELEMENTARY	48	24%
HIGH SCHOOL	62	31%
HIGHER SECONDARY	4	2%
GRADUATION	2	1%
TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

4. MARITAL STATUS: 151 out of 200 respondents were married accounting to 75.5% whereas only 1 out of 200 respondents were divorced, hence, accounting to 0.5%. On the other hand 5% of the respondents belonged to the group separated i.e. neither they were divorced nor they were widowed or widower, 15% accounted to widow/widower and 4% of the respondents were unmarried.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE SHOWING MARITAL STATUS

MARITAL STATUS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
DIVORCED	1	0.5%
MARRIED	151	75.5%
SEPARATED	10	5%
UNMARRIED	8	4%
WIDOW/WIDOWER	30	15%
TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

5. SIZE OF THE FAMILY: This is an important indicator of studying the socio-economic condition of a particular area. According to the data collected, 37 households had only 1 or 2 family members accounting to 18.5%. The majority percentage share of 44.5% accounted to the family size of 2-4, 30.5% accounted to 4-6 members in a family and only one family had the total number of 9 members in the family thus falling in the category of 8-9 accounting to 0.5%.

TABLE SHOWING SIZE OF THE FAMILY

FAMILY SIZE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
0-2	37	18.5%
2-4	89	44.5%
4-6	61	30.5%
6-8	12	6%
8-10	1	0.5%
TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

The majority of households had 1-2 male members in their family whereby only 4 households had 4-5 male members in their family. On the other hand 61.5% of the households had 2-3 female members in their family and only 1 family had 6 female members in their household. The following two tables when analyzed alongside the first table on family size provide a clear picture of the real condition of the family of the respondents.

TABLE SHOWING TOTAL MALE MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY

CATEGORIES (NO. OF MALE)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
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0-1	69	34.5%
1-2	74	37%
2-3	40	20%
3-4	13	6.5%
4-5	4	2%
TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

TABLE SHOWING TOTAL FEMALE MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY

CATEGORIES (NO. OF FEMALE)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
0-1	63	31.5%
2-3	123	61.5%
4-5	13	6.5%
6-7	1	0.5%
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: Field work

II. ECONOMIC ASPECTS: In order to analyze the economic condition of the tea garden workers, the following indicators are studied. The following descriptive frequency distribution table gives a general idea regarding the various indicators of analysis. It is seen that out of 200 valid cases, there lies no missing data.

DESCRIPTIVE FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE SHOWING ECONOMIC PARAMETERS OF STUDY								
	INCOME	TOTAL NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS	MALE DEPENDENTS	FEMALE DEPENDENTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS	MALE WORKERS	FEMALE WORKERS	
N	Valid	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.7400	1.4000	1.3000	1.3000	1.2650	1.2650	1.1100	
Std. Error of Mean	0.09303	0.04010	0.04253	0.04253	0.03285	0.03648	0.02632	
Median	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	1.0000	
Mode	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	

Std. Deviation	1.31570	0.56710	0.60151	0.60151	0.46460	0.51585	0.37228
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	7.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2021.

6. INCOME STATUS: The wages in the tea estate are provided to the workers in two ways: 1) once in a fortnight also known locally as “Kharcha” and 2) once a month, locally known as ‘talab’. Generally, the first type of pay system is provided to the female workers who are engaged on tea plucking and/or male and female workers who are engaged in similar other unofficial works and the second pay system is meant for male/female workers engaged in handling official tasks. There is a hierarchy of workers from labor, sub-staff, staff and super staff in the tea estate and they are paid according to the position they hold. The priority of becoming staff and super staff previously depended solely on seniority at job. But today, apart from seniority, other factors like education and skills in handling computer programming determines the position one will hold in the office. The engagement of educated female workers in the position of ‘kaamdari’ (sub-staff) as well as direct employment of young and skilled individuals at various official posts is a recent example of female empowerment and crushing of the old and outdated norms thus aiming at increasing the work efficiency.

