

Socio-economic Conditions and Livelihood Strategies of Plantation Workers in Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim

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By

Sushma Gurung

Department of Anthropology

School of Human Sciences

737102

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सामदुर, तादोंग - 737102
सिक्किम, भारत
03592-251212, 251415, 251656
फैक्स - 251067
वेबसाइट - www.cus.ac.in



6th Mile, Samdur, Tadong-737102
Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Ph. 03592-251212, 251415, 251656
Telefax : 251067
Website : www.cus.ac.in

सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

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“Socio-economic conditions and Livelihood Strategies of Plantation Workers in Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim”

Submitted by **Ms.Sushma Gurung** under the Supervision of **Prof. K.R.Rama Mohan**, of the Department of Anthropology, School of Human Sciences, Sikkim University, Gangtok- 737102, Sikkim.

Sushma Gurung
Signature of Candidate
(Sushma Gurung)

K.R.Rama Mohan
16/12/22
Counter Signed by the Supervisor

Professor
Dept. of Anthropology
Sikkim University
6th Mile, Gangtok

Srijay
20/12/2022
Vetted by Librarian
Sikkim University

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DATE:16/12/2022

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SUSHMA GURUNG
School of Human Sciences
Sikkim University
2022

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
BDO	Block Development Office
BPL	Below Poverty Level
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary School
CMRHM	Chief Minister Rural Housing Mission
CELS	Comprehensive Educational Loan Scheme
DCRG	Death Cum Retirement Gratuity
DOCI	Department of Commerce & Industries
EAG	Empowered Action Group
EPF	Employees Provident Fund
GI	Galvanised Iron
GOI	Government of India
GOS	Government of Sikkim
HACCP	Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point
HRDD	Human Resource Development Department
IAY	Indira Awaas Yojana
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMO	Institution of Marketology
ISO	International Organisation for Standardization
LII	Livelihood Improvement Index

LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LWD	Labour Welfare Department
LWP	Leave Without Pay
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOAPS	National Old Age Pension Scheme
NPS	National Pension Scheme
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
OBC	Other Backward Class
OFOJ	One Family One Job
PFS	Provident Fund Scheme
PHC	Primary Health Center
PHE	Public Health Engineering
PLA	Plantation Labour Act
PMGAY	Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana
RHSGOS	Rural Housing Scheme of Government of Sikkim
SCs	Schedule Caste
SGAY	Sikkim Garib Aawas Yojana
SGRY	Sampoorna Garmin Rozgar Yojana
SGSY	Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SHG	Self Help Group
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

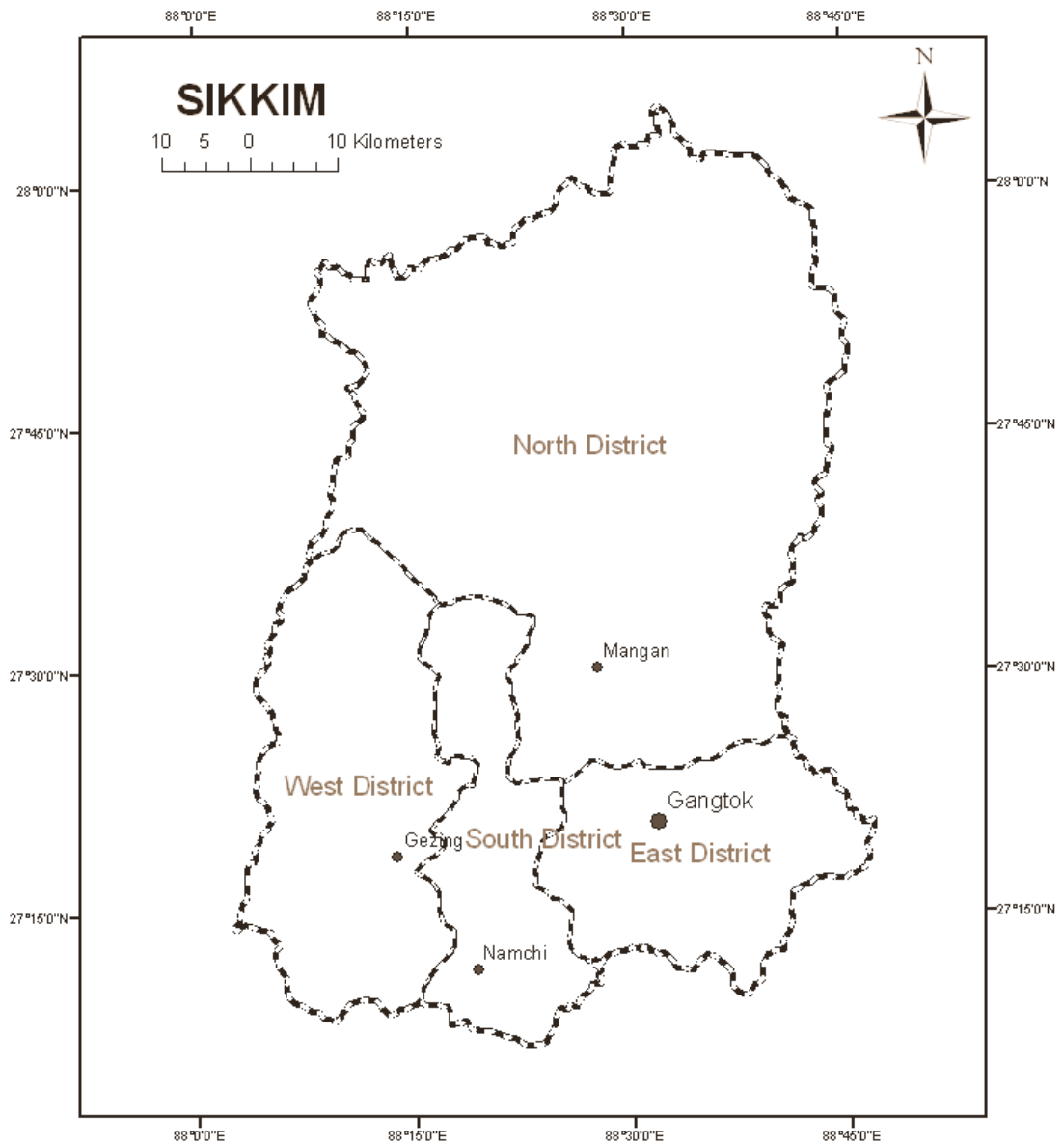
STs	Schedule Tribe
TBI	Tea Board of India
TTE	Temi Tea Estate
UNICEF	United Nation International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

MAPS SHOWING THE STUDY AREA (TEMI TEA ESTATE, SOUTH SIKKIM)



Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/5N7sk71iZsFQEyVn7>

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Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/yBRv1aLdn4RMYAEH6>

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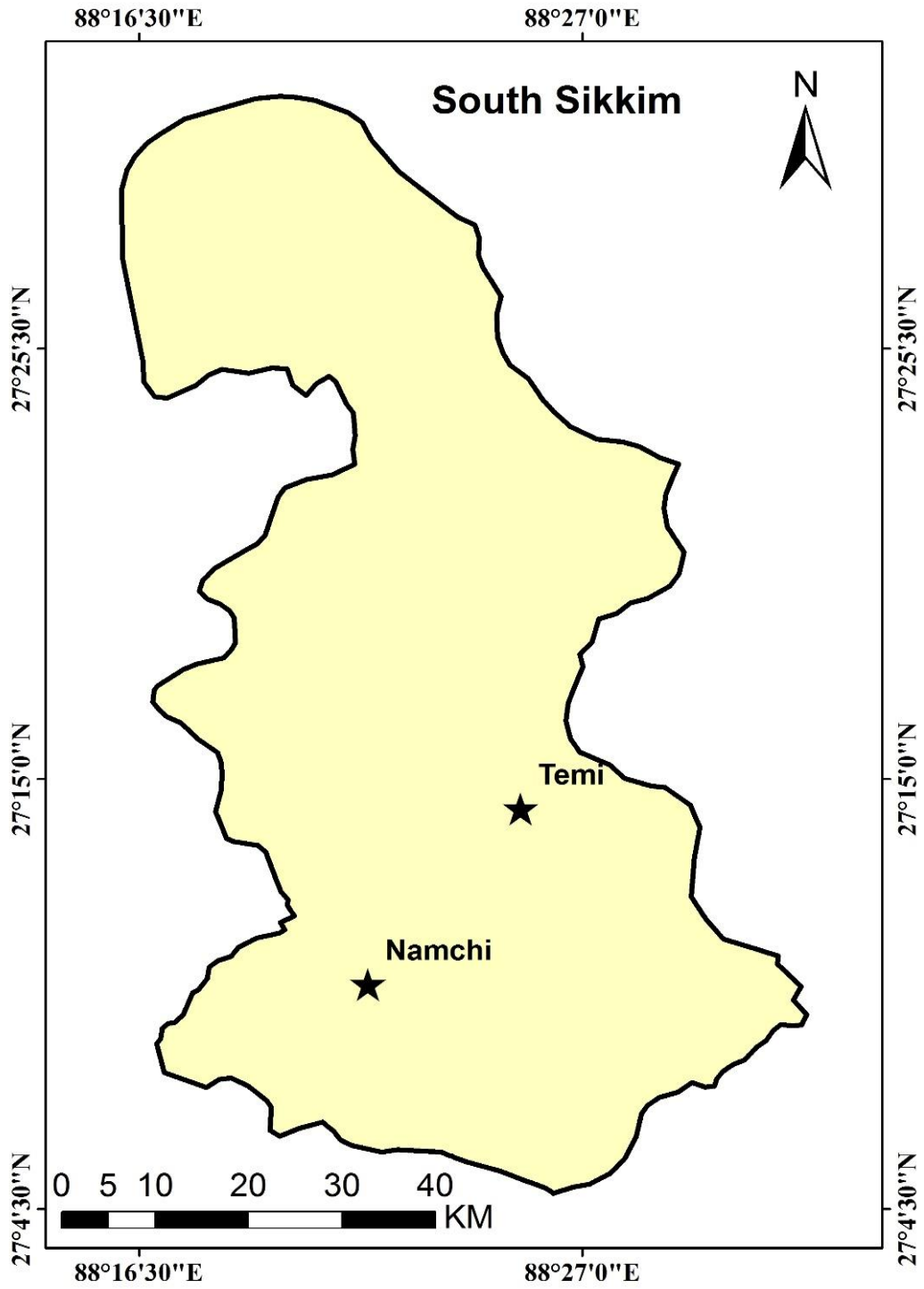


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CHAPTER- 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A simple definition of livelihoods is making a living. The usage of the term 'livelihoods' can be traced back to 1940s when it was used to give a detailed account on how people make a living mostly mentioning in the economic terms. Karl Polanyi was one of the earliest economists who proposed a more holistic and human-centred concepts in his book *The Livelihood of Man* (Kaag et al, 2003). In dealing with Livelihoods, ecologists, anthropologists', agriculturalists and heterodox economists have looked at the changing rural systems and their development challenges since the early seventies of the twentieth century. Livelihood plays an important role in moulding the identity of an individual in a society. Until the late 1980s of the twentieth century the concept of Livelihoods had to compete for attention of scholars with development thinking with the themes like community development, sectoral approaches, technology transfer and integrated rural development. Livelihood patterns particularly tea plantation workers indicate levels of socio-economic development and well-being of the communities in the particular given region.

Plantation is a part of agriculture which plays a crucial role in the export of agricultural produce. It provides employment to many workers who comprise immigrant workers and their descendants which is also the principle means of livelihood. But employment in the tea industry provides very little scope for upward mobility in terms of both earnings and skill. The Plantations Labour Act, 1951 was passed in October, 1951 and the act came into force with effect from 1st April 1954. In the case of tea plantations, the Britishers had already made some limited provisions for labour welfare. Again, the Government of India revised the provision in the Plantation Labour Act of 1951 (PLA), thus entrusting the responsibility for the welfare measures including health to the management. The Plantation Labour Act among other things requires the employer to provide to the workers and their family members medical, housing, sickness and education facility and various other social security benefits.

According to Plantations Labour Act 1951 under section 2 (f), "Plantation means any land used or intended to be used for growing crops like tea, coffee, rubber, cardamom or cinchona which measures twenty-five acres or more land and on which more than

thirty persons are employed on twelve months. In any State where the provisions of this Act have been applied by notification under sub-section (4) of section (1) to any class of plantations means any land used or intended to be used for growing the plant and whereon thirty or more than thirty persons are employed or were employed on any day of the preceding twelve months". The International Labour Organization 1950, notes the term 'plantation' as a group of settlers or the political units formed by it under the British colonialism. For the purposes of the ILO Convention "plantation" does not include family or small-scale holdings producing for local consumption and not regularly employing hired workers. It includes services that are carried out for the primary processing of the products of plantation. Similarly, Jones 1968, also defines plantation as an economic unit producing agricultural commodities for sale and employing relatively large numbers of unskilled labourers whose activities are closely supervised. Therefore, the term 'Plantation' can be defined as a kind of extensive farming, wherein profitable crops are cultivated especially for marketing purposes. In India, plantation of crops is considered to be the main segment of horticulture crops. Thus, plantation crops include growing of variety of products like tea, rubber, coffee, chinchona, etc. Among all the plantation crop, tea is considered to be a major producer and grower in the country. Tea plantations are one of the many varieties of plantations, such as coffee, Cinchona, rubber, and others, providing livelihood to the rural poor people. There are no any other plantations which are well organized as the tea plantation and also there is no other plantation which provides as many employments as the tea plantation does.

The tea industry plays a pivotal role in India's economy development by providing livelihood to thousands of households through direct employment as well as indirect sustenance in the form of ancillary jobs but ironically the level of poverty of tea plantation worker households is so alarming and the managements have been unable to provide to the basic needs, standard of living and welfare of the tea plantation workers. And also, the present study will be in Temi Tea Estate so the work will focus on the socio-economic conditions and livelihood strategies of plantation workers of the tea estate of Sikkim.

Tea is considered as the second most consumable beverage in the world, after water, and is considering the global demand for tea and its consumption, it is one of the most exported agricultural goods (Oxfam, 2015). The consumption of tea is even higher

than beer, carbonated drinks, coffee and wine in the world (Siniya & Mishra, 2008; Rietveld & Wiseman, 2003). Tea is considered to be a major plantation crop in many tropical and sub-tropical countries which include India. The scientific name for tea is *Camellia sinensis*. It is also commonly known as a labour-intensive crop which requires a large number of workers especially during the time of plucking season of tea leaves. Since, tea is considered to be one of the oldest organized sectors of the country and has occupies an important place in national economy and at around 790 million kgs of tea was produced annually which make it to the largest producer of tea in the world, (Sharma et al, 2012). About 87% of tea which is produced in India is consumed domestically; per capita consumption is also low at about 0.80kg per year (Tea Board of India, 2011). Since the production of tea is considered to be both land as well as labour intensive activity. Therefore, we find maximum of people of India in tea industry who works as a labour and earns their wages to sustain their livelihood but over a long period of time the socio-economic condition and livelihood status of tea plantation workers in India have not been changed.

Tea plantation workers are those people who are employed in a plantation for hire or reward, directly or through certain agency to do any kind of skilled or semi-skilled work related to cultivation and brewing of tea, as cultivation of tea is an agricultural activity whereas brewing of tea is industrial activity. Tea plantation workers community are sometime called by different names, sometimes even used as derogatively, such as 'tea garden coolie' or 'drunkards' and so on which is a generic classification for the unskilled manual workers. They are considered to be a particular section of workers that derive one's livelihood resources from tea plantation works. These are the population who are fearful and anxious about its basic subsistence, due to its dependence or over-dependence on low and insecure income, inadequate social services. Therefore, tea plantation workers are one of the cluster groups of people who are severely deprived from basic rights (Das & Jakirul, 2014)

The tea plantation workers are covered by the Plantation Labour Act 1951, which provides for the welfare of plantation labour and regulates the working and living conditions of workers. The working and living conditions of the tea plantation labourers requires more attention as the labour force consists of migrant workers whose rights are less, their working condition frequently formidable, poor education and health facilities, worse than that of similar workers outside the plantation (Sarkar

& Lama, 1986). The workers of tea plantation are being paid daily or monthly wages for their works in tea plantation along with some other facilities of basic needs like housing, medical facilities, drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities etc. Basically, tea plantation workers are waged labours in the organized sector. Once employed into the plantation, they are bracketed into the category of wage labourers (Sharma, 1999). Tea plantation workers invariably include a large number of women in the plantation sector specially for plucking of tea leaves. The most potential labour force of tea industry is women workers, who constitute about 70 percent of total population of workers (Sarma, 2013). Tea plantation is considered to be one of those kinds of plantation which provides employment and securities to many un-employed people to derive and maintain their basic livelihood. Socio-economic condition implies the standing of a person or group in a community or society based on education, occupation and income which is often used as a benchmark for investigating health inequalities (Segen's Medical Dictionary, 2012).

The concepts of livelihoods, livelihoods security are relatively new concepts in social science discourses. According to Davies (1996) & Carney (1998) and others involved in the development studies, livelihood concept is a valuable means of understanding different factors that influence or impact lives of people especially in developing countries. Similarly, Ellis & Freeman (2005) also explains the term livelihood which attempts to capture not just what people do in order to make a living, but the resources that provide them with the capability to build a satisfactory living, the risk factors that they must consider in managing their resources, and the institutional and policy context that hinders them in their pursuit of a viable or improving living. Livelihood throughout the countries is becoming more complex in terms of location, types and combination of activities undertaken (Jones, 2008).

Livelihood is a complex process and an important aspect of understanding human beings who is not only a social animal, but he is also an economic being. The perspective of livelihood starts how different people in different places live, and in recent times the approach has shift its focus from rural to central development thinking (Scoones, 2009). Occupation is usually associated with one or the other kind of organization like agriculture, industry, governmental organization with which people pursue one occupation or the other in order to sustain and maintain their livelihood. Without a better livelihood, it is not possible to aim for a better quality of

life and that is why livelihood plays a vital role in moulding the identity of an individual living in a society.

The concept of a livelihood is widely used in contemporary society which means to support his/her family from other source as to have supplement to his/her income. The meaning of livelihood can often appear as solitary or either due to lack of certainty or to different definitions being encountered in different sources. Chambers and Conway, (1992: 7) defines livelihood as ‘comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living’. A livelihood includes people, their capabilities, and their arrangement for making a living where means of living includes food, income and assets. It is understood as a sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks (such as natural disaster and economic or social upheavals) and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both for now and in the future, while not understanding the natural resource base (ibid, 1991).

