

# Availability of Amenities and Provisions for the Workers of Selected Tea Gardens of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling Districts of Northern West Bengal, India

Rajani Kiran Ekka<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Ratna Sarkar<sup>1\*</sup>

*1, Department of Lifelong Learning & Extension, University of North Bengal*

*\*, Corresponding Author*

## Abstract

Tea gardens constitute a crucial part of North Bengal's economy, and investigating the fundamental amenities and provisions for tea garden workers in North Bengal is vital to understanding their living conditions and social welfare. Therefore, the provision of amenities for tea garden workers is not solely a matter of fulfilling their basic needs; it is a critical undertaking aimed at preserving their health, well-being, and overall quality of life. The study focused on tea gardens in Shikarpur (Fotinga Line, Danga Line, Murgivita, and Factory Line tea garden villages) and Hatighisa (Atal and Damdama tea garden villages) Gram Panchayats in the Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts, respectively. The study had several objectives, including assessing the socio-economic conditions of tea garden workers, the accessibility and availability of basic amenities and provisions provided by the tea garden authorities to the workers of these tea gardens. The condition of infrastructure like roads, drainage, drinking water, and toilets in Shikarpur was reported in poor condition. In contrast, Hatighisa had better road connectivity where bicycle was a common mode of transportation. Shikarpur faced issues with the availability of proper drinking water, affecting quality of life of the residents. Despite provisions under the Plantation Labour Act of 1951, many tea garden workers in both Gram Panchayats lacked proper toilet facilities in their homes. A significant portion of respondents in both areas expressed dissatisfaction with the management of the tea gardens. The socio-economic conditions appeared to be relatively better in Hatighisa compared to Shikarpur. The study concluded that despite some government and management-provided facilities, there was scope for improvement in all-round development for the society.

**Key Words:** Tea Workers, North Bengal, Housing, Sanitation, Education, Infrastructure, Communication

Date of Submission: 09-09-2023

Date of Acceptance: 19-09-2023

## I: Introduction

Amenities and provisions for tea garden workers are essential for their well-being and quality of life. Tea garden workers are typically involved in the labor-intensive process of growing, harvesting, and processing tea leaves, which can be physically demanding and challenging work. Tea garden workers, often from marginalized communities, face a range of social and economic challenges, including poor working conditions, low wages, and lack of access to basic amenities and “.....are among those who are usually excluded from a number of government services with a view that they should be cared for by tea garden authorities. The tea garden authorities have the responsibility to ensure housing, safe water, sanitation, medical and educational facilities for the tea garden labourers and their families but these are not practiced fully by the authorities”<sup>1</sup>. Tea garden workers often lack access to healthcare, clean water, and proper housing<sup>2</sup>. Every individual has the right to a decent standard of living, which includes access to basic amenities like clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, and housing<sup>3</sup>. Adequate sanitation facilities and clean drinking water are essential for maintaining good health and hygiene. Poor sanitation and drainage can lead to the spread of diseases, which can affect both the workers and the quality of the tea produced because “Labour lines in most TEs (Tea Estates) had open drains by the sides of the roads. These were essentially meant for storm water drainage but apparently, the grey water from the bathing and washing areas was seen flowing in the drains for lack of soak pits within the premises. These drains emptied mostly into a natural drainage nearby....Due to uneven topography and lack of apt slope, cesspools were seen in many labour lines, inviting vector breeding and a potential risk of vector borne diseases...”<sup>4</sup>. Workers in remote tea gardens often need housing close to their workplaces. Providing proper housing ensures that they have a safe and comfortable place to live, protecting them from the elements and potential hazards<sup>5</sup>. The West Bengal government made a significant contribution in 2020 with the launch of Chaa-Sundari housing scheme for all laborers who work in tea gardens<sup>6</sup>. Many tea garden workers have families, and it is important to provide access to education for their children. Establishing schools within or near tea estates can help children receive a quality education, breaking the cycle of illiteracy and poverty and “....the situation of education of tea garden workers children is in a dismal condition”<sup>7</sup>. Access to healthcare facilities and services is vital for addressing the health needs of tea garden workers and their families. This includes regular check-ups, maternal care, and treatment for common illnesses<sup>8</sup>. Providing these amenities and provisions can lead to increased worker satisfaction and retention. Happy and healthy workers are more likely to stay in their jobs and be productive<sup>9</sup>. Therefore,

amenities and provisions for tea garden workers are essential not only to meet their basic needs but also to ensure their health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