The total monthly income of the family from all sources was recorded for each family. To understand the income status the sample households are categorized into 7 categories. It is seen that the majority of the households belonged to the first category that earns less than Rs. 10000 per month amounting to 64.5% of the total surveyed households, 17% earns Rs.10000-20000, 10% earns Rs. 30000-40000, 3% earns Rs. 40000-50000, the last two categories accounted to 2% and 1.5% respectively. The families earning less than Rs. 10000 solely depended on the employment in the tea estate and those families with higher income had some of their family members engaged in different government jobs from teaching (from school teachers to assistant professors in the colleges), defense services, health care services etc.

TABLE SHOWING INCOME STATUS

INCOME CATEGORIES (IN RUPEES)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
< 10000	129	64.5%
10000-20000	34	17%
20000-30000	20	10%
30000-40000	4	2%
40000-50000	6	3%
50000-60000	4	2%
> 60000	3	1.5%
TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

PEARSON CORRELATION CO-EFFICIENT BETWEEN AGE AND INCOME: As seen earlier the majority of the respondents belonged to the age category between 40-49 and 50-59. Hence in order to have a concise understanding about the income pattern with regards to the ages of the respondents, Pearson Correlation co-efficient was conducted to check either the monthly income of the family is statistically significant with the ages of the respondents. From the results thus ascertained, it is clear that there is a positive correlation between the two variables (looking at the value of Pearson correlation which is 0.221). Amongst the total sample of 200, there lies no missing data and the p value for the dataset is 0.002 at 0.01 significance level. Since, the p value for this test is less than 0.001, it can be concluded that there is a positive statistical significance between the age of the respondents and the monthly income of the families.

Correlations			
		AGE	TOTAL INCOME IN RS.
AGE	Pearson Correlation	1	.221**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
	N	200	200
TOTAL INCOME IN RS.	Pearson Correlation	.221**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	
	N	200	200
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

7. ANALYSIS OF WORKING MEMBERS: The responses of the individuals were assembled and then grouped into a series of categories for making the study simpler. The greater the number of working members in the family, the better is the economic condition of that particular household. The total number of working members in a family was categorized into three categories:

1. The first category included 0-2 numbers of working members and it is evident from the table below that 149 out of 200 households have either 1 or 2 working members in their family.
2. The second category of 2-4 working members in the family includes 24.5% of the surveyed households.
3. The last category included 4-6 working members in the family which amounted to only 1% of the total surveyed households.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE SHOWING TOTAL WORKERS, MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS

TOTAL WORKERS (CATEGORIES)	FREQUENCY	%	MALE WORKERS (CATEGORIES)	FREQUENCY	%	FEMALE WORKERS (CATEGORIES)	FREQUENCY	%
0-2	149	74.5%	0-1	154	77%	0-1	182	91%
2-4	49	24.5%	1-2	39	19.5%	1-2	14	7%
4-6	2	1%	2-3	7	3.5%	2-3	4	2%
TOTAL	200	100%	TOTAL	200	100%	TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE-FIELD WORK

To understand the condition of economically active population, this indicator is further sub-classified into two:

- I. **MALE WORKERS:** There are 154 households with either no male workers or only 1 male worker in their family, 39 households fell in the second category and only 7 households belonged to the third category.
- II. **FEMALE WORKERS:** Out of 200 surveyed households, 91% have either no female workers or only 1 female worker in the household, 7% have 2 working female members and only 2% of the households have more than 2 female workers in their family.

8. DEPENDENT POPULATION: The more the number of dependents in the family, the more vulnerable is the economic condition of that family. From the data displayed below, it is clear that 127 households have either no dependent population or 1 or 2 dependents and only 1 household has the largest number of dependent population which is a good sign. This indicator is further subdivided for portraying a clearer picture of dependency. It is seen that 153 households have either no or 1 male dependent in the family and only 2 households out of 200 have the largest number of male dependents. It is quite surprising that exactly same scenario exists in terms of female dependents as that of male dependents.