Tea is a common and popular drink in India. Tea plantation industry is one of the most important agro based industries in India in terms of employment generation. The Plantations of tea are predominantly located in North-Eastern States of India, particularly Assam. The cultivation of tea plantation in India started in the middle of 19th century, when the plantations were established in Assam by the British (Baildon, 1882 & Money, 1883). The history of tea plantation in India can be traced back to the period of the East India Company 1774, who is known to have brought a sample of tea seeds from China to India and also was considered to be the sole proprietor of tea production in India. The commercial exploration of tea however began in India only during 1823 when the British trader and explorer, Robert Bruce visited to Assam in the northeast of India and made a deal with a tribal Singhpho Chief, Bessa Gaum to supply indigenous tea plant. According to Baildon (1877), the Dewan Maniram Dutta Barua who was a Minister of the last Raja of Assam, for the discovery of the tea plant introduced Bruce to Chief Bessa Gaum. The Dewan was appointed in the Assam Tea Company to which he later left to start his own tea plantation and became the first Indian tea planter. In India, Assam produces 51% of tea produced and about 1/6th of the tea produced in the world. About 17% of the workers of Assam are engaged in the tea industry and is one of the biggest contributors to the organized workforce of the economy (The Govt. of Assam, official website).

The cultivation of tea in India is a combination of both agriculture and industry that provides many jobs opportunities to the people living in rural area to have better livelihood patterns. India is considered to be one of the world's second leading producers of tea as of 2018, with the crop being grown in bulk across many places like Darjeeling, Assam, Nilgiri etc. About 22 percent of the world's consumption of tea is in India which leads to be the world's largest consumer of tea. Tea plantation are primarily located in hills and interior areas of North-Eastern and Southern states of India. Tea is grown in more than 17 states in India and the major tea producing states of India are Assam, Kerala, West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. About 5,66,600 hectares of land is under cultivation, and producing 1321 million kilograms of tea in 2017-18. The other states where tea is also grown but to a small extent are Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Odisha, Tripura, Uttarakhand, and Sikkim (Tea Board of India, 2018).

TABLE 1.1 AREA, PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTIVITY OF TEA IN DIFFERENT STATES OF INDIA

SL. NO.	STATE	AREA ('000 ha)	PRODUCTION (m kg)	PRODUCTIVITY (kg/ha)
1	ASSAM	282.10 [58.72]	657.24 [56.11]	2330
2	WEST BENGAL	115.08 [19.80]	236.39 [23.98]	2059
3	TAMIL NADU	80.46 [13.90]	160.51 [16.29]	1998
4	KERALA	37.15 [6.45]	55.98 [5.68]	1506
5	KARNATAKA	2.14 [0.37]	5.18 [0.51]	2423
6	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	2.57 [0.45]	5.84 [0.62]	2273
7	HIMACHAL PRADESH	2.35 [0.39]	0.77 [0.11]	329

8	MANIPUR	1.32 [0.21]	0.12 [0.02]	82
9	MEGHALAYA	0.56 [0.11]	0.25 [0.03]	459
10	MIZORAM	0.65 [0.12]	0.07 [0.007]	115
11	ODISHA	0.21 [0.05]	NA	NA
12	TRIPURA	8.98 [1.55]	7.86 [0.80]	877
13	UTTARAKHAND	1.57 [0.31]	0.25 [0.03]	146
14	SIKKIM	0.19 [0.04]	0.08 [0.009]	423

Source: Tea Statistics, Tea Board of India, 2018

[Figures in the parentheses indicates percentages]

The tea industry has played a vital role by providing livelihood to thousands of households through direct or indirect employment but many tea industries in different tea estate across the country also suffers from different problems as people in many regions are solely dependent on tea plantation for their source of income to sustain their livelihood. Thus, tea industry encounters many growing crises which leads to affecting the livelihood patterns of the workers.

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature is an integral part of the study. Various relevant articles, journals about the tea plantation workers are consulted for the study. There are several studies on tea plantation workers and tea industry covering different sectors in Indian context. Most of the studies have looked into the socio-economic aspects, marketing channels, branding, export and the overall growth. However, there are few studies especially dealt on their living condition; is one of the most depriving issues which seeks more attention and need to be studied in-depth. While looking into Sikkim context of tea industry, it is a recent phenomenon which still requires an intensive study.

Ahmad et al. (2015) in *Socio-economic and Educational Condition of Tea Worker at Sylhet tea garden in Bangladesh*, where they mentioned that Bangladesh being one of the leading teas producing countries, the many tea laborers who find their livelihood as tea garden labourers are living in miserable conditions. The article also talks about the most vulnerable groups i.e., the women, children and adolescent girls as tea gardeners. Basic facilities like supply of electricity, pure drinking water and sanitation supply are deplorable. The workers in the estate are still lagging behind socially, economically and culturally. Maximum of the workers are illiterate and they are unaware of their rights.

Kamal et al. (2004) studied the history of tea industries in Sylhet. The authors briefly highlighted about the socio-economic condition of the tea labourers to which it has mentioned to be unsatisfactory. The study also found that the tea garden labourers are deprived from getting education, medical facilities etc.

Kamruzzaman et al. (2015) explained in their study that the livelihood pattern of tea garden workers, mostly women, is not satisfactory despite tea being a profitable cash crop of Bangladesh. They opined those women workers, who are also financially dependent, adopted stiff survival strategies for food, hygiene and health. They used to work extra hours beside their schedule hours to get extra wage because whatever the payment made by planters were not sufficient for maintaining their family. In their study, livelihood improvement was analysed by its five assets i.e., human capital, natural capital, physical capital, financial capital, and social capital and was calculated by using Livelihood Improvement Index (LII).

Nath and Ahammad (2013) in their study socio-economic condition of tea garden labour in Habiganj district conclude that the tea plantation labours are found to be deprived from getting the basic facilities like education, medical, sanitation, pure drinking water etc. the study also examine the labourers to be deprived and exploited as they have to do over-time work but are being paid less wages.

Rahman (2011) also conducted study on the Living Condition of Tea Garden workers of Bangladesh, found that female workers are more vulnerable in terms of social and economic issues than males. The study highlighted the wage composition, sanitation and health, status of literacy of the workers and their family members. The study also revealed that only 68 per cent of workers were contented with their accommodation,

only 18 per cent of such accommodations were pucca houses and remaining was kutcha houses. For the temporary workers of the garden, accommodation made of tin and bamboo were provided. As mentioned above, Bangladesh being one of the leading teas producing countries and most profitable cash crops but the living condition of the Tea plantation workers is not satisfactory. Many researches have been conducted on various aspects but the study on tea garden labourers and their improvement of their livelihood status seem to be one of the most depriving issues which need more attention.

Paul (2013) carried a research work on the socio-economic and working conditions of the tea plantation workers of Tamil Nadu. The study found that the labourers are socio-economically backward, their living condition seems to be pitiable. Lack of educational facilities and poor health facilities.

Savitha (2014) have conducted a study on the working and living conditions of tea plantation industry workers in Munnar Idukki district of Kerala found that the tea plantation workers are satisfied with their salary and also, they are provided with all the basic facilities as per Plantation Labour Act. For the living condition, the workers are totally depended on the industry and have no any source of other employment. The study concludes that the working and living condition of tea plantation worker in Munnar district is found to be good as they are given the basic needs like house, safety in work, good salary and other welfare facilities.

Bhowmik (2015) in his work entitled Living conditions of tea plantation workers of Kerala have highlighted the miserable living condition of the workers which leads to the strike by the workers. Despite the facts that there are some laws that governs the living condition but it has been found that those laws been violated.

Srikumar and Arthi (2019) carried out their study to examine the socio-economic and working conditions of tea plantation workers in Manjoor block of Nilgiris. The study found that the workers are socially and economically deprived from the modern lifestyles. The workers were not provided with the basic and proper facilities and also, they have not been provided with proper sanitation in which women are the victims. The study also concluded that the living standard of the tea estate workers are miserable. The study recommended that government should look into the matter seriously. The tea plantation industry is the largest in the formal sector in the country

with more than a million permanent workers. Yet their wages are low and their living condition is worse. Over 172000 hectares of tea cultivation is done in South India of which the major work force is taken part in Nilgiris but the living condition of the workers are miserable. Looking in the context of tea plantation of Munnar district the living conditions of workers are way better as they were provided with the basic facilities.

Khawas (2006) in his study on the tea plantation workers in the Darjeeling hills mentioned that most of the workers in the garden were migrant workers from the neighbouring country Nepal who migrated to the hills during late nineteenth century. Majority of the tea plantation workers are found not to be satisfied with the prevailing wage structure and which also lead to the fewer amount for future saving. The study has also stressed on the livelihood pattern, alternative skills of garden labours, their poor conditions in terms of education, sanitation, housing and health. The facility of providing subsidized firewood and kerosene to the garden labourers has been stopped and so firewood remains the only major source of fuel for the labourers. Majority of the workers in the tea garden still lives in kutchha and semi-pucca houses.

Khawas (2011) carried out another study on Status of tea garden labourers in Eastern Himalaya: A case of Darjeeling tea industry where he tries to examine the social and economic conditions of the labourers. The study highlighted majority of the tea garden labourers are not satisfied with the prevailing wage structure, lack in the basic facilities such as no provisions of housing facilities, education, health facilities with no availability of ambulance, latrines, drinking water facilities, and electricity.

Sarkar (2013) study informs the workers' living conditions of Jalpaiguri District during colonial India where he talks about the condition of children and women workers in the tea garden which was seem to be worse as compared to some other areas. The findings indicate that the workers suffered from ill health, exploitation, physical torture and exploitations because they had no option to protest or raise the voice against the merciless planters. There were no facilities of education for the children and lack of safe drinking water in the garden. The garden workers were paid low wages but they were bound to do over time work without getting any bonus. The study further gave the report that during the last 150 years, the workers community of

Jalpaiguri district had not received any attention for development purpose by the government.

Ansari and Sheereen (2016) attempted to study the socio-economic condition of tea garden workers of Alipurduar district of West Bengal. The study concludes that one of the main problems in the tea garden which led to live in a deplorable and undeveloped life of the tea garden workers is due to the low wage.

Afzala and Alam (2019) studied socio-economic condition of tea garden workers in North Bengal, India and found that the workers are lagging behind in terms of basic facilities like education, water supply, medical facilities etc. the livelihood patterns of the workers are not satisfactory and also, they have to work for extra hours after working for 6-9 hours daily but their wages are low. It has also been found that child Labour in the tea estate of North Bengal region is comparatively high. Looking into the matter the study has suggested the management, state government and other NGOs to take up necessary action to provide the workers with the basic facilities so that they can sustain their better livelihood.

Rai (2020) in her study among the tea plantation labours in Darjeeling and Dooars specially among the women labours explained that the labourers were fully depends on the tea garden jobs due to lack of education and awareness. The medical facilities, housing, sanitation facilities and supplement of foods seems to be completely inadequate and the living condition of the worker in both the garden were miserable.

Among the major teas producing states of India, West Bengal is considered to be one of the major teas producing states which employs a large number of labourers but the living condition of the labourers does not seem to be satisfactory. Despite the facts that the people in the estate are solely dependent on tea gardens for their livelihood but the study reveals lack of facilities given to the workers and also, they were paid very low wages but are force to do over time job.

Purkayastha and Kalita (2016) conducted a study on Tea Garden labourer and their living condition in Borsillah Tea estate of Sivsagar district of Assam. They found that most of the labourers in the estate were migrated from different state such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orrisa. The labourers in the estate live in a poor condition and also suffers from multiple problems which leads to the lagging behind socially, economically and culturally. They opined that the government should make

proper regulation to safeguard tea garden labourers from being exploited and also should impose proper plan and policy for the development of the labour community in the estate.

Purkayastha (2016) study on socio-cultural changes of migrated tea garden labourers of Oraon in Barak Valley of Assam highlighted the economic condition to be very low as the wages of the labourers are not quite satisfactory to meet their daily expenses. Since the tea garden is fully governed and controlled by the tea garden authority Oraon have fully accustomed to all situation with a healthy aptitude towards tea garden.

Saikia et al. (2013) study on the labourers and their living condition of Sarusarai tea garden of Jorhat district also found that many problems being faced by the workers. The pathetic way of living condition. They live in an unhygienic environment without any basic amenities. In the study they have also highlighted that despite the elementary education being free but the rate of school drop-out is high due to poverty.

A case study made by Sharma (2013) on socio-economic condition of tea garden labourers of Lohpohia Tea Estate where he highlighted that the estate was highly deprived in respect to the socio-economic aspects of the workers. They also failed miserably to provide the basic facilities to the labourers.

Devi (2014) also made a case study with special reference to Sonitpur District on the socio-economic status of the tea garden women workers of Assam. It concludes that the tea garden women workers are lagging behind socially, economically. Lack of education. The study also reveals that the women workers work only for the livelihood of their family.

Bhuyan (2018) in his study tea garden labours of Assam highlighted that despite a large number of workers are being employed in the tea garden of Assam since from the British Raj but the condition of the labours is very worse. The labourers lack basic facilities like access to education, healthcare etc. The study also highlighted that the voice of the labourers is being ignored and deprived in every step of their lives.

Das and Borman (2016) studied on the living condition of tea workers with special references to Dibrugarh district of Assam. He highlighted that the living condition of the workers is pathetic. They also suggested that the management of the tea estate

should maintain a mutual relation with the workers by providing basic facilities for the improvement of the living condition.

Sharma and Bhuyan (2016) studied the livelihood pattern among the tea garden labourers of Majan Rajgarh Borline of Assam. They observe that the living standard of the labourers was very low, poor housing and medical facilities, low wages. It was also found that due to lack of proper sanitation facility the garden is more prone to air borne diseases like diarrhoea, dysentery etc. The study also observe that the tea garden authority could not employ all the people to which it results that only 43.42% of the total population is employed in the garden that leads to other people to work outside the garden to sustain their livelihood.

The tea industry in Assam is one of the most productive in the country. It is one of the biggest contributors to the organized sector of workforce where about 17% of the workers of Assam are engaged in the tea industry (The Govt. of Assam, official website). The tea industry of Assam has also been empowering women by giving them job opportunities in the tea garden but it seems that they failed to give proper basic facilities to the worker of the tea garden of various tea estate of Assam. The living condition of the tea garden workers were miserable.

Despite the implementation of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 it is very much clearly shown from the above studies that the living condition of the labourers working in tea garden among various geographical locations does not reveal better living. These studies also reported that the labourers were not given basic facilities like education to the children of the labourers, safe drinking water, health and sanitation etc.

Sharma (2003) made a sociological study on the tea plantation workers in the Himalayan region to which he highlighted the condition of plantation workers in Temi tea estate of Sikkim. He also presented the socio-economic condition of workers where he pointed out the organizational settings, the composition of the workforce, various benefits and facilities, nature of work, landholding possession, traditional occupation, and livestock rearing. He also focused on the social life of workers where he highlighted the change in their prevailing caste system, educational structure, marriage pattern, family composition, religious structure and practices of both traditional and modern health care practices.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Unlike the tea estates of Darjeeling and other states of India, most of which were developed by the British for their own benefit, the Temi Tea Estate was started with a far more humane reason by the Government of Sikkim in order to provide a livelihood to thousands of Tibetan refugees where they could find a job and continue to live with dignity. Few general information of the only tea estate of Sikkim can be found in the website but there is a dearth of studies related to socio-economic and their livelihood issue of the workers of the estate. In this backdrop, the present research study considered worthwhile to investigate the matter on the socio-economic conditions and also to explore their livelihood issues of plantation workers in Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To study the socio-economic conditions of plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim.
- ii. To study the Livelihood issues among the plantation of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim.
- iii. To understand how the plantation workers negotiated the Pre-Pandemic and during the Pandemic season of covid-19.

1.5 RESEARCH AREA

The research work is based on fieldwork conducted in Temi Tea Estate, South Sikkim. The estate is located at the distance of 22km from the Namchi which is the district headquarters of South Sikkim. The elevation of the garden is from 4,800 ft. to 6,200 ft. above the sea level and the estate has grown to bring 440 acres of the mountainside under tea plantation. Temi Tea Estate is a beautiful estate having the basic facilities like pucca houses, footpath, water sources, electricity facilities, medical facilities, educational facilities etc. The total population of Temi Tea Estate is 1392 of which 721 are female and 671 are the male.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the study is to gain insights about socio-economic conditions and livelihood strategies of plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate and their present condition and experiences. Therefore, to assess the socio-economic condition of the

tea plantation workers, a field work was conducted in Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim. The study has incorporated both of qualitative as well as quantitative method but qualitative data is given more importance with the support of quantitative data. The study is empirical in nature.

The total population of Temi Tea Estate who are engaged as tea plantation labourers is 445. The sample size includes 445 tea plantation workers, 350 permanent and 95 casual workers. Both male and female workers were representation of the study. In the tea plantation there were two types of workers Permanent workers and casual workers (bigha workers). Both permanent and casual workers were interviewed for the study. Based on both primary and secondary sources, data was collected through census schedule to know the detailed about the households of the workers, in-depth personal interviews and interaction using snowball and purposive sample with the tea plantation management, both permanent and casual tea plantation workers of the estate, interview with few retired tea plantation workers, Gram Panchayat officials, Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Sikkim, teachers etc. observation method, focused group discussion as primary source and since sufficient information is not available from secondary source and few data was collected from website of Tea Board of India, Tea Board of Sikkim, Census of India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry department and Labour Department, Government of Sikkim, journals, articles, books, documentaries, research work of the similar topics, etc.

1.7 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the review of literature, it is found that the socio-economic conditions and livelihood issues of the plantation labourers in the tea plantation among the various geographical region does not reveal better living conditions. Despite the implementation of Plantation Labour Act (1951) to monitor the labourers' living conditions, it seems majority of the tea estates have failed to provide proper basic facilities to the workers of their respective tea plantations.

Temi Tea Estate being a recent phenomenon of tea industry in Sikkim, there has been not much study among the plantation workers of the Temi Tea Estate as compared to tea estates of other states in India. This has been a huge research gap on the socio-economic condition and livelihood's aspects among tea plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim. At present, there is no in-depth study conducted on the

socio-economic condition and livelihood issues among the tea plantation labourers of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim. Though there are marketing reports and general information available in the website of Tea board of India and in Tea Board of Sikkim, Government of Sikkim, there is only basic and general information about the quantity of tea produced and how it is marketed to various parts within and outside India.

Since, no full-length ethnographic study conducted on the workers of the Temi tea estate. The research finds it important to know the living condition with essential facilities like houses, medical, education and other basic facilities. Therefore, the present study will examine the socio-economic conditions and livelihood issues and strategies of labourers of Temi Tea Estate and their overall well-being.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The present study “Socio-Economic Conditions and Livelihood Strategies of Plantation Workers in Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim” has been divided into six chapters.

CHAPTER-1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the definition and the concepts related to tea plantation, livelihoods, tea plantation workers, historical background of tea in India. Review of the existing literature, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research area, research methodology and organisation of the study.