The availability of amenities and provisions for workers in tea gardens in North Bengal can vary depending on the specific tea estate and its management practices. Tea gardens are a significant part of the economy in North Bengal, and the tea industry has a long history in the region. Studying the basic amenities and provisions for tea garden workers in North Bengal is an important aspect of understanding the living conditions and social welfare of this workforce. Tea garden workers often face challenging living and working conditions, and it is essential to address their basic needs to improve their quality of life.

## II: Objectives of the Study

- (i) To probe the socio-economic condition of the tea garden workers
- (ii) To look into the accessibility and availability of amenities such as housing with electricity, drinking water and sanitation, education facilities, and health care services in these tea gardens
- (iii) To be aware of the facilities and provisions provided by the tea-garden authorities to the workers of these tea gardens

## III: About the Study Area

### (a) Selection of Jalpaiguri District

Jalpaiguri district in the Indian state of West Bengal is known for its tea industry. The tea economy of Jalpaiguri district plays a significant role in the local economy because it provides employment opportunities to a significant portion of the local population. Laborers are involved in plucking tea-leaves, processing, and various other activities related to tea cultivation and the broader tea industry in India. It is home to numerous tea estates and plantations. These plantations produce a variety of tea, including black, green, and white tea, which are renowned for their quality. The District Jalpaiguri has been selected purposely considering the availability of more than 80 tea gardens with an average size of minimum 120 hectares to 500 hectares with around 52000 permanent workers and their families residing within the garden. There are a total of 13 Community Development blocks in the district of Jalpaiguri. Of the total, Rajganj block was selected randomly for the study. The economy of the block is primarily dependent on agriculture, with tea cultivation being one of the prominent industries. Tea estates in the area produce some of the finest tea in India, which is exported worldwide. The four tea garden villages, namely Fotinga Line, Danga Line, Murgi Vita, and Factory Linewere selected for the present study from Shikarpur Gram Panchayat (Figure 1).