TABLE NO. 13: TOTAL DEPENDENTS, MALE DEPENDENTS AND FEMALE DEPENDENTS IN THE FAMILY

DEPENDANTS	FREQUENCY	%	MALE	FREQUENCY	%	FEMALE	FREQUENCY	%
0-2	127	63.5%	0-1	153	76.5%	0-1	153	76.5%
2-4	67	33.5%	1-2	36	18%	1-2	36	18%
4-6	5	2.5%	2-3	9	4.5%	2-3	9	4.5%
6-8	1	0.5%	3-4	2	1%	3-4	2	1%
TOTAL	200	100%	TOTAL	200	100%	TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

III. SOCIAL ASPECTS: Religion of an individual, the caste composition of a society, the type of house that the people are living in, the availability of health and sanitation facilities etc. say a lot about the social condition of a particular place. For getting an idea of the societal condition of the tea garden, various social indicators have been taken into account that is discussed as follows.

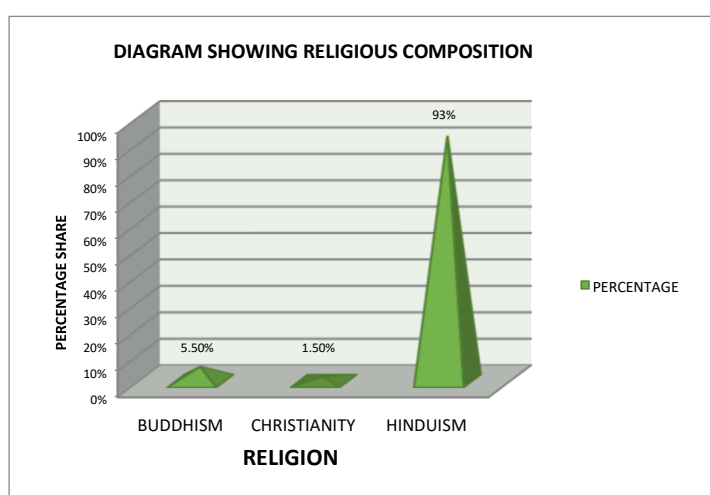
9. RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION: There are three major religious groups in the study area: Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. Hinduism accounts for 93% of the respondents; Buddhism follows the former and accounts for 5.5% of the total percentage of the religious composition of the study area. Christianity has started to spread in the tea

estate since early 2010s. Consequently, it is followed by the least number of respondents which is only 3 out of 200 people that were interviewed.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION

RELIGION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BUDDHISM	11	5.5%
CHRISTIANITY	3	1.5%
HINDUISM	186	93%
TOTAL	200	100%

SOURCE: FIELD WORK

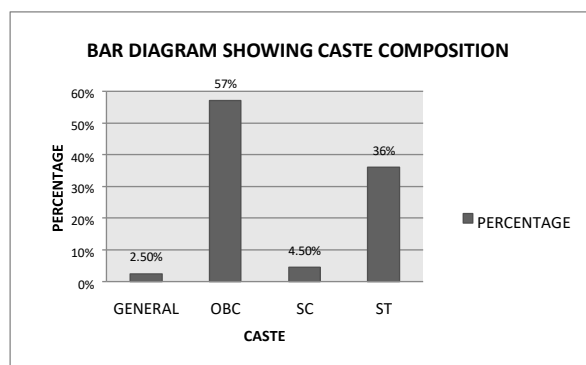


10. CASTE COMPOSITION: 114 out of 200 respondents belonged to OBC category, 72 respondents were Scheduled Tribes, 9 were Scheduled Castes and only 5 of them belonged to General category. The following table and the bar diagram helps in understanding the scenario of the caste composition of the study area more vividly.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR CASTE COMPOSITION

CASTE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENERAL	5	2.50%
OBC	114	57%
SC	9	4.50%
ST	72	36%
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: Field work



11. HOUSE TYPE: The types of houses surveyed were categorized under three broad subcategories on the basis of building materials, roof type etc.