CHAPTER-2: A PROFILE OF TEMI TEA ESATE, SOUTH SIKKIM

This chapter presents a profile of Temi Tea Estate of South Sikkim, and also it includes the location, the climate, flora and fauna, size of the area, no. of labourers etc. and along with the detailed history and description of the estate.

CHAPTER-3: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE TEA PLANTATION WORKERS OF TEMI TEA ESTATE, SIKKIM

This chapter discuss the socio-economic condition of the tea plantation workers. Discussing their socio-economic conditions, we will concentrate on the gender of the respondents, age group, marital status, religions, types of family, language, education, social group, the occupational category (casual workers and regular workers),

monthly family income, total earners of the family, the wage structure of the workers, housing condition, household assets. It will also highlight land holding patterns, working hours, water and sanitation facilities, electricity facilities and fuel for cooking purposes.

CHAPTER-4: LIVELIHOOD ISSUES AMONG THE TEA PLANTATION WORKERS OF TEMI TEA ESTATE OF SIKKIM

This chapter present the various livelihood issues among the tea plantation workers. It will also highlight few central and state programmes or schemes being implemented for the betterment of the workers. The chapter will also look into the sustainability of livelihood of workers in the light of covid-19 pandemic and pre pandemic.

CHAPTER-5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter concludes by drawing the major findings of the study, recommendations for the well-being of the workers.

CHAPTER -2

A PROFILE OF TEMI TEA ESTATE, SOUTH SIKKIM

2.1 SIKKIM CONTEXT

Sikkim for its topography is considered to be heaven in the Himalayan region; where it enfolds its upper valley of the Teesta River, the major tributary of the mighty Brahmaputra River is also the 22nd state of the Indian Union and the eighth north-eastern state of India, located in the southern mountain ranges of the Eastern Himalayas. Sikkim shares national and international border with Nepal in the west, Tibet in the northeast, the kingdom of Bhutan in the southeast and West Bengal in the south. Sikkim is a diverse state in terms of culture and natural resources. Sikkim has six districts namely Gangtok, Pakyong, Mangan, Geyzing, Soreng and Namchi. The geographical area of the state is spread over 7096 sq. km, measuring approximately 113km from North to South and 64km from East to West. The total population of Sikkim is 6.11 lakhs which is the accumulation of 43,709 (24,730 male and 18,979 female) belonging to North district, 136,435 (70,238 male and 66,197 female) belonging to the West district, 146,850 (76,670 male and 70,180 female) belonging to the South district and 283,583 (151,432 male and 132,151 female) belonging to the East district.as of the report of 2011 census of which the total population of 400 are engaged as tea plantation workers in Temi Tea Estate as a permanent worker (Tea Board of India, 2015).

Most part of Sikkim is mountainous with altitude varying between 300 metres above sea level to over 8500 metres at Khangchendzonga peak. The different communities in Sikkim are characterized by their individual culture, customs, and traditions. Over the years it has been home of the Lepchas, Bhutia and Nepalese and are characterized by their individual culture, traditional and customs. Each of these ethnic groups has their own cultural values, which have in fact shaped the culture of Sikkim. Sikkim is a multi-cultural society cohabited by the Lepchas (also called themselves as Rongs/Monpas). They considered themselves to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim. The Bhutias (also called as Denzongpas/Lhopas). and the Nepalis (also called themselves as Gorkhas/Paharias) from major communities in Sikkim. Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity are the major religions. Besides, a small group of the population still practices animism found particularly among the Lepchas and mongoloid stocks of the Nepalis (Gurung, 2011). The three main groups of communities are the Lepchas, the Bhutias, and the Nepalis. The Nepalese are a heterogeneous group. They consist of many castes and tribes of which Bahun,

Chhetri, Newar, Rai, Gurung, Tamang, Mangar, Sunwar, Bhujel, Thami, Kami, Damai, Sarki, and Majhi are conspicuous. Each of these exhibits diverse physical and cultural characteristic. While the Bahun, Chhetri and Newar, belong to so-called upper caste of Hindu hierarchy, the service castes like Kami, Damai, Sarki and Majhi are enlisted as Schedule Castes. Other backward classes of the region include Rai, Yakha, Gurung, Mangar, Sunwar, Bhujel, Thami. The Tamangs, unlike the majority of the Nepalese, profess Buddhism, and in 2002, Tamangs are recognized as Scheduled Tribes (Government of India, 2015). The Sikkimese Nepali communities are basically a hindu society and conform to the caste system followed by the Hindus with their Hindu traditions and customs. The main economic activities of the people are based on agriculture as cultivators, agricultural labourers, household-industry workers and other workers that include all Government servants, teachers, and those engaged in trade and business etc. Sikkim is gradually strengthening its place in the national and international map as a hot spot for scenic beauty, and an ideal destination for adventure tourism, ecotourism, and spiritual tourism. In the last few years, tourism has come up in a big way. The number of tourists, both domestic and foreign, is steadily on the rise. Sikkim has rich bio-diversity and a wide spectrum of flora and fauna due to the altitude that varies from the sea level to summits that touch the skies.

Sikkim is rich in its forest resources. Lying completely within the Himalayan belt. The climate of the state can be roughly divided into tropical, temperate, and alpine zone. Sikkim is endowed with a variety of natural flora and fauna. Over 400 species of flowering plants, 40 species of primulas, 11 species of oaks, 300 species of ferns and its allies, 8 species of tree ferns, and 20 species of bamboos. The faunal wealth of Sikkim comprises of 144 species of mammals, 600 species of birds, 400 species of butterflies and moths and many species of reptiles. The Government of Sikkim has declared unique plants and animals as the State symbols. These symbols are Rhododendron (*Rhododendron niveum*) as State tree, Nobile Orchid (*Dendrobium nobile*) as state flower, Blood Pheasant (*Ithaginis cruentus*) as state bird and Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) as State animal. The people of Sikkim are deeply religious and follow different faiths. The major religious groups in Sikkim are the Hindus and the Buddhists but there are also considerable number of Christians and Muslims. According to the census of 2011, the percentage of Hindus comprising 57.76%, Buddhists comprising 27.39%, the Christians comprising 9.91%, the Muslims

comprising 1.62% and the other religious groups comprising 3.32% of the total population.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY AREA: TEMI TEA ESTATE, SOUTH SIKKIM



PLATE 1: Guide map of Temi Tea Estate

Since the study area encompass Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim. The introduction of tea industry in Sikkim is a recent phenomenon in the process of industrial development of Sikkim. An attempt to introduced the tea industry had been made by the last king of Sikkim, Palden Thondup Namgyal by initiating a small tea plantation in a village called Kewzing, South Sikkim in order to provide livelihood to the Tibetan refugees who had fled from their homeland when China invaded Tibet during 1950-51 and had flocked into some part of Darjeeling and Sikkim. In an around 1960, though the planting of tea has started in Kewzing tea garden but the garden could not produce a good harvest as the soil content of the garden was not favourable for growing rich tea

plants and also tea cultivation requires vast land, shade trees as well as natural topography and landscape. Tea plants preserve the soil from erosion. All together the industry has a positive contribution to environment as well. The Tibetan refugees were also not accustomed to physical perseverance of manual type as tea garden job requires a lot of perseverance of manual type while in trade and commerce do not require such types. Due to this reason, they left the garden job which leads to the abandon of Kewzing tea garden (Sharma, 2003).

After the abandonment of Kewzing tea garden in 1966, the Government of Sikkim started surveying various areas of South Sikkim. During the survey they started clearing up the Temi-Tarku Forest and established the present Temi Tea Estate. The origin and establishment of tea industry in Sikkim is a recent phenomenon in the process of industrial development in Sikkim. Temi tea estate was established in 1969 by the Government of Sikkim covering the total area of 440 acres in Temi-Tarku, the garden now is the producers of organic tea in the state. Since the estate being new to tea cultivation as compare to other tea estate the overall production is at a small scale. Since 2005, the Temi Tea Estate initiated organic method of cultivation and from 2007 it started producing tea using organic methods replacing inorganic fertiliser with the application of bio-fertiliser such as cow dung, castol-cake. Thus, the teas produced at the Temi Tea Estate were certified as 100% Organic Tea in the year 2008, by the Institution of Marketology (IMO), Control Board of India. Temi Tea is also Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Certified as per ISO 22000 standard under Food Safety.

Grown at an elevation ranging from 1400 to 2000 meters above the sea level is the one and only tea garden called Temi Tea Estate, is the area selected for doing my field study and is located in the south district of Sikkim. it is divided into two divisions i.e., upper and lower division. The garden has been encircled by villages and forests in all its boundaries. The total geographical area of the estate is 172 hectares or 440 acres of land under tea cultivation with a total population of 1392 peoples. The estate is located at the distance of 22km from the Namchi which is the district headquarters of South Sikkim. Temi Tea Estate is a beautiful village having all the basic facilities like pucca houses, good roads, footpath, water sources, electricity facilities, medical facilities, educational facilities etc. Most of the houses in the village area have separate kitchen outside of the main house. The people use either earthen hearths or

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) gas stove depending on the availability of the resources and some use both.

Temi Tea Estate has its own factory to which they also called it processing unit, two official blocks where the administration work are been done and eleven staff quarters. The estate also has two guest houses within the administration block and many private homestays within the tea estate. For the workers, the estate has 10 labour line/colony covering different part of the estate. Total of ten colonies/dhuras with different name like 1 number dhura with 36 houses, 5 number dhura with 5 houses, 6 number dhura with 3 houses, 12 number dhura with 12 houses, 22 number dhura with 25 houses, Chaitey dhura consisting of 18 houses, Katel dhura with 26 houses, Shyal dhura with 14 houses, Naya dhura with 23 houses and Lamatar dhura with 38 houses. Total of 200 houses are there in these different dhuras.

TABLE 2.1: LIST OF DHURAS AND NUMBER OF HOUSES OF THE WORKERS

SL NO	NAME OF DHURAS	NO. OF HOUSES
1	1 number dhura	36 houses
2	5 number dhura	5 houses
3	6 number dhura	3 houses
4	12 number dhura	12 houses
5	22 number dhura	25 houses
6	Chaitey dhura	18 houses
7	Katel dhura	26 houses
8	Naya dhura	23 houses
9	Shyal dhura	14 houses
10	Lamatar dhura	38 houses

The Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim is well known for its range variety of white, green and oolong tea. There are of total four season of Temi tea which is Spring is also known as the first flush, Summer is the second flush, Monsoon is the third flush and Autumn is the final flush. Recently during the harvesting of the tea leaves 2022, the first flush of Temi Tea was sold for a record- breaking price of Rs. 7,500 per kg (North East Today, 2022). The main reasons for fetching a good price are attributed to tea leaf plucking where only a bud and two leaves are being plucked for first flush tea.

TABLE 2.2 THE DETAILS OF TEA MANUFACTURED IN TEMI TEA ESTATE OF SIKKIM DURING THE YEAR 2022

MONTHS	GREEN LEAVES IN KG	TEA MADE IN KG	PERCENTAGE	GREEN TEA PERCENTAGE
FIRST FLUSH (MARCH- APRIL)	86714	18325	20.34 %	28.20 %
SECOND FLUSH (MAY-JUNE)	58511	12143	13.48 %	24.20 %
RAIN FLUSH (JULY-SEPTEMBER)	252290	52239	57.99 %	26.45 %
AUTUMN FLUSH (OCTOBER- NOVEMBER)	33627	7374	8.19 %	21.15 %
TOTAL	431142	90081	100 %	100 %

2.3 THE PEOPLE

Temi Tea Estate has been divided into two division i.e., Upper tea garden and Lower tea garden. The population size has also been distinguished division wise. The total population of Upper tea garden of Temi Tea estate is 742 of which 331 are male and 411 are female as shown in (Table 2.2) and the total population of Lower tea garden is 650 of which 340 are male and 310 are female as shown in (Table 2.3). The overall population of Temi Tea Estate is 1392 of which 721 are the female and 671 are the

male as shown in (Table 2.4). Most of the people of the estate are Hindus, followed by some who are Buddhists, Christians and also practice other religious beliefs. Lifecycle practices are largely influenced by the religious orientation of individual families. Despite the complexity, there are general patterns which are common within each community. The primary language or the lingua franca is Nepali for the entire estate although each community may speak in their own mother tongues. Majority of people live in nuclear family, few in joint family. The people of this village seem to be living with their distinct culture and beliefs.

TABLE 2.3: TOTAL POPULATION OF UPPER TEA GARDEN OF TEMI TEA ESTATE

CATEGORY OF POPULATION	NUMBER OF POPULATION
MALE	331 (44.60)
FEMALE	411 (55.40)
TOTAL	742 (100)

TABLE 2.4: TOTAL POPULATION OF LOWER TEA GARDEN OF TEMI TEA ESTATE

CATEGORY OF POPULATION	NUMBER OF POPULATION
MALE	340 (52.30)
FEMALE	310 (47.70)
TOTAL	650 (100)

TABLE 2.5: TOTAL POPULATION OF TEMI TEA ESTATE

CATEGORY OF POPULATION	NUMBER OF POPULATION
MALE	671 (48.21)
FEMALE	721 (51.79)
TOTAL	1392 (100)

The people in Temi Tea Estate comprises a mixture of various caste communities like Gurung, Mangar, Rai, Limbo, Sherpa, Tamang, Biswakarma, Darjee, Chhetri, Sharma etc. Despite living in the same place, they differ in terms of their rites and practices and it varies from one sub-group to another and even from clan to clan and family to family. Lifecycle practices are largely influenced by the religious orientation of individual families. Most Nepalis are Hindus, followed by some who are Buddhists, Christians and also practice other religious beliefs. Despite the complexity, there are general patterns which are common within each community. The primary language or the lingua franca is Nepali for the entire tea estate although each community may speak in their own mother tongues. Majority of people live in nuclear family, few in joint family. The people of the tea estate seem to be living with their distinct culture and beliefs.

2.4 THE CLIMATE

A variation in climatic condition is found in the study area and its surrounding. In the Eastern Himalayas, Sikkim is a hilly State where agricultural practices and adaptations are highly variable in time and space due to varying altitudes and agro-climatic situations. the climate of Sikkim is extremely varied due to variation in altitude. Temi Tea Estate mainly experience four type of season i, e., the spring season (March to May), the monsoon season (June to September), Autumn season (October to November) and the winter season (December to February). The estate is rich in its forest and vegetation resources. The temperate weather and altitude of the estate are entirely suitable for the tea cultivation.

2.5 FLORA AND FAUNA

Temi Tea Estate is a village which is full of vegetation of temperate type and moderately rich in flora and fauna. There are different species and genera of domestic and non-domestic vegetation in the estate. Though the estate is actively involved in tea plantation only few areas are engaged for cultivation of domestic vegetation which includes mustards, green vegetables, banana, pumpkins, cucumbers, peas and beans etc. The floral composition of the tea estate consists of varieties of leaf vegetation comprising *Alnus nepalensis* (utis), *Castanopsis* (kattus), *Macaranga* (malata), *Engelhardia spicata* (mahua), *Machilus* (kawla), *prunes* (cherry), *Japanese cedar* (dhupi) bamboos, ferns, and other wild plants. People use bamboos for construction and making various household materials like bamboo baskets to collect tea leaves, fences, decorative items etc. They also rear domestic birds and animals like cow, ox, dog, cat, goats, pig, pigeons, chicken etc. Some fauna species found in the vicinity are butterflies, monkey, fox, woodpeckers, sparrows, leeches and snakes etc.

2.6 ECONOMY

Man is not only a social animal, but he is also an economic being. Tea plantation is considered to be the main occupation of the people of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim. Most of the inhabitants are labourers who work in the tea plantation or outside the tea plantation to sustain their livelihood.

Beside the tea plantation work there are also some daily wage labourers, carpenters, business personnel and government employees. In recent times, the youth of the estate have also found employment in government sector or the growing industries in the state and other various private jobs for their source of income. The people specially the women who are not only engaged in tea plantation job or any other economic activity besides household work have also organized Self-Help Groups (SHG). The people of the estate have also started opening of small shops and canteens in the garden itself for their daily income.

2.7 RELIGION

Religion is a set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relation between human beings and sacred or divinity. A given religion is defined by specific elements of a community of believers: a dogma, sacred books, rites worship etc.

Religion is inspired by some ideas or force, and connected with what people believe represents their culture, communal and individual truth. Emile Durkheim in his book 'The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life' (1912) defines religions as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden". Religion is universal, permanent, pervasive, and perennial interest of man. Understanding religion is most important in one's life.

The major religious groups found in the garden with 47.20 per cent are the Hindus, 42.24 per cent are the Buddhists and with 10.56 per cent are the followers of Christianity and the nature of performing the religious rituals among these three religious groups is different from each other. There are many hindu temples, monastery and shrines in and around the tea estate. The estate also has a follower of Sai Samity (who follows Shri Satya Sai baba) which helps to train people on moral discipline and other various discipline. Every Sunday they gather all the children of the estate in one place and preach them the lesson. The nature of performing the religious rituals varies from one another.

2.8 FESTIVALS

The festivals of every ethnic community such as Losoong, Lochhar, Dasain & Tihar, Christmas is observed in the estate. Apart from these festivals, Temi Tea Estate also observed the Annual Temi Tea Autumn festival every month of November. Every year this festival is celebrated with different themes, cultural programs, installation of stalls of various products like tea itself, bamboos handicrafts, foods items etc and various adventure activities as a part of recreational facilities to the workers, tourists and people from different parts.

2.9 HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

The nature of human being has always been a concerning, especially when matters are concerned with health. In the Temi Tea Estate, there are three ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) centres and one dispensary in the garden. All these centres provide basic medical and nutritional facilities to children and the expecting mothers. ICDS provide mid-day meal for children up to five years. Their meal mainly consists of rice, dal and vegetables and non-veg on the once a week. The estate also has a group of ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) who actively work in the village in close coordination with health centres and PHC (Primary Health Center). They

especially take care of the pregnant women and a baby after delivery by suggesting and giving nutritional food and diet to both the mother and a baby. In case of serious illness or diseases, the people of the estate visit to the district hospital, Namchi or to the multi-special hospitals like Central Referral Hospital, Manipal, STNM Hospital, Gangtok or outside Sikkim.

2.10 EDUCATION

Education is one of the basic activities of the people in all human societies. The continued existence of society depends upon the transmission of culture to the young. 'Education' has come to be one of the ways of fulfilling this need. It plays an important role in every field of life for every individual to sustain a better future. The term education is derived from the Latin word 'educare' which literally means to 'bring up'.