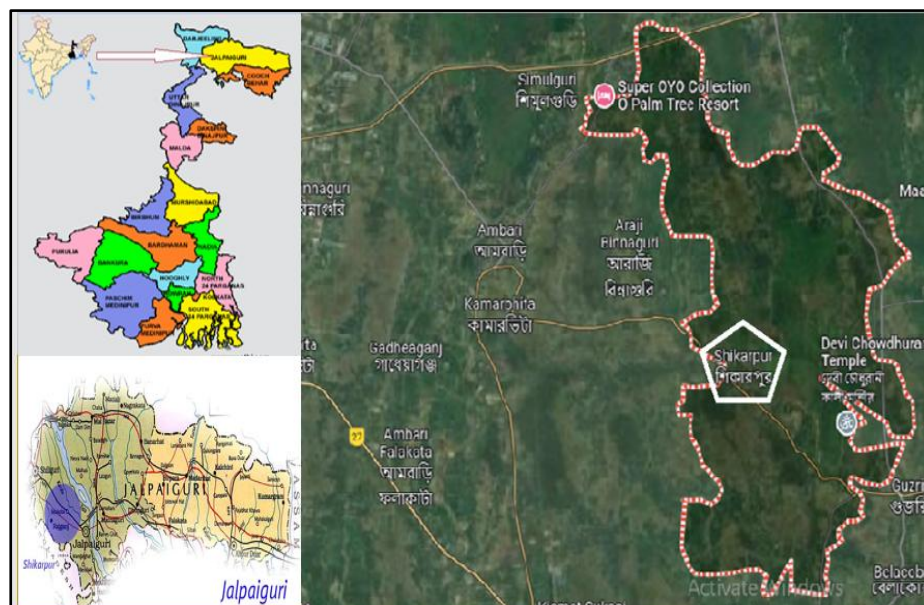
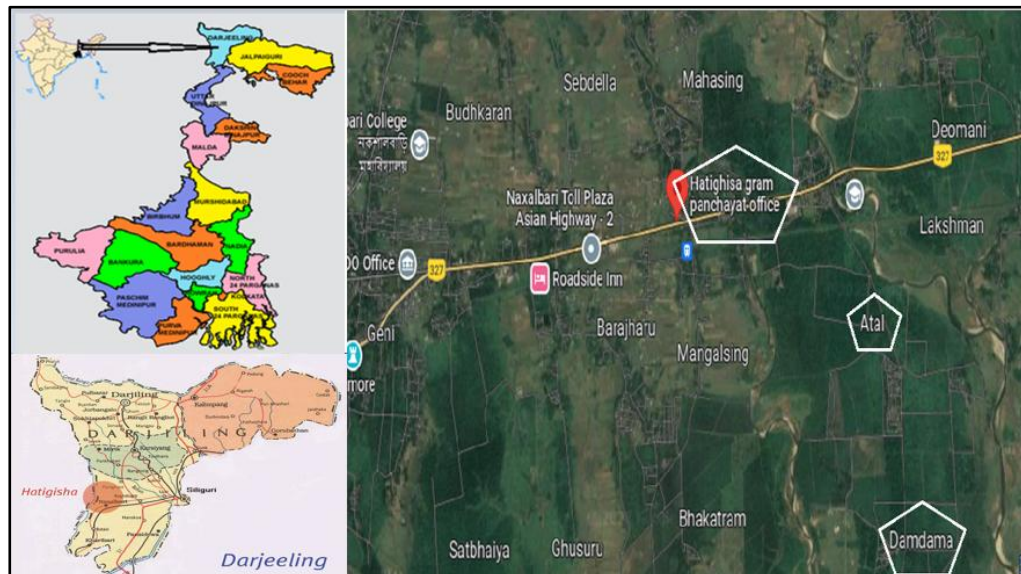


Figure 1: Map of Shikarpur gram Panchayat

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Shikarpur,+West+Bengal/>

### (b) Selection of Darjeeling District:

Darjeeling tea is known for its distinct flavor and aroma and is highly sought after in international markets. The unique climate and topography of the region, with its high-altitude tea gardens, contribute to the exceptional quality of Darjeeling tea. The Siliguri sub-division of Darjeeling district is known for its tea production, and it is part of the larger Darjeeling tea-producing region, which is famous for its high-quality tea. Naxalbari is a community development block (CD block) that forms an administrative division in the Siliguri subdivision of the Darjeeling district is known for its tea production. Naxalbari has several tea estates and gardens where tea is cultivated. The region is a part of the Darjeeling tea-growing area, and plays a vital role in the local economy, providing employment opportunities and contributing to the livelihoods of many people in Naxalbari and surrounding areas. Damdama and Atal are two medium size tea garden villages located in Hatighisa Gram Panchayat Naxalbari Block were selected for the study (Figure 2).



**Figure 2:** Map of Hatighisa Gram Panchayat

Source: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/Damdama+West+Bengal/>

#### IV: Methodology

The study is a descriptive type and was conducted in four tea garden villages, namely Fotinga Line, Danga Line, Murgi Vita, and Factory Line from Jalpaiguri and Atal and Damdama villages from Naxalbari Block of Darjeeling district. A total number of 200 (100 from each block) respondents were selected subject to their availability and proportionate allocation to the population. A self-constructed survey schedule was used for data collection. The tool comprised socio-demographic details constituting age, gender, religion, marital status, literacy level, number of children, type of work, and monthly income of the respondents. The questions regarding accessibility and availability of amenities such as housing with electricity, drinking water and sanitation, education facilities, and health care services were included. The survey schedule also included questions about the facilities and provisions provided by the tea garden authorities. The secondary information was obtained from research journals, reports, and government documents. The primary data were collected during April-May, 2016.