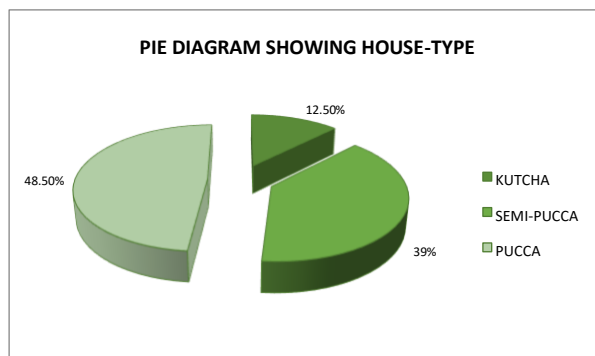
- i. Kutcha households (built from mud and bamboo/ loosely packed stones with plastic roofs in the study area) accounted to 12.5%. It was also seen that the houses were only having one room with no electricity connection that was only built up of tin/ ply board walls with tin/plastic roof. Overall such types of households were 25 in number.
- ii. Semi Pucca households (built from mud and stone that are cemented from outside or those houses that are half concrete and half wooden with tin roofs) accounted to 39% of the total surveyed households.
- iii. Pucca houses (built from brick, sand, cement with either concrete or tin roof) accounted to a total of 97 households.

From the table below it is clear that pucca and semi-pucca households are ample in number whereas only 12.5% of the households are kutcha in nature.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE SHOWING HOUSE TYPE

HOUSE TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
KUTCHA	25	12.5%
SEMI-PUCCA	78	39%
PUCCA	97	48.5%
TOTAL	200	100%

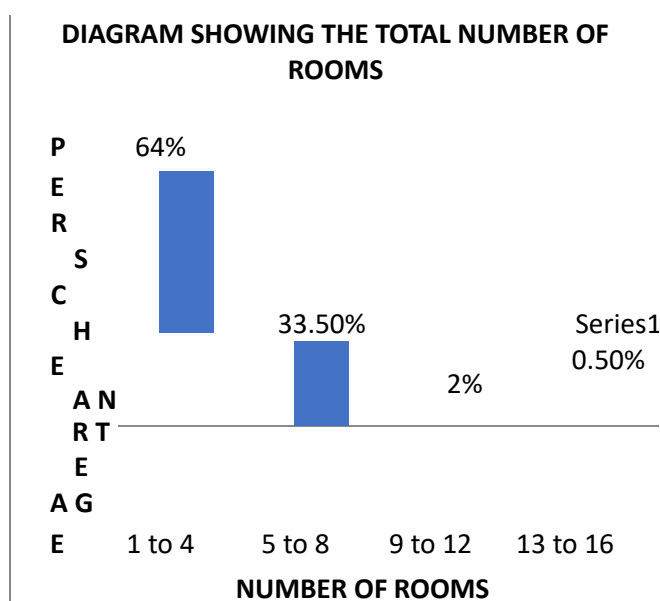
Source: Field work



11.1. TOTAL NUMBER OF ROOMS: The majority of households in the surveyed area had a total of 1 to 4 rooms and accounted for 64% whereas only 1 household had 14 rooms in total. Other categories have been presented in the following table-

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE SHOWING TOTAL NUMBER OF ROOMS IN A HOUSEHOLD

NO. OF ROOMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE SHARE
1 to 4	128	64%
5 to 8	67	33.50%
9 to 12	4	2%
13 to 16	1	0.50%
TOTAL	200	100%