The estate has one senior secondary school namely Temi Senior Secondary School where they teach till class 12 offering Humanities, Science, Commerce. There is one primary schools in the garden i.e., Temi Tea Garden junior high School that is taught up to class 5 with moderate basic facilities like rough playground, mid-day meal etc. The total enrolment of the students in Temi Tea Garden JHS is 120 with 10 teaching and non-teaching staffs. There are various privates' school in the garden for the betterment of the future of children of garden. All schools in Temi tea estate are affiliated to CBSE. Previously the literacy rate and drop-out rate of the garden was very high but at present, more children are going to school and completing their education.

CHAPTER -3
SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF PLANTATION WORKERS IN TEMI
TEA ESTATE OF SIKKIM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In tea plantation, labourers are backbone because it is a labour-intensive industry where labourers spend half of their life in tea plantation (Santhimol, 2014). The tea plantation workers are just victimized in critical circumstances and continuously struggling for food to mouth for survival (Ministry of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau, 2008; Philips, 2003). The workers mostly tea plantation workers are indentured, migrant and also tea plantation people are poor and backwards in term of literacy and suffering from indigenous problems. Despite the fact that there are many provisions in the tea plantation through Tea Plantation Act, 1951 for the welfare of tea plantation workers but consequently, they are deprived of all the provisional benefits. Normally the tea plantation workers are indenture, isolated and deprived sections of the society, live within the boundary of tea plantation and isolated from the mainstream of society. As the tea plantation workers have to do their work in harsh conditions (hot, cold, rain) but they are deprived of all the provisional benefits and as well as their socio-economic and living condition is very miserable and pathetic. In this respect, the study focuses on the socio-economic condition of the tea plantation workers of Temi-Tea Estate of Sikkim. Tea plantation workers are often recruited from different communities of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim so they possess various cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic identities and heritages (Bhadra, 2004; Devi, 2014).

Analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the tea plantation workers is considered necessary in better understanding their livelihoods. Rai (2019) examined the socio-economic conditions of plantation workers in the tea industry of Darjeeling and pointed out that workers solely rely on the appallingly low wages for their living. According to Ansari and Sheereen (2016), the wages of the tea workers were below the prescribed minimum wages and this had an adverse impact on health, low expenditure on education. The economic activity and nature of work in Temi Tea Estate have been gradually diversifying with time. Majority of the plantation workers are not satisfied with the prevailing wage structure in the view of increasing market price for their better and healthy livelihood in the present times.

The chapter shall be discussing the socio-economic condition of the tea plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim. While discussing their socio-economic

conditions as attempt has been made to highlight the respondent's gender, age group, marital status, religions, types of family, education, social group of the tea plantation workers. It will also highlight the provision drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities and electricity facilities. occupational category (casual workers and regular workers), monthly family income, expenditure of the workers, total earners of the family, housing condition, land holding patterns, working hours, wage structure of the works, housing condition, household assets. The socio-economic condition of the workers is analysed and highlighted with the help of figures, tables and relevant information to understand the existing condition.

3.2 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

Gender plays an important role in the subsistence of the tea industry. In the plantation sector, especially in tea plantation more than half the workforce is women as their nimble hands are suitable for plucking the tea leaves. But in Temi tea estate both the gender has an equal opportunity to be recruited for the work. The management cannot deny any person who wishes to join the garden jobs after the retirement or resignation by the former workers.

Table 3.1: GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

GENDER	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
MALE	167	37.53
FEMALE	278	62.47
TOTAL	445	100

From the study it is evident that the engagement of women workers is quite higher than the male workers. Temi Tea estate have total of 445 workers of which 350 regular workers and 95 workers are casual workers are interviewed during the study. There was no gender difference during the study, as both males and females were interviewed. Table 3.1 reveals that there are 278 female workers and 167 male workers in the tea plantation.

3.3 AGE GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS OR WORKERS

Age and socio-economic activities are interrelated. In the tea plantation sector, there are various types of work from plantation works to factory works. People from different age groups are engaged in tea plantation work. The following table gives us an idea about the age group of the workers of Temi tea plantation. The youngest tea plantation workers are 15 years old and the oldest is above 60 years.

Table 3.2: AGE GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS

AGE GROUP	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
15-30	73	16.40
31-45	210	47.20
46-60	148	33.25
ABOVE 60	14	3.15
TOTAL	445	100

The study reveals with the highest number of 47.20 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-45 years, followed by 33.25 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 46-60 years. It also shows that 16.40 per cent of respondents belong to age group of 15-30 years and 3.15 per cent of respondents belong to age group of above 60 years.

3.4 MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Marriage is another social institution in the society where it has a huge impact on the well-being of the family. Both inter-caste and intra-caste marriages is prevailing among the plantation workers.

Table 3.3: MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

MARITAL STATUS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
MARRIED	329	73.93
UNMARRIED	64	14.38
WIDOW/ WIDOWER	30	6.75
DIVORCE/SEPARATED	22	4.94
TOTAL	445	100

The study reveals that 73.93 per cent respondents are married, 14.38 per cent of respondents are unmarried, 6.75 per cent of the respondents are widow or widower and 4.94 per cent of the respondent are divorced or separated.

3.5 RELIGIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Religion is not a phenomenon of recent emergence. Its beginning is unknown. It is also one of the most important socio-demographic aspect in the area. Basically, three type of religious practice is found within the people of the estate and those are Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, etc.

Table 3.4: RELIGIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS

RELIGIONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
HINDUISM	210	47.20
BUDDHISM	188	42.24
CHRISTIANITY	47	10.56
TOTAL	445	100

The study reveals that showing the highest of 47.20 per cent of the respondents belong to Hinduism, 42.24 per cent of the respondents belong to Buddhism and 10.56

per cent of the respondents belong to Christianity. The estate also has a follower of Sai Samity (who follows Sri Sathya Sai Baba) which helps to train people on moral discipline and other various discipline. Every Sunday they gather all the children of the estate in one place and teach them the lesson in developing various personality like physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological and spiritual aspects.

3.6 TYPES OF THE FAMILY OF THE RESPONDENTS

Tea plantations are not just economic but social ecosystem where employment is family based and it encourages the family members to work in the tea plantation. Generally, the term family denotes a group of people living together in the same house whether related or not. The Temi Tea Estate is patriarchal in many ways consisting of husband, wife, their sons and daughters, married sons, daughters-in-law and their children. The decision making does not always come from the male folks alone. It lies with the head of the family. In the estate, the plantation management have provided quarters to every permanent worker of 3 to 4 rooms with attached kitchen. They have to accommodate all the family members in the house even if they have more than five to seven members.

Table 3.5: TYPES OF THE FAMILY OF THE RESPONDENTS

TYPES OF FAMILY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
JOINT FAMILY	237	53.26
NUCLEAR FAMILY	181	40.68
OTHER	27	6.06
TOTAL	445	100

During the study, three types of family composition are found among the respondents in the study area. These are joint family, nuclear family and other is unclassified based on their size and composition. Out of 445 workers, 53.26 per cent of respondents lives in joint family, 40.68 per cent of respondents lives in nuclear family and 6.06 per cent of respondents live as unclassified family.

3.7 LANGUAGES

The primary language or the lingua franca is Nepali for the entire people of the estate although each community like Lepcha, Bhutia, Limbu, Tamang, Rai etc. of the estate may speak in their own mother tongues. At the tea estate, there are several ethnic groups having their distinct languages and have different cultural practices but live together and work together. Some of the ethnic group like Lepchas, Bhutia, Limbu, Tamang etc. speaks their own language among themselves but speaks in nepali with the other ethnic group people.

3.8 EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Education is the key to all progress. It is intrinsically essential as it leads to cultural awakening, awareness building, understanding of human rights, adaptability and empowerment, self-reliance and self-confidences (Sachs, 2004). It is also known that lack of education will adversely affects the awareness of health and also towards health-seeking behaviour, knowledge about higher incidence of diseases. The study outcomes can observe that many of the workers have attended the school till primary level but nowadays the workers are becoming aware of educating their children. Many of them send their children to private school in and around Estate. Temi Tea Garden Junior High school and Temi Senior secondary School is there in the garden that comes under the control of Human Resource Development Department (HRDD), Government of Sikkim. The total enrolment of students in Temi tea garden JHS is 120 with 10 teaching and non-teaching staffs.

Table 3.6: EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

QUALIFICATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
ILLITERATE	89	20
PRIMARY	178	40
SECONDARY	146	32.80
HIGHER SECONDARY	21	4.72
ABOVE HIGHER SECONDARY	11	2.48
TOTAL	445	100

From the study it could be observed from the above table that only 20 per cent of the respondent of the study area are illiterate, 40 per cent of the respondents have completed their primary education, 32.80 per cent of the respondent have completed their secondary education, 4.72 per cent of the respondents have completed their higher secondary education while only 2.48 per cent of the respondents have completed their education above higher secondary. Since the garden school is under Government of Sikkim, the student studying till class five are benefited from the materials like books, bags, cloths and shoes. Mid-days meals are been provided to the students. Enrolment in the primary school is about hundred per cent but many of them could not continue their secondary and higher secondary education as they have to go to another school outside the estate. The literacy rate is increasing among the new generation.

3.9 SOCIAL GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS

Since, the estate comprises a mixture of multi-ethnic communities like Nepali, Lepcha and Bhutia with different social group and every group possesses the various cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic heritages.

Table 3.7: SOCIAL GROUP OF THE RESPONDENTS

SOCIAL GROUP	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
SCHEDULE TRIBE (ST)	98	22.03
SCHEDULE CASTE (SC)	74	16.62
OTHER BACKWARD CLASS	207	46.52
GENERAL	66	14.83
TOTAL	445	100

It is evident from the study that with the highest percent of population of about 46.52 per cent of the respondents belong to Other Backward Class (OBC) category comprising of Gurung, Mangar, Rai, Pradhan, Mukhia etc., 22.03 per cent of the respondents belong to the Schedule Tribe (ST) category comprising of Lepcha,

Bhutia, Tamang, Sherpa and limbo etc., about 16.62 per cent of the respondents belong to Schedule Caste (SC) category which includes Biswakarma, Darjee, Kami. and 14.83 per cent of the respondents belong to general category comprising of Chettri, Bahun, Sharma.

3.10 DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES OF THE ESTATE

Since, Temi Tea Estate comprise of mixture of ethnic groups. 13 communities are found among the workers in the estate. The different communities among the workers include Gurung, Rai, Mangar, Limbu, Pradhan, Tamang, Sherpa, Bhutia, Lepcha, Chhetri, Sharma, Biswakarma, Darjee, etc.

TABLE 3.8: DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES OF THE ESTATE

SL NO.	COMMUNITIES	RESPONDENTS
1	GURUNG	89 (20)
2	RAI	50 (11.23)
3	MANGAR	47 (10.56)
4	PRADHAN	12 (2.69)
5	MUKHIA	9 (2.02)
6	TAMANG	33 (7.41)
7	SHERPA	25 (5.61)
8	BHUTIA	8 (1.79)
9	LEPCHA	11 (2.47)
10	LIMBU	21 (4.71)
11	CHETTRI	46 (10.33)
12	SHARMA	20 (4.49)
13	BISWAKARMA	43 (9.66)
14	DARJEE	31 (6.06)
15	TOTAL	445 (100)

From the above table, the study shows that the highest caste group is Gurung with 20 per cent, Rai with 11.23 per cent, Mangar with 10.56 per cent, Pradhan with 2.69 per cent, Mukhia with 2.02 per cent, Tamang with 7.41 per cent, Sherpa with 5.61 per cent, Bhutia with 1.79 per cent, Lepcha with 2.47 per cent, Limbu with 4.71 per cent, Chettri with 10.33 per cent, Sharma with 4.49 per cent, Biswakarma with 9.66 per cent and Darjee with 6.06 per cent.

3.11 OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

Workers in every tea plantation are at the bottom of the hierarchy. In Temi Tea Estate most of the workers resides within the tea plantation, so they are mostly engaged in tea plantation works and only few are engaged in various other occupations like government sector services, small business, daily labours, drivers and students. During the study, it is observed that there are two types of workers, regular workers and casual workers (bigha workers). Permanent workers comprise of those who works throughout the season in the tea plantation. Those workers enjoy the benefit of housing, subsidized ration, provident fund and gratuity. During the peak season, when there is enough flush and more numbers of workers being required than the temporary workers are mostly hired by the management to pluck leaves or to meet the plantation's seasonal requirement and are being paid in cash. (Kar, 1984).

TABLE 3.9 OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

CATEGORY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
CASUAL WORKERS (Bigha workers)	95	21.34
REGULAR WORKERS	350	78.65
TOTAL	445	100

During the study it has been observed that 79.65 per cent workers are found to be regular workers whereas only 21.34 per cent worker works as casual workers (Bigha workers).

3.12 MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME

Tea plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate belonged to the BPL categories and their income is one of the important factors that influenced the social factor. The tea plantation worker works hard despite the heat and the rain but they get low daily wages. The daily wage of Temi Tea estate is Rs. 300-335 per day which is not sufficient for the people to sustain their better living as the food price and other essential goods price is high. Some people work outside the tea estate as driver, army, in government sector, teachers carpenter, in some private companies etc. which help to maintain their livelihood. Therefore, the total income of the worker family has been calculated from all the different earning sources in the house.

TABLE 3.10: MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME

MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME (Rs.)	NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENTAGE (%)
9000	103	39.62
9,000 TO 18,000	59	22.69
18,000 TO 27,000	44	16.92
27,000 TO 36,000	28	10.76
36,000 TO 45,000	17	6.53
ABOVE 45,000	9	3.46
TOTAL	260	100

The study reveals that the garden consists of total number of 260 household of which the study highlights 39.62 per cent households earns monthly Rs. 9000 which is very nominal, while 22.69 per cent household earns Rs. 9,000-18,000. On the other hands 16.92 per cent households earns of Rs. 18,000-27,000, 10.76 per cent of households earns of Rs. 27,000-36,000. Only 6.53 per cent of households earns of Rs. 36,000-45,000 and similarly only 3.46 per cent of households earns of Rs. above 45,000.

3.13 EXPENDITURE OF THE WORKERS

The expenditure level of the workers was seemed to be average. Due to the hike of price in the market, the tea plantation workers suffer a financial crisis to fulfil their basic requirement with the low wages i.e., Rs. 300 per day. Many of the workers borrow money from their relatives, friends etc.

TABLE 3.11: EXPENDITURE OF THE WORKERS

EXPENTITURE (Rs.)	NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENTAGE (%)
BELOW 9000	53	20.38
9000 TO 18,000	58	22.30
18,000 TO 27,000	54	20.76
27,000 TO 36,000	47	18.07
36,000 TO 45,000	43	16.53
ABOVE 45,000	6	2.30
TOTAL	260	100

From the above table 4.3, it is evident that 20.38 percent respondents of 53 households spend below Rs. 9000, around 22.30 percent of the respondents from 58 households spend between Rs. 9000 to 18,000, 20.76 percent of the respondents from 54 households spend Rs. 18,000 to 27,000, 18.07 percent of the respondents from 47 households spend Rs. 27,000 to 36,000, around 16.53 percent of the respondents from 43 households spend Rs. 36,000 to 45,000 and only 2.30 percent of the respondents from 6 households spend above Rs. 45,000 per month. The respondent's expenditure includes expenditure on buying food items, clothing, education, health and other expenditure.

3.14 TOTAL EARNERS OF THE HOUSE

The total earning members of the households depicts the economic status of the tea plantation workers. Most of the people of Temi Tea estate are engaged in tea

plantation works and only few are engaged in various other occupations like government sector services, small business, daily labours, drivers and students.

TABLE 3.12: TOTAL EARNERS OF THE HOUSE

NUMBER OF EARNERS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	41	15.76
2	109	41.92
3	67	25.76
ABOVE 4	43	16.53
TOTAL	260	100

The study found that 15.76 per cent of the families have one member working in their family, 41.92 per cent of the families have two members working in their family, 25.76 per cent of the families have 3 members working in their family and only 16.53 per cent of the families have 4 and above member working in their family.

3.15 THE WAGES STRUCTURE OF THE WORKERS

The Payment of Wages Act, 1936 was enacted to regulate payment of wages to the employees employed in industry and to ensure a speedy and effective remedy to them against unlawful deductions and unfair delay caused during payment of wages to them.

The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 is an act to provide for fixing minimum rates of wages that must be paid to skilled and unskilled labours.

The wage of the tea plantation workers is usually calculated monthly based on daily performance. All the workers of Temi Tea Estate, permanent and casual workers receive the same wage and is classified as a daily wage worker. The daily wage of the workers of the estate is Rs. 300/- per day which is calculated to be Rs. 9000/- per month. The study found that the daily wage of the workers is same i.e., Rs. 300/- per day irrespective of permanent, casual, male female. Every worker who are engaged in plucking leaves has to pluck fixed quantities of tea leaves (thikka) within the working

hours. If they do not pluck the targeted quantity of leaves, they will not get additional wage but if they plucked leaves beyond the thikka then they are entitled to bonus in a monetary form i.e., Rs. 10-12 per kg. The wages of the workers are being revised from time to time by The Labour Department, Government of Sikkim. The State Government of Sikkim had made the last revision of the minimum rates of wages in the scheduled employments under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 with vide notification No. 11/DL dated 15/09/2017 on 11/07/2022. The latest revised minimum rates of wages for Tea plantation Workers are Rs. 500 which is calculated to be Rs. 15000/-.

TABLE 3.13: PROFILE OF DAILY WAGES IN TEMI TEA ESTATE

YEARS	DAILY WAGES (IN Rs.)	MONTHLY WAGES (IN Rs.)
2010-2013	Rs. 130/-	3,900/-
2013-2014	Rs. 200/-	6,000/-
2014-2017	Rs. 220/-	6,600/-
2017-2022	Rs. 300/-	9,000/-
2022	Rs. 500/-	15,000/-

Source: Data prepared from the Gazette notification no 44/DL published by Government of Sikkim (secondary source)

3.16 HOUSING CONDITION OF WORKERS

According to the Section 15 of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, every tea management should provide and maintain the requisite housing accommodation for the workers employed in their tea plantation as housing conditions plays an integral part. Similarly, in Temi Tea Estate also every tea plantation worker residing within the boundary of tea estate have been benefitted with the housing facilities which are of Pucca type with concrete cemented and wooden wall and tin roof. during the time of study mainly three types of houses were observed i.e., Government quarter also known as dhura, self-build/own house and rented house. Government quarter or dhura are those houses which are been provided by the tea estate, made with permanent materials kind of pucca house. Self-build/own house is also made with permanent

material and some made with mud, unburnt bricks or wood. The roof of the house needs to be replaced frequently. Rented house are those where they need to pay the money periodic mutually agreed rent to the owner. The workers are not allowed to build their private houses of their own in the estate.