#### V: Data Analysis and Interpretation

##### (a) Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents:

The demographic profile of respondents in a survey typically includes information about the characteristics of the individuals who participated in the research. The specific demographic variables collected may vary depending on the research objectives and the target population. In this study, the variables include age, gender, religion, marital status, literacy level, number of children, type of work, and monthly income of the respondents.

##### Age of the Respondents

**Table:** Distribution of the Respondents according to their Age Range

Age Range (in Years)	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
21-40	49	13	62	31.0
41-60	51	87	138	69.0

Source: Primary Data

From Table 1, it is clear that most of the respondents (69 percent) belonged to the age range between 41-60 years and the study comprised 31 percent of the sample belonging to the age group between 21-40 years. The age group of tea garden workers in North Bengal can vary widely. However, traditionally, many tea garden workers in North Bengal have been part of families who have worked in the tea industry for generations<sup>10</sup>. Some older individuals aged 50 and above, have spent their entire lives major part of their lives working in these tea gardens. They have valuable experience and knowledge of the tea cultivation process.

##### Gender of the Respondents

**Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents according to their Gender**

Gender	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Male	43	44	87	43.5
Female	57	56	113	56.5

Source: Primary Data

Out of a total of 200 respondents, 113 (>56%) of them were female. Tea gardens employ a significant number of men and women for various tasks related to tea cultivation and processing and “female workers are preferred over male because their efficiency in plucking.....”<sup>11</sup>. Men typically perform tasks such as involving high degree of manual labour or in transport or as technicians and accountants. However, these roles can vary from one tea garden to another and may evolve over time due to changing labor practices and gender dynamics.

#### Religion of the Respondents

**Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents according to their Religion**

Religion	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Hindu	97	82	179	89.5
Christian	3	18	21	10.5

Source: Primary Data

The majority of the respondents (89.5 percent) (as per summed-up total) were from the Hindu religion. Tea garden workers in North Bengal, India, come from diverse religious backgrounds. North Bengal is the home to a mix of ethnicities and religions, and the tea gardens employ people from various communities<sup>12</sup>. A significant portion of the population in North Bengal practices Hinduism. Many tea garden workers are Hindus, and they celebrate various Hindu festivals and customs. The study revealed that 10.5 percent of tea garden workers are Christians. North Bengal is also the home to several indigenous and tribal communities<sup>13</sup>, each with its own traditional belief systems and practices. These communities often have their own unique religious customs and rituals. It is important to note that the specific religious composition of tea garden workers in North Bengal can vary depending on the tea estate and the local demographics. The region's diversity is a result of historical migration patterns and the coexistence of various cultures and religions.

#### Marital Status of the Respondents

**Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents according to their Marital Status**

Marital Status	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Married	91	78	169	84.5
Unmarried	3	7	10	5.0
Widow/Widower	6	15	21	10.5

Source: Primary Data

The marital status of tea garden workers may include a mix of married, unmarried, and widowed individuals. Tea garden workers' marital status is influenced by a combination of factors like age, cultural norms in their region, socio-economic conditions, education levels, and access to healthcare services. Besides this, “another very strong social disease is there in the tea garden areas i.e. early marriage practices among the tea garden workers”<sup>14</sup>. In this study, the majority of the respondents (84.5 percent) were married, followed by widows or widowers (21 out of 200 respondents).

#### Literacy Level of the Respondents

**Table 5: Distribution of the Respondents according to their Literacy Level**

Literacy Level	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Illiterate	82	73	155	77.5
Primary	10	19	29	14.5
Upper Primary	8	8	16	8.0

Source: Primary Data

The education of tea garden workers is a critical aspect of improving the quality of life and socio-economic conditions for individuals and communities involved in the tea industry. In this industry, women and children are generally considered the better pluckers and the most productive labour and a huge proportion of these women tea plantation workers are illiterate or educationally backward<sup>15</sup>. It is shown that 155 out of 200 respondents cannot read and write. This legacy of low educational attainment has been a significant challenge to overcome. The socioeconomic conditions and quality of life of people and communities involved in the tea industry can be significantly improved by educating tea garden employees. Women and children are typically seen as better pickers and more productive workers in this field, and a significant number of these female plantation workers for tea are illiterate or have low educational attainment<sup>16</sup>. It is evident that 155 out of 200 survey participants are illiterate. Overcoming this legacy of low educational achievement has proven to be a considerable task.