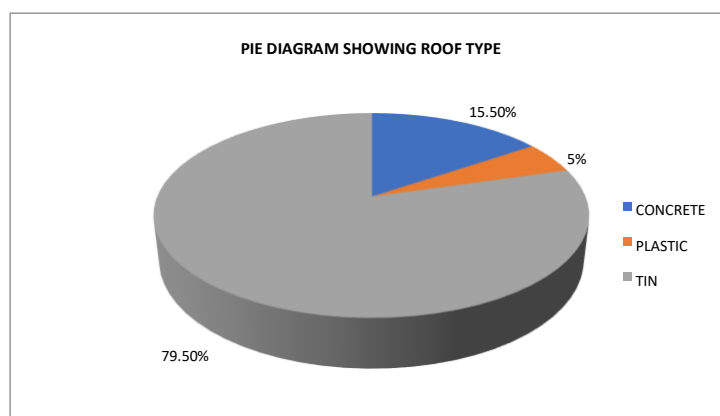


11.2. ROOF TYPE OF A HOUSEHOLD: The roofs of the houses surveyed that were made up of concrete accounted to 15.5%, that made up of tin accounted to 79.5% and that of plastic accounted to 5% of the total surveyed households.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR ROOF TYPE

ROOF TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
CONCRETE	31	15.5%
PLASTIC	10	5%
TIN	159	79.5%
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: Field work

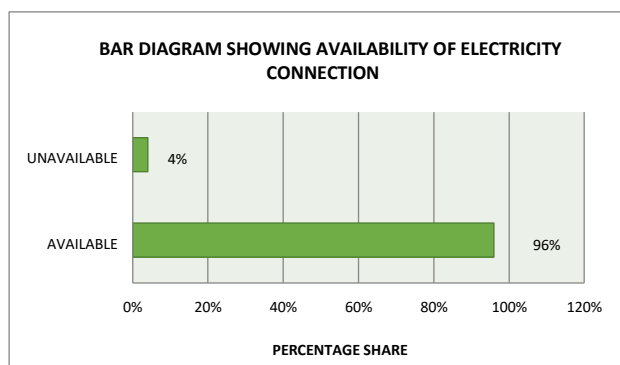


11.3. ELECTRICITY CONNECTION: Out of 200 households, 192 households had electricity connection and only 8 households did not have electricity connection.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY

ELECTRICITY CONNECTION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
AVAILABLE	192	96%
UNAVAILABLE	8.0	4%
TOTAL	200.0	100%

SOURCE: Field work

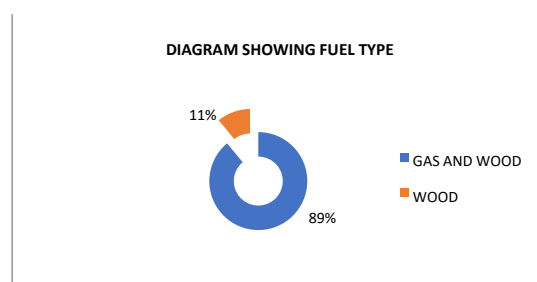


12. FUEL SOURCE: This study was conducted in a rural area where majority of the population are solely dependent upon tea garden for employment and as such their monthly income is minimal, as has been discussed earlier. Yet it was found that 178 out of 200 households used gas cylinders and wood as the source of fuel. Only 22 households relied solely on wood as their main source of fuel.

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLE FOR FUEL TYPE

FUEL TYPE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GAS AND WOOD	178	89%
WOOD	22	11%
TOTAL	200	100%

Source: Field work



PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS: With the intention of channelizing the research direction more into finding the problems of the tea estate workers, a sample size of 200 respondents was selected randomly and 5 major problems faced by the people residing in the study area were selected which was later converted into a 5 point Likert Scale. The aim was to find the satisfaction levels of the respondents in terms of the following 5 issues-

- Q1-Whether the respondents are satisfied with their monthly wages that the company pays to them?
- Q2- Are the respondents satisfied with the health care services presently prevalent in the tea estate?
- Q3- Whether the respondents are satisfied with the educational facility that is there in the tea estate?

- Q4-If the transportation facilities are satisfactory or not?
- Q5-Whether all their needs and supplies are fulfilled from the nearest town?