TABLE 3.14: HOUSING CONDITION OF WORKERS

TYPES OF HOUSES	NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENTAGE (%)
GOVERNMENT QUARTER (DHURA)	200	76.93
OWN HOUSE	53	20.38
RENTED HOUSE	7	2.69
TOTAL	260	100

The overall observation from the above table shows that higher proportion of Temi tea estate worker are living under the arrangement of tea estate management with 76.93 per cent, 20.38 per cent of the workers have their own house and only 2.69 per cent of the workers live in rented house. When the respondents were asked about the numbers of rooms in their house, they revealed that they were not satisfied with the size of the houses as they live in three small rooms with separate kitchen and due the extending family members in the house, they have made an extension as per their requirement. All the houses have separate kitchens. All the dhuras of the estate are made with bricks and cement wall and CI sheet roof. The tea management bears the cost of making house to the permanent worker. Repair and maintenance of the workers houses is also done by the management. Many of the workers have extended their house with their own cost in case of the house having a joint family and the house is not sufficient for healthy living.

3.17 LAND HOLDING PATTERNS

The study also tried to find out the land holding patterns of Temi Tea Estate workers. In Temi Tea Estate, all the land has been occupied by tea plantation therefore, there is no land holding patterns of their own. Every worker has been provided with the

kitchen garden (*kothe bari*) near to their respective dhuras where they can grow different varieties of green leafy vegetables, fire ball chilies (*dalle*), local tomatoes, cauliflower, potatoes, pumpkins etc. for their own consumption.

3.18 HOUSEHOLD ASSETS

Household assets is an important factor of depicting economic condition of the workers all over the world. Possession of ten items of common use was enquired from the workers. Nine consumer durables items have been considered under non-productive asset namely mobile phone, television, LPG gas connection, refrigerator, music system, laptop, and Livestock which are considered as productive assets since income can be generated from it.

TABLE 3.15: HOUSEHOLD ASSETS

HOUSEHOLD ASSETS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	TOTAL NO. HOUSEHOLDS	PERCENTAGE (%)
MOBILE PHONE	248	260	95.38
TELEVISION	194	260	74.61
GAS CONNECTION	242	260	93.07
REFRIGERATOR	45	260	17.30
MUSIC SYSTEM	17	260	6.53
LAPTOP	11	260	4.23
LIVESTOCK	168	260	64.61

In the study areas, it has highlighted that almost all households have a better living with the modern's equipment like mobile phone is common assets among the tea plantation workers where 95.38% of the respondents use mobile phone. With regards to television, 74.61% of the respondents have own television sets in their home. Other households' assets which are possessed by the workers of tea plantation of Temi Tea Estate includes like gas connection (93.07%), refrigerators (17.30%), music system (6.53%), laptop (4.23%), Though the plantation workers have left the agrarian work

long time back but some people were still found of domesticating cattle stock like cows, pigs, goats, poultry and hens in most of the households. 64.61 per cent of households in the study area have livestock. Domesticating of cattle is also alternative source of income in the estate as they sell cow dung in the tea plantation itself. Therefore, in Temi Tea estate livestock also constitutes major household asset.

3.19 FUEL FOR COOKING PURPOSE

As per the law, the tea plantation workers are supposed to get the supplement of fuels like firewood, kerosene for daily use in cooking purpose. In Temi Tea Estate, the workers do not receive any fuel for cooking purpose. The study also found that firewood is the main source of fuel used for cooking purpose. But nowadays the search and availability of firewood is low due to the environmental degradation and safeguard measure of forests to which 93.07 per cent of the workers in the estate has gas connectivity. They collect wood, bamboo from nearby forest and also used the old bushes of tea plant.

3.20 WORKING HOURS AND LEAVE FOR THE WORKERS

Tea plantation workers usually work six days a week and is entitled a weekend holiday on Friday. Looking at the working hours for the workers of the estate, during the peak season (March to September) all workers have to report their work with the siren at 7:30 A.M in the morning and continue their work till 11:30 A.M, for an hour-long break from 11:30 to 12:30 is their lunch time. Most of the workers carry their own lunch to their field, few goes to their home. Again at 12:30 P.M they all have to report back to their work till 4 P:M in the evening. And during the slack season (November to February) the morning reporting timing will be the same i.e., 7:30 A.M to 2:30 P.M with the lunch break at 11:30 A.M to 12:30 P.M. This is the regular work schedule of tea plantation workers at Temi Tea Estate. During the peak season if the worker plucks extra green leaves per day than rupees ten is given to the workers per kilogram.

According to the labour law, Leave is generally entitled with various types of leave namely casual leave, sick leave and festival leave. The permanent tea plantation workers enjoy day's paid leave for 15 working days and 10 sick days leave and pregnant female plantation workers are entitled to 16 weeks maternity allowances and

other benefits under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. The plantation workers of the estate are also entitled with festivals leave on different festivals occasions.

3.21 MATERNITY PROTECTION AND CHILD CARE

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines maternity protection as a precondition of genuine equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women (Maternity Protection at Work, 1997). In tea plantation industry, women are found to be the powerful workforce.

Since the Temi Tea Estate has 62.47% of its women workers, so the women plantation workers are benefitted with the maternity leaves under Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. As the act state that if a women worker gets pregnant than she is entitled to have a leave with full pay for six weeks before and after the delivery of her child. Maternity leave of 60 days with full pay has been introduce in the estate.

Childcare center or crèche contributes to the productivity of working parents, as both parents are found to be engaged at work in tea plantation. In Temi Tea Estate, creche facilities was introduced by the tea management for working mothers.

3.22 SANITATION AND TOILETS FACILITIES

The tea plantation employs a large number of labourers who works hard in the field for a long period of time. It becomes the responsibility of the management to provide proper sanitation facilities for the workers as and when required as sanitation is one of the basic and fundamental human rights. Also, increase in the access of proper sanitation facilities improve healthy and hygienic behaviour among the people and is also one of the key factors to reduce many communicable diseases. The study found out that for the convenience of the workers of Temi tea estate has been benefitted with proper sanitation facilities and also every dhuras have their own respective toilet/sanitation facilities. Almost all households have proper sanitary toilets made of cemented wall and tin roof with proper water connection. Therefore, in order to stay healthy and disease-free estate, open field defecation is strictly prohibited in and around the estate. The people of the estate are fully aware about hygiene and healthy life.

3.23 DRINKING WATER FACILITIES

According to the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 (clause 8), there is an effective arrangement of drinking water in every labour houses. Therefore, during the time of interview, all the respondents have mentioned that the garden has the connection of drinking water supply to their respective dhuras. The workers used get drinking water from Public Health Engineering (PHE), Government of Sikkim where the bill for the supplied drinking water is to be paid by the workers themselves. As the drinking water from PHE is irregular, the workers along with the management of the tea estate have connected the drinking water pipes from the nearby Temi Forest i.e., springs water which is also the main source of drinking water in the estate. It is stored in storage tanks which they have setup in different places in the tea estate from where the water is being collected and distributed using GI pipes to all the dhuras for different purpose like drinking, cleaning, washing etc.

3.24 ELECTRICITY FACILITIES

As per the fact that the non-statutory provisions of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 includes subsidized electricity. During the interview with the workers at the estate they mention that the supplement of electricity to the workers is done by the State Electricity Board, Government of Sikkim and the estate has been accessed with the electricity facilities in every dhuras. Though the electricity connection is been provided by the government of Sikkim but no electricity bill has to be paid by the workers till today. But some of the workers also said that they are worried about the future as the Government of Sikkim has already decided to install the prepaid electricity meters in phased wise manner all over Sikkim.

CHAPTER- 4

**LIVELIHOOD ISSUES AMONG THE PLANTATION WORKERS IN TEMI
TEA ESTATE OF SIKKIM**

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The tea plantation industry plays an important role in terms of providing employment and livelihoods to the rural areas in plantation regions of the country. It is a prime concern that organised tea industry provides employment and livelihoods of 2.50 million of people in India (Hannan, 2017). Livelihood is a complex process and an important aspect of understanding human beings, who is not only a social animal, but also an economic being. According to International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), a livelihood is a means of making a living. Livelihood is sustainable when it is enabled people to cope with and recover from the shock and stress and enhance their well-being and that of future generation without undermining the natural environment or resources base. The tea industry is basically one of the major sources of better livelihood and employment opportunities for millions of people around the world. Employment in the tea plantation sector has grown faster than the employment in other sectors. Livelihood refers to the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets such as stores and resources and intangibles assets such as claims and access (Zoomer & Haan, 2005). Tea plantation community is one of the sections that derive one's livelihood resources from the tea plantation and is the only source of income to sustain their livelihood as the workers are always busy plucking, brewing the tea in the garden. Plantations are mostly located in backward and rural areas thus providing livelihood and employment to the rural population (Joseph & George, 2010). Most of the plantation workers are unskilled and the plantation industry directly employs more than 2 million workers in India out of which women form 50 percent of the total workforce (Labour Bureau, 2008-09). They are been paid very low wages and provide low welfares and social benefits like housing and medical facilities, subsidized food. As a result, the livelihood condition of tea plantation workers is miserable and their demands and requirements are nominal. The workers are still lagging behind and remain under the invisible shackles of the management as they do not have sufficient livelihood options that dismissal from their current engagement.

Generally, the tea plantation workers are isolated from the mainstream society and poverty is one of the main reasons for the isolation and social segregation. Tea plantation workers are one of the cluster groups of people who are severely deprived from their basic rights (Das & Jakirul, 2014). Despite spending over an hours per day

in the plantation field specially the workers those who are indulge in plucking the leaves. Those workers bear the borne of pricking heat of the sun in summer, heavy rainfall during monsoon season and cold and chilly weather in winter season but there is no recess for the workers and also the working and living condition of the tea plantation workers with low wages is deplorable. Therefore, it is important to find out the living condition, their issue and strategies as everyone has the equal opportunities to improve the living standard with basic and essential livelihood facilities such as food, housing, education, health and medical, living standard etc.

In India, the plantation workers are managed and covered by the Plantation Labour Act (PLA), 1951 which regulates the working and living conditions of the workers. It also prescribes the standards for housing, healthcare and education, regulates working conditions including maximum working hours, child labour, paid leaves, sickness and maternity benefits, overtime payments etc.

4.2 LIVELIHOOD ISSUE OF THE WORKERS

4.2.1 LOW WAGES:

The Temi Tea Estate workers have adapted themselves to this source of livelihood where they spend most of their day with hard work in the garden from dusk to dawn and on returns provides them with a very little amount which may not be enough to sustain their family's basic needs. The daily wage of Temi tea plantation workers is Rs. 300 per day which is considered to be very less. They get paid Rs. 9000 per month which is not sufficient to meet the emerging problems in their everyday life. They faced difficulties to sustain their livelihood with such a less amount of monthly salary stated 49 years old Dhan Maya Gurung. For the demand in the increase of their daily wage, the workers have conducted a protest in 2020 to demand adherence to the minimum wages and other basic facilities in the estate and also the workers had a thorough discussion about the issue of the garden worker between the than Managing Director Mrinalni Shrivastav, Secretary of Commerce and Industry department, representatives of Labour department. After the discussion they decided to fulfil all the demands and provision and gave the assurance of providing the basics facilities to the workers of Temi Tea Estate. After giving the assurance of all the demands to be fulfilled from the tea board of Sikkim and the management, the workers of the estate ended their protest and got back to their work but as the time pass by and till now no

such revision in the wage have been made. Another workers Kamal Rai, 55 years old state that we have been working in this tea plantation for generation, every day from early morning 7 A.M to late 4 P.M in evening. She lives in a joint family and finds it difficult to meet the family needs with such a less amount of wage. Recently only Family Pension Scheme of 1995 under Provident Fund Scheme (PFS) of government of India has been introduced as pension systems to ease the departure of older workers. Pension systems can be interpreted as systems that allow for buy-out of exhausted persons from the production process (Martin, 1996). There have been no deductions in Employees Provident Fund (EPF) along with Leave Without Pay (LWP).

In Temi Tea Estate there are about 100 casual workers during the peak season and have equal work force but are not benefitted with the equal and basic facilities in the garden. Arati Subba, 29 years old is a casual worker in the garden stated that the casual workers simply get paid for their work only and no wage given if she stays off from her work. She also said that there are no any basics facilities for the casual workers. Only the regular workers are benefitted with all the facilities and for the casual workers they do not even grant any casual leaves or sick leaves in the garden. Some casual workers have only one family member working in the estate and due to low wage and lack of basic facilities, they face many difficulties in fulfilling their minimum needs for the survival. Since the dependence of the workers is on the wage that they get from the tea garden is quite not satisfactory so the other family members dependent on livelihood outside the garden like working on different private companies, online delivery center, government service on the scheme of One Family One Job, drivers, etc. Due to the low wage and harsh working condition, it was found that many youths had shifted to other means of livelihood on the basis of their skills and education.

4.2.1 HEALTH AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

In a wider perspective, health is considered to be a good indicator of the socio-economic well-being of individuals (Loewenson, 1992). As per the Plantation Act, 1951, the provision of basic health and medical facilities to the workers fall under the responsibility of management of respective tea estate. Thus, like other aspect of the workers, the health aspect is secondary to the tea plantation workers. The

tea plantation workers not only deprived of their basic rights but also faced problems related to the healthcare facility, maternal mortality, epidemics diseases, child labour, alcoholism, illiteracy (Sarkar et al, 2016). However, the health facilities in the garden are adequate as the garden have only one dispensary in the estate but there is no any doctors or nurses, only one attendant attends the dispensary. The dispensary provides only primary medical care for minor ailment such as fever, diarrhoea and first aid for minor injuries. There is only one ambulance and lacks of medicines and basic medical facilities. Most of the workers have to go Namchi district hospital, multi-special hospital Gangtok, CRH Manipal and even outside Sikkim for better treatment or better medical facilities and all the medical expenditure during the treatment is to be completely paid by the workers themselves. Often time the workers faced a critical issue of medical expenses due to low income. For the betterment and immediate treatment in emergency of the workers, the primary health center needs to be established in the estate with proper facilities and infrastructure.

In the tea plantation, the tea leaves plucking is difficult and hazardous one where workers stand on their feet for hours after hours with carrying tea leaves baskets on their backs causes a common back problem while there is risk of accidents due to uneven terrain and steep slopes with a harsh weather condition (hot, cold, wet) and vulnerable to pesticides, mosquitoes, poisonous snakes and other insects (Majumder & Roy, 2012). The study found that the tea plantation workers are working with a lot of problems associated with their occupations. Generally, the workers are disappointed due to their work frustration as they also suffered from heat, cold, rain, injuries, headache, cold and cough, fever, weakness, high blood pressure, body pain, sprain, insect bite, the peril of leech and snake, etc. in the field of their work. The workers often suffer from respiratory problems due to overcrowded houses and increase in population and improper ventilation as well, skin diseases and water communicable diseases due to the pesticides and insecticides used in the garden and also the water they used from the forest area is not always clean.

Since the Temi Tea Estate has 278 women workers, so the women plantation workers are benefitted with the maternity leaves under Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. As the act state that if a women worker gets pregnant than she is entitled to have a leave with full pay for six weeks before and after the delivery of her child. Maternity leave of 60 days with full pay has been introduced in the estate. In the Temi Tea Estate, there is

an ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) centres. But the ICDS has water seepage on the wall of the building to which it leads to deterioration of children health. At this centres basic medical and nutritional facilities to children and the expecting mothers. ICDS provide mid-day meal for children up to 5years. Their meal mainly consists of rice, dal and vegetables and non-veg on the once a week. Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) has been appointed in the estate where they work with the Primary Health Center (PHC) and gram Panchayat to create awareness to the workers on determinants of health, basic sanitation and hygienic practices, healthy working and living condition and existing health services and the need for timely utilization of health and family welfare services. They also sensitize and counsel the pregnant women on birth preparedness, dos and don'ts during pregnancy etc. The following list of common health problem and its causes has been listed below (Table 4.1) based on the interaction/interview with the tea plantation workers of Temi Tea estate of Sikkim.

TABLE 4.1: LISTS OF COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG PLANTATION WORKERS OF TEMI TEA ESTATE

SL. NO.	HEALTH PROBLEM	CAUSES
1	Skin diseases	Due to usages of pesticides and insecticides.
2	Respiratory problems	Due to overcrowded houses and increase in population and improper ventilation as well.
3	Water communicable	Due to water, they used from the forest area which is not always clean. And lack of cleaning water storages tank.
4	Common back & body pain	As they have to stand on their feet for hours after hours with carrying tea leaves baskets on their backs and also due to uneven terrain and steep slopes.
5	High blood pressure	Due to unhealthy lifestyle, consumption of alcohol.
6	Common cold & cough, fever & weakness	Due to a harsh weather condition (rain, cold & heat).
7	The peril of leech, insect and snake	As they have to work in the field which is prone to leech, insects and snake.

TABLE 4.2: NUMBER OF STAFF AND THE INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITY OF DISPENSARY IN TEMI TEA ESTATE

STAFF/ INFRASTRUCTURE	NUMBERS
DOCTORS	0
NURSES	0
ATTENDENTS	1
BEDS	1
AMBULANCES	2

4.2.2 HOUSING FACILITIES

According to the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, it is mandatory that tea plantation ownership should allot suitable land and housing facilities for tea plantation workers and their families. In Temi Tea Estate though the workers have been provided with the housing facilities but housing facilities are inadequate due to the gradual increase in the population of the area. So, the plantation management may suggest the workers to be shifted in storage building which can be provided by the estate management to prevent additional usage of the cultivated tea planting land. Also, in Temi Tea Estate, animal husbandry go hand in hand with the plantation because of the fact that there are sufficient cattle fodders available in the nearby jungles and also tea estate being the organic estate they used cow manure in the garden which is also another source of income of the workers. That is also another reason why every household rears the cattle like cows, goats, hens etc.

Since the Temi tea estate is eco-friendly estate with full of flora and fauna and only heritage tea estate of Sikkim. By considering and observing the increasing importance of tourism in Sikkim Himalaya and Temi Tea Estate being a beautiful landscape attracting tourists all-over the country, many of the land of the tea plantation has been utilized for alternative purposes like they have setup many tourist spots like construction of tourist inspection bungalow, bonfire place, ziplining, many homestays and resorts in order to encourage tourism industry in the estate.