Number of Children possessed by the Respondents

**Table 6:** Distribution of the Respondents according to the number of Children

Number of Children in the Family	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
No Children	8	9	17	8.5
1-3	51	57	108	54.0
4-6	41	34	75	37.5

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 shows that 108 numbers of respondents have 1 to 3 children whereas 75 respondents have 4 to 6 children. The number of children of tea garden workers can vary widely depending on individual families and their circumstances. In regions where tea cultivation is a significant industry, tea garden workers may have multiple children. However, it's important to note that family size can be influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, access to healthcare, and education. Tea garden workers often face challenging working conditions and may have limited access to resources and services, which can impact family planning decisions. Some may have larger families due to limited access to contraception or cultural preferences, while others may have smaller families if they have better access to family planning resources.

Type of Works rendered by the Respondents

**Table 7:** Distribution of the Respondents according to their Types of Work in the Tea Garden

Types of Work in the Tea Garden	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Labour	43	44	87	43.5
Plucker	57	56	113	56.5

Source: Primary Data

Tea garden workers, also known as tea plantation workers, typically engage in various tasks related to the cultivation and harvesting of tea leaves in tea plantations. These workers play a crucial role in the tea industry, especially in regions where tea is a major agricultural product. The primary task of tea garden workers is to pluck tea leaves from the tea bushes. They carefully select the tender, topmost leaves and buds, as these are the most desirable for tea production. Women have historically played a significant role as tea pluckers in many tea-producing regions around the world. This labor-intensive job involves hand-picking tea leaves from tea bushes. In this study also it is shown all women respondents (113 out of 200) in these two gram panchayats are tea pluckers. Tea plucking requires skill and precision, as pluckers must selectively pick the right leaves and buds while leaving others to grow for future harvests. Many tea estates value the expertise of experienced women pluckers and it is based on the perception that women have more delicate hands for plucking, and the availability of women for such work. Male respondents work as labour and are involved in a variety of activities like weeding, pruning and trimming, sorting and processing, transporting, etc.

Monthly income of the Respondents

**Table 8:** Distribution of the Respondents according to their Monthly Income

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Upto 2500	72	66	138	69.0
2500-3000	13	15	28	14.0
3000-3500	10	17	27	13.5
3500-4000	5	2	7	3.5

Source: Primary Data

Income is the important factor which influences the most of the social factors. The wage of the tea garden was fixed by the tripartite agreement between the tea garden owner, the government, and the trade union for every 3 years; as on 19 February 2015 the wages were fixed at Rs112.50 for the first year, Rs 112.5 for the second year and Rs 132.5 for third year<sup>17</sup>. The wages earned by the worker were lower than the government-prescribed minimum wage rate. From Table 8 it can be seen that 69 percent of the worker earns below Rs 2500 per month. Fourteen percent of the respondents belong to the income group of Rs2500-3000 per month, and 13.5 percent of the respondents earn have income ranging between Rs3000-3500. Only 3.5 percent of the worker in the tea garden has an income of Rs3500-4000 a month.

**(b) Accessibility and availability of amenities such as housing with electricity, drinking water and sanitary toilet facilities, education facilities and health care services**

Awareness about government programs among tea garden workers is crucial for ensuring that they can access the benefits and support offered by various government initiatives. Tea garden workers often face economic and social challenges, and government programs can play a significant role in improving their livelihoods and living conditions.