NOTE: Q= QUESTION

These five questions were then measured on a 5 point scale based on the intensity of satisfaction that the respondents might feel regarding such pressing issues. Hence, the various satisfaction levels and the values assigned to them for computing those in the SPSS Software are as follows-

- ✚ Strongly satisfied: the value chosen for the most positive response was 5.
- ✚ Satisfied: a relatively less positive response was given the value of 4.
- ✚ Indifferent: a value of 3 was assigned to this response.
- ✚ Unsatisfied: This response was given the value of 2.
- ✚ Strongly unsatisfied: The most negative response was given a value of 1.

A simple descriptive analysis was conducted to understand the pattern and intensity of the underlying social as well as economic challenges in the study area and the following statistical table makes this point clear. As per the output, it is visible that there is no missing data in any of the five cases selected for undertaking the study, which is a positive sign as to take into consideration that all the respondents were responsible enough to rate their satisfaction level for each societal problems. Each of the problem areas will be discussed with probable suggestions in the following section.

Statistics						
		WAGE SATISFACTION	SATISFACTION WITH MEDICAL FACILITY	SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL FACILITY	SATISFACTION WITH TRANSPORT FACILITY	SATISFACTION WITH MARKET FACILITY
N	Valid	200	200	200	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.52	1.78	2.42	3.02	2.83
Mode		3	1	3	3	3
Std. Deviation		1.125	0.841	0.979	0.964	1.085
Range		4	3	4	4	4
Percentiles	25	1.25	1.00	2.00	2.25	2.00
	50	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00
	75	3.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.00

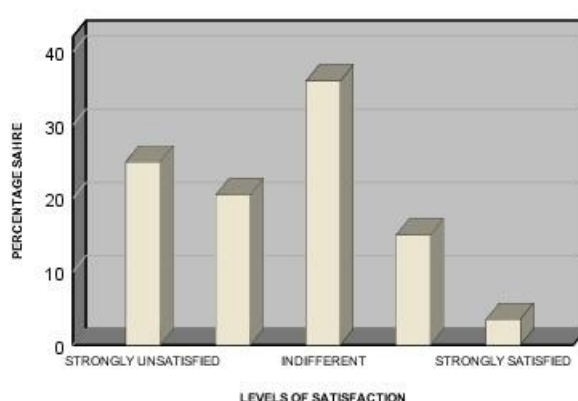
- A. **WAGE SATISFACTION:** It is the most important indicator for understanding the problems being faced by the respondents. It must be noted that as per the surveyed data, the monthly income of the labor at the tea garden (which is the lowest category of workers) hardly exceeds Rs.4500 per month. As per the following table, 25% of the respondents were strongly unsatisfied with the wages that they receive and 20.5% of them were unsatisfied. This gives us a picture that 45.5% respondents are not satisfied with their wages. On the contrary

only 18.5% of them were satisfied with their monthly income (15% satisfied, 3.5% strongly satisfied). Out of 200 respondents, 72 of them were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their wages.

B.

WAGE SATISFACTION					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	STRONGLY UNSATISFIED	50	25.0	25.0	25.0
	UNSATISFIED	41	20.5	20.5	45.5
	INDIFFERENT	72	36.0	36.0	81.5
	SATISFIED	30	15.0	15.0	96.5
	STRONGLY SATISFIED	7	3.5	3.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF WAGE



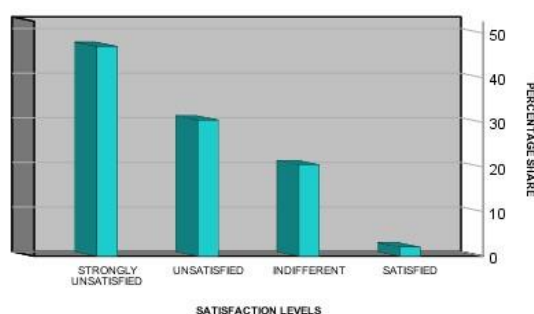
C. **SATISFACTION WITH THE MEDICAL FACILITY:** The nearest health center of this tea garden is Sonada P.H.C. which is nearly 13 kms away from the tea garden and the nearest hospital is Darjeeling Sadar which is 28 kilometers away from the study area. There is however, a small dispensary being run bun the company in the tea estate but the employees are not skilled. Only recently the state government has established a Sub- Health Center here which facilitates a weekly visit of a doctor for the betterment of the society. Accordingly, it was seen that 47.5% of the respondents were highly unsatisfied with the medicinal facility prevalent in the tea estate, 30.5% were unsatisfied, 20.5% were indifferent, 2% was satisfied, whereas not even a single respondent was highly satisfied with the options of medical facility in the study area.