4.2.3 SOCIAL SECURITY

The concept of social security is a wide term and has acquired a global character. It should be provided not only on human grounds but also for economic reasons as they are conducive to productivity and aggregate demand (ILO, 2001). Social security may be defined as the protection furnished by the society to its members through a series of public measures against social and economic distress such as employment, under employment, social disability, backwardness, sickness, maternity and so on. On the other hand, livelihoods of tea plantation workers around the world constitutes mainly of daily wage labour from tea plantation work. For majority of tea plantation workers daily wages constitutes the basic livelihood activity while for many others it provides ancillary jobs. As a matter of fact, the tea industry has played pivotal role in the India's economy by providing livelihoods to thousands of households through direct as well as indirect employment in the form of ancillary jobs (Sarkar & Lama: 1998; Ghosh: 1987). Besides daily wages, tea plantation workers have been dependent on the tea management for housing, medicine, ration (rice/flour), firewood, sanitation, water and electricity supply. Additionally, permanent workers also get basic benefits in the form of housing, medical care, equipment and others which constitute different capitals but the casual workers do not enjoy any benefits in the tea plantation. The casual workers of Temi Tea Estate do not have job security. They are deprived of the basic facilities, benefit of PF, gratuity, pensions etc. Sole dependence or over-dependence on wage labour for livelihoods has not only hampered economic development in the tea regions but has also led to the livelihood insecurity among tea plantation workers at a time tea industry is undergoing a crisis and uncertain future, especially in India. It is under these circumstances that they face acute socio-economic crises as the management cuts down on the wages even while the statutory benefits are withdrawn.

The workers in Temi Tea Estate belonging to Below Poverty line (BPL) status, daily wage has been the main source of livelihoods and have remained dependent on tea plantation for their social and livelihood security. Land being one of the precious natural resources which can serve as the means of tackling the livelihood problems. However, despite living in the tea plantation for over years, tea plantation workers have not granted any land ownership rights of even some unutilized lands. The workers in the estate do not have power of purchasing land due to low wages. Tea

plantation sector is still considered outside the beneficiary of state/central government welfare schemes or statutory benefits. Consequently, tea plantation workers are neither considered landless labourer nor people below poverty level despite the loss of their only source of livelihood is plantation labour daily wage. Since these factors have not been addressed in Temi tea Estate which is the reason that the tea plantation workers still continue to feel threatened and insecure when it comes to sustaining their livelihood.

4.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS PROGRAMMES/SCHEMES FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE WORKERS OF TEMI TEA ESTATE.

There are various central and state government schemes implemented for the upliftment of the workers of tea plantation which have been served to make it a major role in the overall development strategy.

- 1) The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which was launched in 2006 under the Ministry of Rural Development for assurance of 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Government of India initiated this scheme for attaining the economic development of the country and to provide the work assurance to rural poor, organized people. In Sikkim, the scheme with the slogan '*Afno Gaun, Afai Banaun*' (let's build our village ourselves) was implemented in February 2006 to manifest the rights of individuals to act as a means to protect and promote livelihood security.
- 2) Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY): The scheme named Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana was restructured as National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in 2011 under Ministry of Rural Development. It was first launched on April 1, 1999. Sikkim also started this program as a holistic programme. It is a self-employment programme of individual and groups of individuals subsisting below the poverty line (BPL). It started covering all aspects of self-employment such as organisation of the poor into Self-Help Groups, who will serve at

the village and higher levels as a cooperation and a collective way for social and economic development. Its target was to cover women-headed households, single women, women victims of trafficking, women with a disability and other such vulnerable categories because they are marginalized in the economy, polity, and society.

- 3) Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY): The scheme Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana was initiated under the Ministry of Rural Development on September 2, 2001, and finally shaped as Rural Self Employment (July 15, 2015).

Its aim was to provide employment opportunities and food to rural people who lived below the poverty line.

- 4) Chief Minister Rural Housing Mission (CMRHM): This mission was launched in the year 2010 under the Sikkim state plan with the already existing national flagship scheme of the Ministry of Rural development, the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY). This mission was initiated with the primary objective of providing a comfortable sizeable house of 605 sq./ft and will result in achieving the status of a “Katcha House Free State”. Recently on 24th May 2022 the stone laying ceremony for 20 nos of house under this scheme has been launched for the workers of Temi Tea estate.

- 5) Comprehensive Educational Loan Scheme (CELS): the state government launched the Comprehensive Educational Loan Scheme (CELS) for pursuing higher/professional studies in India and abroad with the effect from July 2007, SIDICO is the nodal agency for implementation of this scheme and has witnessed commendable success. The students are undergoing courses in engineering, medicine, agriculture, horticulture, hospitality management, post graduate courses etc.

- 6) Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS): The scheme ICDS was launched on 2nd October 1975 under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It is the largest and unique scheme which provides pre-school education, primary health care, immunization, health check-up, the services and food to children under 6 years age and their mothers.

The scheme is considered as the world's largest program for early childhood development and cares. In the Temi Tea Estate, there are three ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) centres. All these centres provide basic medical and nutritional facilities to children and the expecting mothers. ICDS provide mid-day meal for children up to 5years. Their meal mainly consists of rice, dal and vegetables and non-veg on the once a week.

- 7) National Rural Health Mission (NRHM): The scheme National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) launched on 12th April 2005 for providing accessibly, affordability and quality of health care to rural people, especially vulnerable groups. The scheme focused on Empowered Action Group (EAG) states, Jammu & Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, North Eastern states and Hilly states including Sikkim regarding reproduction, maternal, new-born child health, and adolescence (Twelfth five-year plan, 2012-2017).
- 8) Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA): one of the main components of NRHM is to provide every village in the country with a trained female community health activist is ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist). ASHA are employed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The mission began in 2005 with the idea to connect marginalized communities to the health care system. In Sikkim. The Government appreciated the work of ASHA and has approved the honorarium of Rs. 3000/- per months w.e.f. 1st April 2011 and Sikkim is the only state paying honorarium to the ASHA's.
- 9) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA): The SSA (2003) a national program launched a central government of India was focused that on the education of all girls at a higher level through residential school with mid-day meal scheme. As a result, children get proper nutrition and decrease gender disparity in the educational attainment of rural areas and emphasized women's teachers in a rural school, hostel facilities and scholarship for girls increased awareness regarding women's rights.

- 10) National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS): Presently in Sikkim, under this scheme, Rs. 1500/- per month to the old aged person between the age group of 60 years to 69 years, Rs. 2000/- per months to the old aged person between the age group of 70 years + and above and Rs. 2500/- per months to the old aged person having attained the age of 80 years and above are being benefitted.
- 11) National Pension Scheme (NPS): The government of India took the initiative to enroll the entire citizen under the voluntary National Pension Scheme which was launched on 1st May 2009. It was defined as the contribution of the retirement saving scheme during the subscriber's working life. It ensures an adequate retirement income of the citizen of India. Following the recommendations of the 4th State Pay Commission and decisions of the State Government, the pensionary benefits to the state Government Employees have been increased substantially. The rates of DCRG have been enhanced from Rs. 3,00,000/- as on 31st December 2005 to maximum of Rs. 10,00,000/- applicable from 1.1.2006.
- 12) Rural Housing Scheme of Government of Sikkim (RHSGOS): under the Rural Housing Scheme of Government of Sikkim, economically backward rural households are being provided 30 numbers of GCI sheets and a grant of Rs. 15,000/- as a house upgradation subsidy in order to take up immediate repair of their houses.
- 13) Sikkim Garib Aawas Yojana (SGAY): This scheme of Government of Sikkim is an initiative to facilitate housing for poor and to improve the quality of the life of deserving households by providing basic amenities. The house under this scheme will be a RCC framed structure with GCI sheet roofing over tubular steel truss and brick wall partition. Under this scheme, the Government of Sikkim had laid the foundation stones of 20 nos of houses for the workers of Temi Tea Estate. The house will be fully furnished including television set, beds, sofa sets etc.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY OF LIVELIHOOD OF WORKERS OF TEMI TEA ESTATE IN THE LIGHT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As per the report from World Health Organization (WHO), the coronavirus disease 2019 was first reported in the month of December that brought with it a new pandemic. India had about 2.2 million deaths by late May 2021 leading to one of the worst outbreaks in the world (Guilmoto, 2021). The global pandemic affected people not only physically but also psychologically, economically, socially and politically. People belonging to various socio-economic strata were affected adversely in this pandemic regardless of their social status as everyone has been affected of this crisis in one way or the another. It is undeniably true that the life in the pandemic is affected a far-reaching change in the way people think, work and interact with one another around the world (Aragona et al, 2020).

The world-wide pandemic has led to a great loss of human life worldwide and great challenge to public health, education, food system and the world of work. It has been reported that nearly half of the world's 3.3 billion global workforce were at risk of losing their livelihood. The plantation sector is crucial to the livelihood of many people working in it as there are considered to be the vulnerable sector. The plantation sector provides livelihood to more than about 23 million workers and more than 1.5 million growers. Among the plantation sector workers, tea plantation workers are particularly more vulnerable because they lack social protection and access to quality health care and also have lost access to productive assets.

4.5 THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN TEMI TEA ESTATE

In India, a nationwide lockdown in order to stop the spread out the covid-19 disease was imposed from 23rd March 2020. As the lockdown was imposed everything came to standstill so as the tea garden work. Since the lockdown was in the month of March which is consider to be the peak season for plucking first flush of tea leaves in every tea plantation so, it has been adversely affected on the production level. Assistant Manager Pratik Gautam said that due to the pandemic in 2020 Temi Tea Estate missed the first flush. Earlier in the normal season they used to produce 20-30 tons but during the pandemic seasons it had gone down to 15-18 tons. He also highlighted that during the pandemic time, the Temi Tea Estate had followed strict guidelines given by the government. With the assurance of giving the safety measures for the

workers at their workplace, the estate was exempted from lockdown vide notification/Order 19/home/2020 dated 27 March 2020 and continued their work despite lockdown. Speaking to the almost all the workers about the new and deadly spread disease, all the workers said that the management had briefed them about the dos and don'ts of the disease. They were also asked to follow the strict guidelines and were provided with face masks and sanitizers. The tea management kept on spraying sanitizers in all the dhuras and adhered to the covid-19 instruction like social distancing, working or standing at 6 feet distant etc.

While talking to the tea management of Temi Tea Estate about the world-wide pandemic, they said that the workers were frequently educated on the pandemic through public announcement at their respective Dhuras (residential complexes). The workers were directed to stay indoors with no social gathering and the heavily infected dhuras were totally locked down to prevent further spread but in the labour lines it is almost impossible to isolate themselves from each other where almost 5-6 members stay together in 2-3 rooms and sharing one toilet. There is lack of quarantine centres inside the plantation and the dispensary do not have facilities. Vaccination started but there was doubt and fear about the vaccines among the workers and also unsure of its efficacy as many of the workers were infected and had developed symptoms like fever, body ache and nausea after vaccinating. Many of the workers even complained about the unaware or unable to register on the CoWin app as the workers could not understand the online process and also many of them do not possessed smartphone.

The management has provided the workers with all the essential kits such as face masks and sanitizers regularly, PPE kits for ambulance driver and also distribution of free ration by the government like rice, pulses, oil, salt, potato and onion. During the pandemic period, in view of the rising cases on coronavirus in the state and as per the guidelines of the Government, the Temi Tea Estate workers were told to maintain proper measures for social distancing, sanitization process and the adaptation of 50% workforce in the estate. The authorities of the tea management frequently visited the respective dhuras and even the supervisors were asked to check whether the workers have adhered to covid protocol during the lockdown period. The Block Development Officer and the staffs of Temi-Namphing, South-Sikkim also frequently carried out supervision through miking on dissemination of awareness and information to the

entire dhuras of the estate. They also created awareness and sensitised the people regarding the pandemic. Despite adhering to the guidelines of covid-19 pandemic, many of the workers have been affected by the disease and few succumbed to death too.

4.6 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

Temi Tea Estate being a government enterprise is controlled and managed by forest Department, Government of Sikkim till 1974. From 1974 onwards, the tea estate is looked by the Ministry of Industries, Government of Sikkim with a Tea Board of Sikkim, having chairman, members and representatives from the Department of Industries, Finance, forest and Agriculture, Government of Sikkim. The estate has been implemented with certain rules and regulation which are to be obeyed by the estate including the workers. As Temi Tea Estate being the only tea estate, which is run by the state government, every provision is looked by the Government of Sikkim.

Since, Temi Tea Estate being a government garden or government property, there is no any formation of trade union in the estate. The workers of the estate rely on whatever is provided to them by the Government of Sikkim. But the study reveals that there is existence of the Labour Association body in the estate. Tek Bahadur Gurung is the president of Temi Tea Garden Labour Association. The workers of the estate are aware of the fact that the labour association is the medium to which they can complained and express their grievances and also assert their rights related to the benefits and facilities.

4.6.1 TEA BOARD: Tea Board, an anonymous body was set up as a statutory body on 1st April 1954 as per Section (4) of the Tea Act, 1953. As an apex body, it looks after the overall management and promote development of the tea industry on every matters. To promote overall development of the tea industry, specific measures are to be planned in different sphere and the functions and responsibilities of Tea Board includes increasing production and productivity, improving the quality of tea, market promotion, and welfare measures for plantation workers and supporting Research and Development. Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim has its own tea board known as Tea Board of Sikkim. The members of the tea board who are the actual policy making body of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim are appointed by the ministry from the various department of

Agriculture, Industries, Finance and Forests. The Tea Board also has a main function and its major objective to look after the welfare of the workers and providing the basic necessities to the workers. The improvement in the living conditions of the workers becomes one of the main functions of the Board.

4.6.2 LABOUR DEPARTMENT: The labour department ensure cordial relationship between the employers and employee. It provides job securities, good hygienic conditions and safety measures at work sites, welfare and beneficial wages to workers in time and compensation in case of accidents, medicals facilities, provisions for future perspectives etc. It also helps to improve socio-economic condition of the working-class people. The main role of Labour Department, Government of Sikkim in Temi Tea Estate especially for workers is to maintain the provision of welfare materials to the workers.

4.6.3 PANCHAYAT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM: Temi Tea Estate is a government- run estate which was started in 1969 to looks after the social and economic development of the workers by providing the provisions by the state government which are given to the general public are also given to the workers of the estate. The workers are entitled to the government subsidies for ration. They all participate in the elections and have all the rights of citizens in a democratic policy of Sikkim.

CHAPTER- 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Temi Tea Estate is the only existing tea plantation in Sikkim covering an area of 440 acres (177 hectares) has been divided into two division i.e., Upper tea garden and Lower tea garden. The population size has also been distinguished division wise. The overall population of Temi Tea Estate is 1392 of which 721 are the female and 671 are the male. Temi Tea Estate have total of 445 workers of which 350 workers are the regular workers and 95 casual workers are interviewed during the study. There was no gender bias during the study, both males and females were interviewed and also both the gender have an equal opportunity to be recruited for the work in the estate. The study reveals that there are 278 female workers and 167 male workers in the tea plantation. Age is interrelated to socio-economic activities. In tea plantation there are various types of works varying from plucking the leaves in the field to different processing of the tea in the factory. Plantations Labour Act, 1951 classified the labour into three categories i.e., Adolescent, Adult, and Children. Adolescent means a person who has completed his fourteen years but has not completed his eighteenth year, Adult means a person who has completed his eighteenth year, and child are those persons who has not completed his/her age of 14 year. In 2010, the Amendment of PLA,1951 restricted the employment of child labour in the plantations, The tea industry fully banned the employment of child labour in the tea garden 24 years after the passing of “Child Labour Act (Prohibition and Regulation) 1986”, which restricted the employment of children in any establishment. Despite the age being one of the important factors to determine the employability of the respondent in the estate, the Temi Tea Estate do not entertain any child labours in the estate. The study reveals with the highest number of 47.20 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-45 years, followed by 33.25 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 46-60 years. It also shows that 16.40 per cent of respondents belong to age group of 15-30 years and 3.15 per cent of respondents belong to age group of above 60 years.

Marriage is a social status in the society. In the estate, both inter-caste and intra-caste marriages is prevailed among the plantation workers. The study reveals that 73.93 per cent respondents are married, 14.38 per cent of respondents are unmarried, 6.75 per cent of the respondents are widow or widower and 4.94 per cent of the respondent are divorced or separated.

The study reveals that showing the highest of 47.20 per cent of the respondents belong to Hinduism, 42.24 per cent of the respondents belong to Buddhism and 10.56 per cent of the respondents belong to Christian. The estate has a formation of Sai Samity (follower of Shri Satya Sai Baba) which aims to train people on moral discipline and various other discipline of life. Every Sunday they gather all the children of the estate in one place and preach them the lesson on Samantha Dharma.

The family is one of the most socializing institutions of the society. As per the Plantation labour Act 1951 Family is used in relation to a worker means his or her spouse. In the estate three types of family composition are found among the respondents i.e., joint family, nuclear family and other is unclassified based on their size and composition. A joint family is an extended family which includes grandparent, parent and their children who live under a same roof and a nuclear family generally includes parents and children. Out of 445 workers in estate, 53.26 per cent of respondents lives in joint family, 40.68 per cent of respondents lives in nuclear family and 6.06 per cent of respondents live as unclassified family. The primary language or the lingua franca is Nepali for the entire people of the estate although each community of the estate may speak in their own mother tongues. At the tea estate, there are several ethnic groups having their distinct languages and have different cultural practices but live together and work together. Some of the ethnic group like Lepchas, Bhutia, Limbo, Tamang etc speaks their own language among themselves but speaks in nepali with the other ethnic group people.

As education is an important factor in a society which helps to bridge a gap between the social and economic condition. Further, it provides a way to future economic and social security (Hasmath, 2016). It could be observed from the study that only 20 per cent of the respondent of the study area are illiterate, 40 per cent of the respondents have completed their primary education, 32.80 per cent of the respondent have completed their secondary education, 4.72 per cent of the respondents have completed their higher secondary education while only 2.48 per cent of the respondents have completed their education above higher secondary. During the survey, the researcher found that earlier the awareness about education is very low amongst the tea garden workers but now the younger generation are completing their school and colleges. This is the result of becoming aware about the education and its facilities.

With the highest percent of population of about 46.52 per cent of the respondents belong to Other Backward Class (OBC) category comprising of Gurung, Mangar, Rai, Pradhan, Mukhia. 22.03 per cent of the respondents belong to the Schedule Tribe (ST) category comprising of Lepcha, Bhutia, Tamang, Sherpa and limbo etc., about 16.62 per cent of the respondents belong to Schedule Caste (SC) category which includes Biswakarma, Darjee, Kami. and 14.83 per cent of the respondents belong to general category comprising of Chettri, Bahun, Sharma. The study also shows that the highest caste group is Gurung with 20 per cent, Rai with 11.23 per cent, Mangar with 10.56 per cent, Pradhan with 2.69 per cent, Mukhia with 2.02 per cent, Tamang with 7.41 per cent, Sherpa with 5.61 per cent, Bhutia with 1.79 per cent, Lepcha with 2.47 per cent, Limbu with 4.71 per cent, Chettri with 10.33 per cent, Sharma with 4.49 per cent, Biswakarma with 9.66 per cent and Darjee with 6.06 per cent.