Housing facilities of the Respondents

**Table 9:** Distribution of the Respondents according to their Housing Facilities

Housing provided or owned	Number of Respondents				Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Panchayat	Gram	Hatighisa Panchayat	Gram		
Own their house	45		37		82	41.0
Provided by the Tea Garden Authorities	55		63		118	59.0

Source: Primary Data

Tea garden workers in North Bengal often live in housing facilities provided by tea estate owners or management. These housing facilities are typically known as "labour lines" or "coolie lines". Workers in tea gardens are typically provided with housing facilities within the estate premises. These houses are often basic and may vary in terms of size and quality<sup>18</sup>. The bulk of respondents (59 percent), as shown in Table 9, reside in homes supplied by the tea garden authority. The housing offered to workers in tea gardens is often modest and simple. It consists of a small, single-storey. Facilities such as running water, electricity, and sanitation may be limited or not readily available. In some cases, workers may have to share community toilets and bathing areas. The housing is frequently supplied by the tea estate management as a benefit of the worker's employment, either for free or at a significantly reduced cost. Many cases, the housing is provided rent-free or at a heavily subsidized rate by the tea estate management as part of the worker's employment package.

Electrical Connectivity in Houses of the Respondents

**Table 10:** Distribution of the Respondents as per presence or absence of electrical connection in their house

Electricity Connectivity	Number of Respondents				Total	(to the Electricity Connectivity in their Houses in percent)
	Shikarpur Panchayat	Gram	Hatighisa Panchayat	Gram		
Yes	67		79		146	73.0
No	33		21		54	27.0

Source: Primary Data

The availability of electricity in tea garden worker housing can vary from one tea estate to another. Some estates may have better infrastructure and provide electricity to their workers' houses, while others may lack such facilities. In this study, 73 percent of the respondents' houses have electricity connectivity.

Sources of Drinking Water in Houses of the Respondents

**Table 11:** Distribution of the Respondents according to the Sources of Drinking Water

Sources of Drinking Water	Number of Respondents				Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Panchayat	Gram	Hatighisa Panchayat	Gram		
Tube Well	33		5		38	19.0
Well	67		95		162	81.0

Source: Primary Data

Many tea gardens have their own bore-wells or tube wells that tap into groundwater sources. Workers may use hand pumps or other systems to extract water for drinking and domestic purposes. The quality of groundwater can vary, so periodic testing and treatment may be necessary. Some tea gardens may have community wells where workers can collect water. In this study, 162 respondents use water from a well and the water ideally should have been monitored regularly to assure quality (practically there is no recorded data with the authority). Access to safe and clean drinking water is essential for the health and well-being of tea garden workers, and efforts should be made to ensure that the water sources are regularly tested and treated to meet safety standards.



Sanitary Toilet facilities in the Houses of the Respondents

**Table 12:** Distribution of the Respondents according to the as per presence or absence of Sanitary Toilet Facilities in their Houses

Sanitary Toilet facilities	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Yes	7	12	19	9.5
No	93	88	181	90.5

Source: Primary Data

Providing sanitary toilet facilities for tea garden workers is essential for their health, hygiene, and overall well-being. In many tea gardens, especially in remote or rural areas, access to proper sanitation can be limited. Table 12 shows that only 19 respondents' houses had sanitary toilet facilities there. The provision of sanitary toilets in tea garden workers' houses in North Bengal is essential. Sanitary toilets promote better sanitation and hygiene practices. They help prevent the spread of diseases, especially waterborne diseases, which can be prevalent in areas with inadequate sanitation facilities. Proper disposal of human waste reduces the risk of contamination of water sources and soil, safeguarding the health of tea garden workers and their families.

Education facilities in the Tea Garden

**Table 13:** Distribution of the Respondents according to the opinion about the Education Facilities

Distance of Primary School from Respondent's House (in Km.)	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
1-2	26	20	46	23.0
2-3	5	50	55	27.5
3-4	1	5	6	3.0
More Than 4	68	25	93	46.5
Medium of Transportation to School				
By Foot	16	24	40	20.0
Bicycle	78	67	145	72.5
Others	6	9	15	7.5
Road Connectivity to School				
Good	11	78	89	44.5
Not Good	89	22	111	55.5

Source: Primary Data

The distance between schools in tea gardens in North Bengal can vary depending on the specific location of the tea garden and the availability of educational facilities in the area. North Bengal is home to many tea gardens, and the distance to the nearest school can vary widely. Many tea gardens have schools within the estate for the education of workers' children. In some cases, there may be schools located within or very close to the tea gardens to serve the children of the tea garden workers. In other cases, children may need to travel some distance to reach a school. Table 13 shows 93 respondents have answered that the distance of school is more than 4 km from their houses, specifically in Murgi Vita and in Factory Line of Shikarpur Gram Panchayat. The majority of them answered that a bicycle is their mode of transportation to school. Road connectivity is not good specifically for Murgi Vita and Factory Line of Shikarpur.