D.

SATISFACTION WITH MEDICAL FACILITY

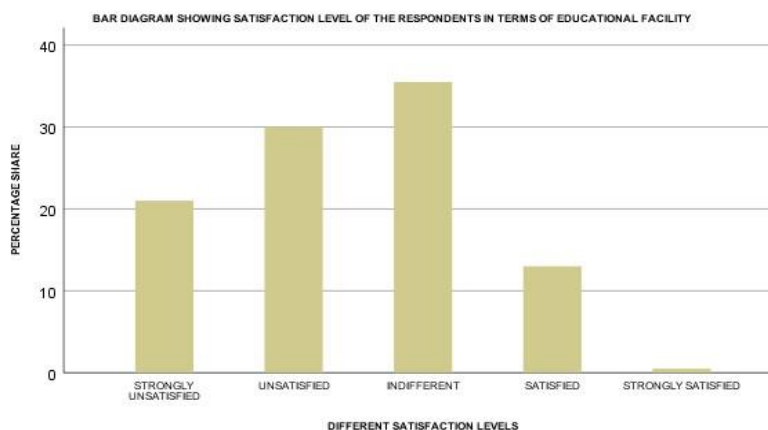
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	STRONGLY UNSATISFIED	94	47.0	47.0	47.0
	UNSATISFIED	61	30.5	30.5	77.5
	INDIFFERENT	41	20.5	20.5	98.0
	SATISFIED	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS IN TERMS OF MEDICAL FACILITY



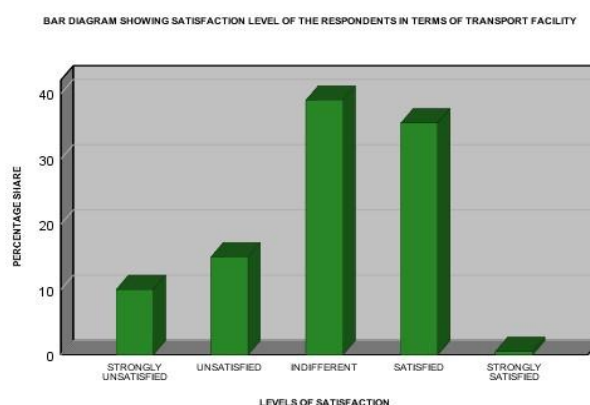
- E. **SATISFACTION WITH THE EDUCATIONAL FACILITY:** There is only 1 government high school and 1 government primary school in the tea garden. Apart from a few private primary schools, there is no prospect of higher studies here. Consequently, only 0.5% of the respondents were highly satisfied with the educational facility.

SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATIONAL FACILITY					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	STRONGLY UNSATISFIED	42	21.0	21.0	21.0
	UNSATISFIED	60	30.0	30.0	51.0
	INDIFFERENT	71	35.5	35.5	86.5
	SATISFIED	26	13.0	13.0	99.5
	STRONGLY SATISFIED	1	0.5	0.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



- F. **SATISFACTION WITH TRANSPORT FACILITY:** Same is the scenario with the transport facility in the region. Only 0.5% of the respondents were strongly satisfied with the transport services. 35% of them were unsatisfied (10% strongly unsatisfied and 15% unsatisfied).