There are two types of workers, permanent workers and casual workers (bigha workers). Permanent workers comprise of those who works throughout the season in the garden. Those workers enjoy the benefit of housing, subsidized ration, provident fund and gratuity. The temporary workers are mostly employed during the peak season when more workers are required to pluck leaves and are being paid in cash. (Kar, 1984). During the study it has been observed that 89.88 per cent workers are found to be regular workers whereas only 10.12 per cent worker works as casual workers of Bigha workers.

The income of the family is one of the important factors determining the living standard of the family. The study reveals that the garden consists of total number of 260 household of which the study highlights 39.62 per cent households earns monthly of Rs. 9000, while 22.69 per cent household earns Rs. 9,000-18,000. On the other hands 16.92 per cent of households earns of Rs. 18,000-27,000, 10.76 per cent of households earns of Rs. 27,000-36,000. Only 6.53 per cent of households earns of Rs. 36,000-45,000 and similarly only 3.46 per cent of households earns of above Rs. 45,000. Since the daily wage of the plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate is nominal therefore expenditure level of the workers was also seemed to be average. Despite the having low expenditure also but due to the hike of price in the market, many times the tea plantation workers suffer a financial crisis to fulfil their basic requirement with the low wages i.e., Rs. 300 per day. Many of the workers borrow money from their relatives, friends etc. from the study it is quite evident that 20.38 percent respondents

of 53 households spend below Rs. 9000, around 22.30 percent of the respondents from 58 households spend between Rs. 9000 to 18,000, 20.76 percent of the respondents from 54 households spend Rs. 18,000 to 27,000, 18.07 percent of the respondents from 47 households spend Rs. 27,000 to 36,000, around 16.53 percent of the respondents from 43 households spend Rs. 36,000 to 45,000 and only 2.30 percent of the respondents from 6 households spend above Rs. 45,000 per month. The respondent's expenditure includes expenditure on buying food items, clothing, education, health and other expenditure.

Most of the people of Temi Tea estate are engaged in tea plantation works and only few are engaged in various other occupations like government sector services, small business, daily labours, drivers and students. The study found that 15.76 per cent of the families have one member working in their family, 41.92 per cent of the families have two members working in their family, 25.76 per cent of the families have 3 members working in their family and only 16.53 per cent of the families have 4 and above member working in their family.

All the workers of Temi Tea Estate, whether be it permanent or casual workers receive the same wage and is classified as a daily wage worker. The daily wage of the workers of the estate is Rs. 300 per day which is calculated to be Rs. 9000/- per month. The wages of the workers are being revised from time to time by The Labour Department, Government of Sikkim. The State Government of Sikkim had made the last revision of the minimum rates of wages in the scheduled employments under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 with vide notification No. 11/DL dated 15/09/2017 on 11/07/2022. The last revision of the minimum rates of wages is Rs. 500 per day which is applicable to the tea plantation workers of Sikkim.

Article 21 of the Indian constitution guarantees the protection of life and personal liberty, which also includes the right to shelter. Thus, the constitution guarantees a right to live in a suitable condition. Thus, other than food and cloths, shelter is also one of the basic human needs. It provides the significant economic and social security and at the same time, it is also a symbol of status in the society (GOI, 2004). Also, according to Plantation Labour Act, 1951 Section 15, "It shall be the duty of every employer to provide and maintain necessary housing accommodation for every worker (including his family) residing in the tea plantation". Therefore, it is necessary

for every management to provide housing facilities to the tea garden workers. In the present study, types of houses are categorized into three categories i.e., Government quarter also known as dhuras, self-build/own house and rented house. Government quarter or dhura are those houses which are provided by the tea estate within the tea garden, those houses are basically built with permanent materials like cements, bricks etc., kind of pucca house. Self-build/own house is also made with permanent material and some made with mud, unburnt bricks or wood. The roof of the house is made of GCI sheet and often needs to be replaced by the new one. Rented houses are those where they need to pay the money periodic agreed rent to the owner. 76.93 per cent of the workers are satisfied about their accommodation provided by the Government. 20.38 per cent of the workers are living in self-build house and 2.69 per cent of the workers live in rented house. The study also tried to find out the land holding patterns of tea plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate. In the Estate, all the land has been occupied by tea plantation so every worker has been provided with the kitchen garden (kothe bari) near to their respective dhuras where they grow different varieties of green vegetables etc.

During the peak season (March to September) all the worker has to report their work with the siren at 7:30 A.M in the morning and continue their work till 11:30 A.M, for an hour-long break from 11:30 to 12:30 is their lunch time. Most of the workers carry their own lunch to their field, few goes to their home. Again at 12:30 P.M they all have to report back to their work till 4 P.M in the evening. And during the slack season (November to February) the morning reporting timing will be the same i.e., 7:30 A.M to 2:30 P.M with the lunch break at 11:30 A.M to 12:30 P.M. During the peak season the wage of the workers depends upon the extra leaves from the exact quantity of leaves. If the workers pluck extra green leaves than rupees ten per kg is given extra to their daily wage to the workers. According to the labour law, Leave is generally entitled with various types of leave namely casual leave, sick leave and festival leave. The permanent tea plantation workers enjoy day's paid leave for 15 working days and 10 sick days leave and pregnant female plantation workers are entitled to 16 weeks maternity allowances and other benefits for pregnant women under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961. The plantation workers of the estate are also entitled with festivals leave on different festivals occasions.

With regards to leave facilities, sickness allowance and maternity allowance are been provided to the regular workers. The study reveals that the sickness leaves up to maximum of 10 days is provided. Under the Section 32(2) of Plantation Labour Act,1951 the state government may make rule regulating the maternity allowance to the plantation workers. In India maternity benefits enacted after the passing of Maternity Benefits Act 1961, which directed the employer to provide a leave of 12 weeks after the birth of a child at the prevailing, wage rate. Since the Temi Tea Estate has 62.47% of its women workers, the women workers are granted maternity leave with full pay for six weeks before and after the delivery of her child.

Household assets seems to be another important factor that depicts the economic condition of the workers around the whole world. In the study areas, the study highlighted that almost all households have a better living with the modern's equipment like mobile phone (95.38%), television (74.61%), Gas connection (93.07%), refrigerators (17.30%), music system (6.53%), laptop (4.23%), motorbikes (10.38%) and vehicles (8.07%) which are available at Temi Tea Estate to reach people to Singtam, Ravangla, Namchi, Gangtok and even Siligure. Though the garden workers have left the agrarian work long time back but some people were still found of domesticating cattle stock like cows, pigs, goats, poultry and hens in most of the households. 56.92 per cent of households in the study area have livestock as it is considered to be one of the productive assets in the estate. Livestock is also considered to be major supplement to the family income beside the daily wage in the estate. Therefore, in Temi Tea estate livestock also constitutes major household asset.

As per Plantation Labour Act 1951 section 9(1), the tea management have to provide sufficient number of latrines and urinals separately for male and females at convenient places and accessible to all workers. The study in the Temi Tea estate has found that the workers are benefitted with proper sanitation facilities and also every dhuras have their own respective toilet/sanitation facilities. Almost all households have proper sanitary toilets made of cemented wall and tin roof with proper water connection. All the respondents have toilets at their home.

According to the Plantations Labour Act 1951, Section 8 state that "In every plantation effective arrangement shall be made by the employer to provide and maintain at a convenient place in the plantation sufficient Supply of wholesome

drinking water for all workers”. Therefore, it is the basic duty of every tea garden management to provide adequate water facilities to the tea garden workers. All the respondents have mentioned that the garden has the connection of drinking water supply to their respective dhuras. The workers used get drinking water from Public Health Engineering (PHE), Government of Sikkim where the bill for the supplied drinking water is to be paid by the workers themselves. As the drinking water from PHE is irregular, they have connected the drinking water of stream water from nearby Temi Forest and have setup a water tank in different places in the tea estate from where the water is being distributed to all the dhuras.

At the estate, the supplement of electricity to the workers is done by the State Electricity Board, Government of Sikkim. The estate has electricity facilities access in every dhuras. The electricity connection is provided by the government agencies but no electricity bill has to be paid by the workers. Some of the workers also said that they are worried about the future as the Government of Sikkim has already decided to install the prepaid electricity meters in phased wise manner all over Sikkim. Till now they are not supposed to pay the electricity bill but if the government being to install the prepaid electricity meters that they will be suffered. 93.07 per cent of the workers in the estate has gas connectivity but they mostly use firewood for cooking purpose. They collect wood, bamboo from nearby forest and also used the old bushes of tea plant as firewood.

The Plantation labour Act 1951 Section 10 embodies the provision of the health services stating “In any plantation, there shall be provided and maintained so as to be readily available such medical facilities for the worker and their families as may be prescribed by the State Government”. The health facilities in the garden are adequate as the garden have only one dispensary in the estate but the availability of ambulance service is 24/7. There is no any doctors or nurses, only one attendant attends the dispensary. The dispensary provides only primary medical care for minor ailment such as fever, diarrhoea and first aid for minor injuries. There is only one ambulance and lacks of medicines and basic medical facilities. Most of the workers have to go Namchi district hospital, multi-special hospital Gangtok, CRH Manipal and even outside Sikkim for better treatment or better medical facilities and all the medical expenditure during the treatment is to be paid by the workers themselves. Often time the workers faced a critical issue of medical expenses due to low income. For the

betterment and immediate treatment in emergency of the workers, the primary health centre needs to be established in the estate with proper facilities and infrastructure. In Temi Tea Estate, infrastructural facilities related to health sector should be developed like Separate buildings for health care. Recruiting more expert health employees (Doctors, nurses, and pharmacists). Health awareness camps related to various social and contemporary issues like health, maternity, family benefits and economic progression should be organized for the workers of the estate. As per PLA, 1951 section 12, it mandatory for every tea management having more than 50 or more female workers including women employed by any contractor, to maintain crèches for the children of the women up to the age of 6. The room of the crèches should be clean and ventilated and should be looked after by a trained female worker. The employer should also provide milk, food, sleeping area, playing area etc. It is studied that in the estate, creches facilities is being provided by the management for the children of the workers with the facilities like playing toys for children, sleeping area, and providing them with lunch etc.

During the pandemic time, the Temi Tea Estate had followed strict guidelines given by the government. With the assurance of giving the safety measures for the workers at their workplace, the estate was exempted from lockdown vide notification/Order 19/home/2020 dated 27 March 2020 and continued their work despite lockdown. Speaking to the almost all the workers about the new and deadly spread disease, all the workers said that the management had briefed them about the dos and don'ts of the disease. They were also asked to follow the strict guidelines and were provided with face masks and sanitizers. The tea management kept on spraying sanitizers in all the dhuras and adhered to the covid 19 instruction like social distancing, working or standing at 6 feet distant etc.

When talking to the tea management of Temi Tea Estate about the world-wide pandemic, they said that the workers were frequently educated on the pandemic through public announcement at their respective Dhuras (residential complexes). The workers were directed to stay indoors with no social gathering and the heavily infected dhuras were totally locked down to prevent further spread but in the labour lines it is almost impossible to isolate themselves from each other where almost 5-6 members stay together in 2-3 rooms and sharing one toilet. There is lack of quarantine centres inside the plantation and the dispensary do not have facilities. Vaccination

started but there was doubt and fear about the vaccines among the workers and also unsure of its efficacy as many of the workers were infected and had developed symptoms like fever, body ache and nausea after vaccinating. Many of the workers even complained about the unaware or unable to register on the CoWin app as the workers could not understand the online process and also many of them do not possessed smartphone. The management has provided the workers with all the essential kits such as face masks and sanitizers regularly, PPE kits for ambulance driver and also distribution of free ration by the government like rice, pulses, oil, salt, potato and onion. During the pandemic period, and in view of the rising cases on coronavirus in the state as well as the tea estate. As per the strict guidelines of the Government of Sikkim, the Temi Tea Estate workers were also told to maintain proper measures for social distancing, sanitization process and the adaptation of 50 % workforce in the estate. The authorities of the tea management frequently visited the respective dhuras and even the supervisors were asked to check whether the workers have adhered to covid protocol during the lockdown period.

There are various central and state government schemes for the upliftment of the workers which have served to make it a major role in the overall development strategy. The main motive of the Government to launched various schemes is to eradicate unemployment as well as the poverty.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the field work, the research purpose to present the following recommendations and suggestions to improve better socio-economic condition and strategies for better living of plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim.

- 1) The Temi Tea Estate is the government enterprise. So, it is suggested that the Government plan and policy should be implemented properly for the future development of the tea garden as well as the living standard of the workers.
- 2) Since the workers often face a critical issue of medical expenses due to low income. So, the study suggested that the tea management or Government of Sikkim takes measures wherein the medical expenses of the workers and their immediate family may avail support or benefits to the workers. Also, the Temi Tea Estate have only one dispensary with adequate medical facilities, the study highly recommends the demand of upgradation of the estate dispensary

with sufficient number and experienced medical staff like doctors, nurses should be appointed, pharmacy facilities should be available in the estate, dispensaries with proper facilities for emergency cases of the tea workers and their families. In Temi Tea Estate, infrastructural facilities should be developed like Separate buildings for health care. Health awareness camps related to various social and contemporary issues like health, maternity, family benefits and economic progression should be organized for the plantation workers as well as the other people of the estate.

- 3) Daily wages are not adequate to meet their basic needs. The study recommends the management to ensure the increase in their daily wages, proper medical facilities, for both permanent and casual workers of the garden. There is a need for an alternative job in the off season for casual or temporary workers of the tea garden. Self-help groups within tea plantation should be organized properly to gear up their socio-economic conditions.
- 4) The workers must be aware of their own rights. Therefore, there is need of promoting proper educational facilities in the garden so that the younger children get education and make their parents and themselves aware of their rights. For that reason, the estate school need to be upgraded up to secondary level with better facilities.
- 5) The study also recommends the management and the Government of Sikkim to promote the importance of the education for the children of workers in the garden by providing qualified and well-trained teachers and educational kits in the garden school. The importance of raising the awareness among the people of the estate on good health, sanitation practices through education and motivational programs. Thus, the estate management and the state government can take the initiative to organise such programs.
- 6) The study recommends the government personnel or officers must visit not only the garden but also the particular dhuras to be monitored their living condition and to address the difficulties of the workers in a proper manner as per the national labour laws.

- 7) Transportation system connecting the labour line is not pucca. Thus, the improvement and repairment of the infrastructure of roads within the estate is necessary for the easy communication and transportation for the workers.
- 8) Most of the workers are not aware about various scheme or benefit provided by the central and state government. The study recommend that the awareness programs need to be conducted in the estate to make the workers aware about their rights and privileges and the state as well as central government schemes which are available for the rural area should be extended to the tea estate too.
- 9) Since many women plantation workers are also engaged and are the members of Self-Help Groups. The study recommends that the members as well as the tea management to motivate the other women workers to develop their skills through this group by organising the awareness program and actively participating in the activities. The tea management can put efforts to set up a centre of Vocational training for younger generation as an immediate goal.
- 10) The Government of Sikkim concerned shall endeavour to ensure other employment opportunities in the estate such that the children or other members who are not working in the garden may have wider livelihood option.
- 11) Not just kitchen garden but few plot of land should be given to every dhuras where the workers should be encouraged for planting the daily consumed vegetables and rearing livestock for better dietary habits and become economically involve from the agricultural products also. The adequate credit facility among tea plantation people should be provided, so that they can start the opportunities of new income generation such as setting up small business, petty business, kitchen gardening, cultivation for the betterment of livelihood.
- 12) Number of water storage tank need to be established in different area maintaining number of households and at the same time natural water sources should be preserved, maintained and developed in a proper way.
- 13) The proper sanitation strategy should be implemented in the households of tea plantation. The government and tea management both in hand in hand may take initiatives for improving sanitation conditions in the tea plantation.

Drainage facilities and waste management need to be improved to ensure a healthy living atmosphere. The panchayat along with tea management and government officials may arrange awareness camps in the tea plantation regarding the health and hygiene of the tea plantation workers. They can also create awareness of importance of change in lifestyle of individual.

14) Although there is a provision of better education facilities for the children of the plantation worker but there is need to review the content of education especially for the tea garden people and it should emphasis a vocational training program, food production, sex education, nutrition, farm program where younger generation can take a productive role for a decent livelihood.

15) The people of tea plantation should be aware and conscious about the importance of health and hygiene, benefits of safe drinking water, cleanliness of surroundings and stagnant water. On the other hand, every space, materials and equipment within factories should be kept clean and hygienic.

16) The number of casual workers is more than 100, but they are deprived of social benefits that are allotted for the permanent's workers. The tea plantation authority should need to recruit casual workers as permanent workers than other employment opportunities.

17) Temi Tea Estate being the government enterprise, the government should also take an inevitable measure for the upliftment of the workers of the estate. Labour Welfare Department (LWD) should regularly investigate Social Security measures for the tea plantation workers of the study areas.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

In a wider perspective, the tea industry is a labour intensive where majority of the people is engaged in the tea plantation job but the tea plantation people are marginalized due to illiteracy and ignorance. The strengthening of the overall development in all aspects of one's life for the improvement of socio-economic conditions and their livelihood of the tea plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate is necessary. Though in Temi Tea Estate, the workers are being provided with the basic facilities but few provision need to be revised for the betterment of their living. There should be looked upon for uplifting of livelihood of the tea plantation peoples by

introducing revised wage's structure, financial inclusion schemes, girls' education schemes, and program, food security schemes, employment generation and vocational skilled programmes and proper implementation of infra-structural schemes i.e., electricity, drinking water, sanitation, housing and social security (Debnath & Debnath, 2017).

According to the present study, the tea plantation workers of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim are moderately satisfied with the basic facilities, safety in work, leave facility, leave with wages and the overall welfare facilities availed by all categories of workers' as per plantation labour Act. Also, the workers of Temi Tea Estate have a labour union who are well aware of their rights and voices the concerns of the workers to the management. The Temi Tea Estate also follows the provisions under Plantation Labour Act, 1951 which is considered to be one of the most important acts among the laws affecting the plantation sector that regulates the worker's working and living conditions of the workers. The Plantation Labour Act, 1951 mandates the employers to provide housing accommodation for the workers and their families residing within the plantation. The workers and their children are to be provided with recreational facilities by the plantations. Creches for infants below 6 years and primary school in the garden but with insufficient number of faculties and facilities. Since the school comes under the control of Human Resource Development and Department (HRDD), Directorate of Education, Government of Sikkim so the tea management do not play any role for the upliftment for the education system of the garden. There is also provision of other basic amenities such as drinking water, sanitation facilities, protective accoutrements such as umbrellas, raincoats, blankets are being provided to the workers. The Act also provides for leave with wages whereby, to ordinary holidays, employees receive a day's paid leave for 15 working days and 10 sick days leave and female employees are entitled to 16 weeks of maternity allowances and other benefits under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961.

The tea plantation workers are also engaged in factory works and the researcher feels that there should be provision of proper training for handling tools and machines before operating the factory machines. The authority should adopt the new technology for producing tea and another efficiency which is very helpful in the present day. With regard to employment, the working hour is 8 hours per day which is applicable to all the workers. The recreational facilities are also been utilize by the management

of the tea garden for the workers as well as the outside person whoever visit to the estate. The garden has various tea tourism festivals/activities such as Annual Autumn festival every year in the months of November to December, horse riding, paragliding, ziplining etc. and also there are many homestays or resorts which attracts the tourists from other places as well as the local visitors.

Without a better living, it is not possible to aim for a better quality of life therefore for most of the unemployed people tea plantation sector has been considered to be one of the major sources of livelihood and employment of some of the most marginalised and vulnerable section of the population of the regional economies (Joseph & George, 2010). The present study found that the daily wage of the workers of the Temi Tea Estate is very meagre in the era where the price in the market is getting higher day by day. That is why more than one member from each household is engaged in tea plantation work and also other family member who does not work in the estate works outside the tea garden to meet their daily expenses. Even the management of the estate also thought that the kind of wage that the workers of estate are receiving is not sufficient for their physical existence. Besides wages the benefits admissible to permanent workers are free housing facilities, Contribution towards Provident Fund, Free medical care, Leave with wages, Subsidised ration, Bonus and Gratuity. For cooking purpose, they use firewood which they can produce from the nearby jungles. Gas connectivity has been provided by the government scheme to each family with subsidy. The other components accessible to the permanent plantation workers are like drinking water and electricity facilities, education, proper health and sanitation facilities indicate a better side of the livelihood patter of the tea plantation workers. But casual workers do not get any kind of facilities from the estate. In better livelihood of the workers of the estate, the worker should be encouraged to work in other income generating activities like tourism, organic farming, handicrafts etc. Most of the workers has been provided with the houses and a kitchen garden by the management. There are also some alternative sources of income of the people of the estate like government service, livestock farming, dairy farming, private jobs etc. Another important factor for the betterment of their living is health and hygiene of the workers as maintaining their good health and pursue a good sanitation at home as well as work place are an integral part of their work schedule in their socio-economic living. For this, the management can organise an awareness programme on various

health issue where the workers are being made aware of various problems associated with the hygienic practices against common diseases like malaria, tuberculosis etc., high birth rate, family planning, maternal health care, and health risks associated with alcohol, tobacco and other toxication tea and also organising a medical camp once or twice a year in the estate can help the workers in maintaining their health. The health infrastructural facilities along with doctors/nurses should be developed.

The living conditions of tea plantation workers which includes of the housing conditions, standard of living structure, educational facilities, health and sanitation, creche for children of the worker, maintenance of houses, sanitation facilities, drinking water facilities, electricity, indebtedness among workers, etc. are also found to be moderate. Looking into the educational facilities, the estate has two government school i.e., Junior High School and Senior Secondary school under Government of Sikkim which provides free education to the children and also many of the children are studying in private schools. With regards to health facilities and as per the Plantation Labour Act, majority of the labourers, field supervisor, office personnel avail the drinking water facility, adequate medical facility and also separate latrine facility for male and female at the work place are been benefitted. The tea garden has access to appropriate water supply and sanitation separate for both male and female workers in the estate as well as for each family in the estate. The tea plantation also has provision of weather protection facilities or provision of free utility products such as raincoat, umbrella, boots, blankets to every worker.

Since, most of the workers of the estate expressed dissatisfaction over the daily wage which result to the majority of the tea plantation workers have low levels of education, training skill, alternative livelihoods and fewer job opportunities. The workers' low wages together with rising living costs, has resulted in their poor socio-economic conditions. 76.93 per cent of the workers are satisfied about their accommodation provided by the Government. 20.38 per cent of the workers are living in self-build house and 2.69 per cent of the workers live in rented house.

Finally, for uplifting and to mitigate the crisis for the workers of Temi Tea Estate of Sikkim in overall development, awareness should be created about the intervene of different developmental central and state government programs and schemes like MGNREGA, NRHM, ICDS, NOAPS, RHSGOS, CMRHM, SGAY, etc., which

served to make it a major role in the overall development strategy and those schemes need full supervision for the implementation at the grass-root level for the betterment. The awareness program should focus more on child education, health, and hygiene, alternatives income-generating activities for their better livelihood. Finally, it is necessary to fully implement the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and 1956 (Amendment) where workers' benefits of plantation are provisionalized. They should also be made aware about their basic rights in their working field. Finally, government and tea garden management should look and take necessary action for pushing and uplifting the social and economic life of the workers. Therefore, the state government must provide an institutional framework and legal foundation for these vulnerable tea plantation workers. The crisis that the tea plantation workers are facing can only be put to rights if the labour unions, tea industry management and government gain consciousness to their responsibilities. otherwise, the livelihood for significant improvements in economic and social welfare of tea industry in Sikkim may be desolate and indeed unreachable.

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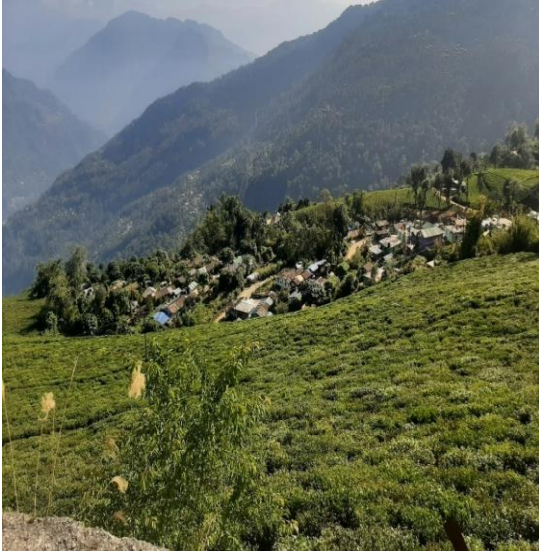
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LIST OF PLATES

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN DURING FIELDWORK



PLATE 2. Board of organic tea garden, Temi Tea Estate



PLATES 3. Lush green carpets of tea bushes



PLATES 4: Types of houses within the estate



PLATES 5: Growing vegetables in their kitchen garden



PLATE 6: Footpath in between the tea garden



PLATES 7: Workers at their work in Temi Tea Estate



PLATE 8: Dispensary center



PLATE 9: Temi Tea Estate factory and Administration Buildings



PLATE 10: Co-operative society limited



PLATES 11: Setting of water tank in the estate



PLATE 12: Tourists' information and attraction sites

APPENDIX-1
HOUSEHOLD CENSUS SCHEDULE FOR M. Phil DISSERTATION- 2022
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

**TOPIC: “SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND LIVELIHOOD
STRATEGIES OF PLANTATION WORKERS IN TEMI TEA ESTATE OF
SIKKIM”**

PART-I

1. NAME: _____

2. AGE: _____

3. GENDER

I. Male II. Female III. Others

4. GPU/ WARD No. _____

5. MARITAL STATUS

I. Married II. Unmarried III. Widowed IV. Separated
or divorced

6. RELIGION

I. Hinduism II. Buddhism III. Christianity IV. Muslim
 V. Others

7. EDUCATION

I. Literate II. Illiterate III. Dropout

Primary(I-V)

High School(V-VIII)

Class X Passed

Class XII Passed

Graduate

Above graduate

Others (specify) _____

8. OCCUPATION.

I. Tea Garden workers II. Farmers III. Government Employees
 IV. Others (specify) _____

9. SOCIAL GROUP.

I. Schedule Tribe II. Schedule Caste III. OBC/MBC
IV. General V. Others

10. FAMILY INCOME: Rs. _____

I. Monthly Basis II. Weekly Basis

11. FAMILY EXPENDITURE: Rs. _____

I. Food item _____

II. Clothing _____

III. Education _____

IV. Health _____

V. Other _____

12. TYPES OF FAMILY.

- I. Joint Family II. Nuclear Family III. Other
(specify) _____

13. What are the facilities provided from the estate for the workers?

- I. Health facilities
II. Education facilities
III. Food supplies
IV. Incentives during festivals
V. Other facilities _____

14. WATER SOURCE.

- I. River II. Stream III. PHC IV. Other
(Specify) _____

15. What type of energy do you use at home for cooking purpose?

- I. Firewood II. Kerosene III. L.P.G IV. Coal
V. Electricity VI. Solar VII. Other (Specify) _____

16. TYPES OF HOUSES.

- I. Pacca House II. Kaccha House III. Concrete House
IV. Other (Specify) _____

17. SELF BUILD HOUSE/ GOVERNMENT QUARTER

18. NUMBER OF ROOMS.

- I. One II. Two III. Three IV. More than three

19. How many people are working in your family?

- I. One II. Two III. Three IV. Four
V. More than four

20. Which of the following electronic appliances do you use at your home?

- I. Mobile phone II. Television III. Radio IV. Refrigerator
 V. Geyser VI. Computer/Laptop VII. Other
(Specify) _____

21. Do you have Sanitation facilities? (Yes/No)

- I. Piped sewerage system II. Septic tank III. Public Latrine
IV. Other's system (specify) _____

22. Do you have drainage system? (Yes/No)

- I. Underground II. Covered pucca III. Open pucca
IV. open kaccha V. others

23. Name of the member of the family

NAME	RELATION TO HEAD	QUALIFICATION	OCCUPATION	INCOME

PART-II

1. What are the basics facilities given to the workers in the estate?

2. What is the wage structure of the worker? Are they daily wage/ weekly wage/monthly wage?

3. What is the pattern of recruitment process of the workers in the garden?

4. Do the workers visit your office with their queries? If yes, how often.

5. Are there any recreational facilities in the garden? Please explain:

6. Are the workers satisfied with the facilities given to them?

7. Are the garden workers aware of their rights and privileges?

8. Are there any major issues faced by the Tea Garden workers? If yes, what would you suggest suitable alternative policy guidelines for the well-being of the workers.

9. What are the difficulties faced by the labourers of the estate during the covid-19 pandemic?

10. Whether the tea management had briefed the workers about the world-wide pandemic? Please explain:

11. Did the management provide the essential kits and commodities to the workers while working in the garden? Please explain:

12. What are the resilience and coping mechanisms adopted by the workers of the estate during covid-19 pandemic?

13. How was the sustainability of the livelihood patterns in the Pre pandemic and during the covid-19 pandemic?

14. Role of the government institutions: Please Explain:

a) Panchayat: _____

b) Tea Board: _____

c) Labour Department: _____

d) Any other Specify: _____

15. What else should the government do? any suggestion:

16. Any other important comment:

APPENDIX II

SIKKIM



GOVERNMENT **GAZETTE**

**EXTRAORDINARY
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY**

Gangtok Monday 11th July, 2022 No. 278

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM
GANGTOK

No. 44/DL

Dated: 11/07/2022

NOTIFICATION

Whereas the State Government of Sikkim had last revised the minimum rates of wages in the Scheduled Employments under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 vide Notification No.11/DL dated 15/09/2017.

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred by clause (b) of sub-section (1) of Section 5 read with section 26 (2), (2A) and section 27 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (11 of 1948) and in supersession of Notification No. 11/DL dated 15/09/2017 published in the Sikkim Government Gazette No. 440 dated the 15th day of September, 2017, the State Government hereby publishes its proposal for revision of minimum rates of wages for the information of persons likely to be affected thereby, inviting their suggestions, objections, views and comments within sixty (60) days in writing to the Labour Department from the date of publication of this Notification in the Official Gazette.

The following revised rates of minimum wages shall be applicable in respect of unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled categories of scheduled employment.

Table I

Category of workers	Existing Rates Of daily Wages	Proposed Rates of Daily Wages
1	2	3
Unskilled	Rs.300/-	Rs.500/-
Semi-skilled	Rs.320/-	Rs.520/-
Skilled	Rs.335/-	Rs.535/-
Highly-skilled	Rs.365/-	Rs.565/-

Categories of Workers:

1. Un-Skilled Workers:

1. Chowkidar (Watchman)
2. Peon
3. Safaikarmachari
4. Waiter
5. Cleaner
6. Packer
7. Helper
8. Office boy
9. Nursery watcher
10. Earth digger
11. Mali
12. Khalasi
13. Shop assistant
14. Service boy
15. Jali workers (Cement Concrete pipes)
16. Bull caretaker
17. Boar caretaker
18. Dog catcher
19. Dresser (Poultry)
20. Dairy care taker
21. Field worker
22. Grass cutter
23. Horse Attendant
24. Kion-Yeer
25. Laboratory Assistant
26. Line Assistant
27. Milk Carrier
28. Patrol man
29. Poultry caretaker
30. Power house cleaner/Oil man
31. Room attendant
32. Hospital/Dispensary Attendant
33. Conductor
34. Yak attendant
35. Mule attendant
36. Pony attendant
37. Security Guard
38. Any other category by whatever name called which are of un-skilled nature.

2. Semi-Skilled

1. Assistant fitter (Mechanic)
2. Assistant black smith
3. Assistant gold smith
4. Assistant welder
5. Assistant painter

6. Baker
7. Pump man
8. Polisher
9. Gate keeper
10. Booking Assistant
11. Earth breaker
12. Rock excavator
13. Hole driller
14. Spray man
15. Stone breaker
16. Store keeper
17. Switch man
18. Duplicating machine operator
19. Sales man
20. Press man (Metallic)
21. Castingwala (Metallic)
22. Cutter (Metallic)
23. Circle cutter (Metallic)
24. Assistant Mistry (Motor body building)
25. Tyre and tube mistry
26. Line man / Assistant line man
27. Assistant switch board operator
28. Assistant turbine operator
29. Compressor operator
30. Crane operator
31. Engine operator
32. Field assistant
33. Field enumerator
34. Filter operator
35. Lathe man
36. Meter reader-cum-bill clerk
37. Mechanic
38. Stone crusher operator
39. Supervisor
40. Switch yard attendant
41. Switch operator
42. Sub-station attendant
43. Senior assistant turbine operator
44. Tailor
45. Dhobi
46. Cobbler
47. Barber
48. Tractor helper
49. Turbine operator
50. Vibrator operator
51. Mixer operator
52. Security Guard (Two years experience)
53. Any other categories by whatever name called which are of semi-skilled nature.

3. Skilled:

1. Electrician
2. Pipe Fitter
3. Carpenter
4. Mason
5. Spray painter
6. Painter
7. Litho machine man
8. Litho press man
9. Radio man for offset machine
10. Line operator
11. Mono operator
12. Composer
13. Cook
14. Quality controller
15. Turner
16. Moulder
17. Plant operator Masson
18. Machine man
19. Chemist
20. Chemical analyst
21. Blender
22. Foreman
23. Boiler attendant
24. Operator (cinema)
25. Air conditioner operator
26. Munshi
27. Cutter (timber)
28. Laboratory technician
29. Radiographer
30. Radio/T.V/Computer mechanic
31. Photo artist
32. Manager (petrol pump)
33. Technical supervisor
34. Compositor
35. Binder
36. Computer operator
37. Dancer/singer/musician
38. Kang-so-pa
39. Demand clerk
40. Draughtsman
41. Handmade paper worker
42. Lower divisional clerk/Typist
43. Librarian (with Diploma/Degree)
44. Light Vehicle driver
45. Tracer
46. Welder cum Denter
47. Medical Dresser (Veterinary/Health Services) or its equivalent by designation
48. Security Guard (Five years experience plus Class XII passed, Security Supervisor)
49. Any other categories by whatever name called which are of skilled nature.

4. Highly Skilled

1. Heavy vehicle driver
2. Bull dozer operator/driver
3. Excavator operator/driver
4. Roller driver
5. J.C.B Driver
6. Plumber/Welder/Foreman/Electrician/Draughtsman/Computer Mechanic having I.T.I or Diploma Certificate.
7. Security Guard (8 years experience with minimum Graduation or Ex-Army in the Rank of JCO).
8. Any other categories by whatever name called which are of Highly Skilled Nature

The four categories of workers shall be read along with the schedule attached under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and the schedule attached with this Notification.

1. The revised rates are inclusive of Dearness Allowance, but exclusive of other concessions, if any, enjoyed by the employees.
2. The rates of daily wages of workers at various altitudes shall be as under:-
 - (a) Upto 8000 ft altitude - Worker shall be paid normal wages
 - (b) From 8001 ft to 12000 ft - Workers shall be paid 50% more than the normal wage.
 - (c) From 12001 ft to 16000 ft - Workers shall be paid 75% more than the normal wage.
 - (d) From 16001 ft & above - Workers shall be paid double the normal wage.
3. If a worker works without being absent during the period of 6(six) days consecutively in a week, he/she shall be given one paid holiday on either Sunday or any other Haat day.
4. No worker shall be required to work for more than nine hours in a day with break of one hour.
5. Where a worker works for more than 8 hours in any day or more than forty eight hours in any week, he/she shall in respect of overtime work, be entitled to wages at the rate of twice his/her ordinary rate of wages.
7. If any question arises as to what particular work is Highly Skilled, Skilled, Semi-skilled or Un-Skilled, it may be referred to the Labour Department, Government of Sikkim, whose decision shall be final.
8. These rates shall be effective from the **date of Notification**.

EXPLANATION:

Definition of categories:

- (a) **Un-Skilled Work**” means work which involves simple operation requiring little or no skill or experience on the job.
- (b) **“Semi-Skilled Work**” means work which involves some degree of skill or competence, acquired through experience on the job, and which is capable of being performed under the supervision or guidance of skilled employee and includes unskilled supervisory work.

- (c) **“Skilled Work”** means work which involves skill or competence acquired through experience on the job or through training as an apprentice in a Technical or Vocational Institute and the performance of which calls for initiative and judgment.
- (d) **“Highly-Skilled Work”** means work which calls for degree of perfection and competence in the performance of certain jobs including clerical work acquired through intensive technical or professional training or adequate work experience for certain reasonable period and also require an employee to assume full responsibility for his/her judgment/decision involved in the execution of his/her job.

Miss Namrata Thapa, IAS
Secretary
Department of Labour,
Government of Sikkim
File No.GOS/DL/2012/2 (3)

THE SCHEDULE

1. Employment in Shops and Commercial Establishments.
2. Employment in an Industry manufacturing drugs and Pharmaceuticals.
3. Employment in Hydro-Power Projects.
4. Employment in Distilleries and Breweries.
5. Employment in Construction of Projects including Dams and Multi-purpose Projects.
6. Employment in Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Clinics other than Government Hospitals and dispensaries.
7. Employment in Private Educational Institutions including tutorial institutions and computer coaching centres excluding teaching staff.
8. Casual contingency employees engaged by Government, Semi-Government and Public Sector Undertakings which are not covered under the regularization policy of the State Government.
9. Employment in any other Industrial or manufacturing Units which are not listed.