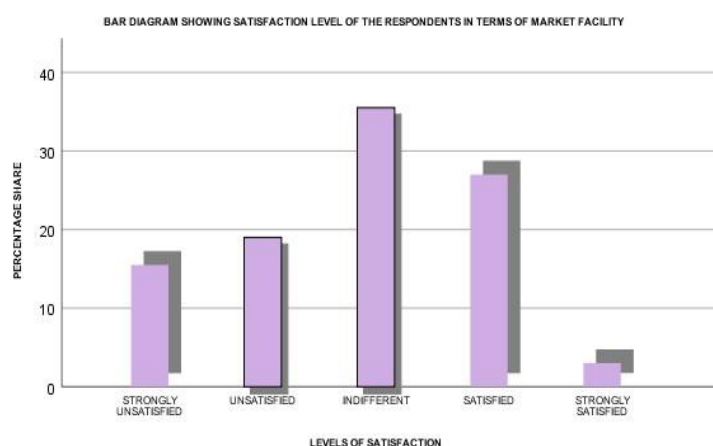
SATISFACTION WITH TRANSPORT FACILITY					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	STRONGLY UNSATISFIED	20	10.0	10.0	10.0
	UNSATISFIED	30	15.0	15.0	25.0
	INDIFFERENT	78	39.0	39.0	64.0
	SATISFIED	71	35.5	35.5	99.5
	STRONGLY SATISFIED	1	0.5	0.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



- G. **SATISFACTION WITH THE MARKET FACILITY:** The nearest market of this village is Darjeeling town which is 28 kms away. People also rely on availing some market functions from Sonada. Thus, 15.5% were highly unsatisfied, 19% were unsatisfied, 35.5% were indifferent, 27% were satisfied and only 3% were highly

satisfied when talking about the proximity with the nearest town as well as the goods and services that are available thereof.

SATISFACTION WITH MARKET FACILITY					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	STRONGLY UNSATISFIED	31	15.5	15.5	15.5
	UNSATISFIED	38	19.0	19.0	34.5
	INDIFFERENT	71	35.5	35.5	70.0
	SATISFIED	54	27.0	27.0	97.0
	STRONGLY SATISFIED	6	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



Hence, on the basis of 1-5 scale measurement, the overall satisfaction levels of the respondents may be summarized as follows-

PARAMETERS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
STRONGLY UNSATISFIED	25.00%	47%	21%	10%	15.50%
UNSATISFIED	20.50%	30.50%	30%	15%	19%
INDIFFERENT	36.00%	20.50%	35.50%	39%	35.50%
SATISFIED	15.00%	2%	13%	35%	27%
STRONGLY SATISFIED	3.50%	0%	0.50%	0.50%	3%

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

SUGGESTIONS: The overall analysis of the socio-economic condition of the village brought to the fore myriad economic as well as social problems that need to be dealt with in the near future. Hence, some of the recommendations on the same may be made for proper functioning of the tea garden as well as for the betterment of the living condition of the tea garden workers.

- i. More number of educational institutions should be established so that the economic pressure on the economically downtrodden populace of the tea garden would be brought down.
- ii. The plantation workers enjoy the facility of 'sick leave' but the number of days of such leave must be increased.
- iii. There needs to be an arrangement so that doctors would be available in the S.H.C, which is a must for the tea estate. The dispensary in the tea garden should also aid and advice the S.H.C workers on the same.
- iv. Proper maintenance of the roadways shall be practiced to avoid accidents.

CONCLUSION: The present study was conducted to understand the socio-economic condition of tea garden workers of a specific village under tea plantation in North Bengal. There is no questioning on the authenticity and quality of Darjeeling tea that had the capacity of being the first Indian product to receive a GI Tag in 2004-2005 (after India enacted Geographical Indication of goods registration and protection act in 2003). Initially Darjeeling black tea was the only variety of tea to receive G.I. tag. Recently Darjeeling white and green tea also received the said tag with effect from 24th October, 2019. Hence, it can be said that the district is known for its 'tea'. The production of such authentic product requires the incessant hard work of the plantation workers and this study revealed that the plantation workers are surrounded by severe economic as well as social challenges; to which the management pays very little attention. This research paper will help to understand such aspects of the living condition of the tea plantation workers.

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