Health Care Service facilities in the Tea Garden

**Table 14:** Distribution of the Respondents according to the opinion about the Health Care Service facilities

Health Care Service facilities	Number of Respondents		Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Gram Panchayat	Hatighisa Gram Panchayat		
Distance of Health Centres from Respondent's House (in Km.)				
1-5	95	74	169	84.5
5-10	5	26	31	15.5
Problems face by respondents while going to health centre				
No Problem	56	75	131	65.5
Transportation	33	22	55	27.5
Bad Road Connectivity	11	3	14	7.0
Health Issues faced by the Respondents				
No Disease	54	58	112	56.0
Fever	13	17	30	15.0
Weakness	13	7	20	10.0
Others	20	18	38	19.0

Whether Respondents Prefer Medical Advice				
Yes	53	70	123	61.5
No	47	30	77	38.5

Source: Primary Data

The distance of health centers from the houses of tea garden workers can vary widely depending on the specific location and region. Tea garden workers are often located in rural or remote areas, and the availability of health centers and their proximity to the workers' houses can be a significant concern for their healthcare access. The distance of 15.5 percent of respondents' houses from health centre is more than 5 km. and 34.5 percent of total respondents face problems going to the health centre due to a lack of transportation and bad road connectivity. The availability of roads, Poor road infrastructure, and transportation infrastructure can make healthcare facilities less accessible. The health issues faced by the respondents are not serious as revealed in this study, although yet 19 percent of them have respiratory problems, high blood pressure, and dermatitis. Tea garden workers often work in dusty environments, which can lead to respiratory problems such as bronchitis, asthma, and other lung diseases. Prolonged exposure to sunlight and chemicals used in tea cultivation and processing can lead to skin problems like dermatitis and sunburn. When any health issue arises about 62 percent of the respondents prefer to take medical advice. Efforts have been made by various organizations and the government to improve the living and working conditions of tea garden workers in North Bengal and address their health concerns. However, challenges remain, and ongoing efforts are needed to ensure the well-being of tea garden workers in these regions.

(c) **Opinion of the Respondents about the facilities and provisions provided by the tea-garden authorities**

**Table 15:** Distribution of the Respondents according to the opinion about the facilities and provisions provided by the tea-garden authorities

Opinion of the Respondents about the facilities and provisions provided by the tea-garden authorities	Number of Respondents				Total	(in percent)
	Shikarpur Panchayat	Gram	Hatighisa Panchayat	Gram		
Rice (in Kg)						
Not Entitled	-		11		11	5.5
Receiving 1-5 Kg	26		60		86	43.0
Receiving 5-11Kg	37		27		64	32.0
Receiving more than 11 Kg	37		2		39	19.5
Wheat (in kg)						
Not Entitled	-		11		11	5.5
Receiving 1-5 Kg	25		54		79	39.5
Receiving 5-11Kg	41		27		68	34.0
Receiving More than 11	34		8		42	21.0
Sugar						
Not Receiving	86		98		184	92.0
Receiving Upto 500 gms	10		2		12	6.0
Receiving 500 gms -1 kg	4		-		4	2.0
Kerosene						
Not Receiving	3		29		32	16.0
Receiving Less than 1 litre	21		29		50	25.0
Receiving 1-2 litres	76		42		118	59.0
Umbrella						
Receiving	89		71		160	80.0
Not Receiving	11		29		40	20.0
Raincoat						
Receiving	8		10		18	9.0
Not Receiving	92		90		182	91.0
Mosquito Net						
Receiving	85		99		184	92.0
Not Receiving	15		1		16	8.0
Satisfied on receiving aids						
Yes	47		54		101	50.5
No	53		46		99	49.5

Source: Primary Data

Ration provision for tea garden workers in North Bengal, India, is an important aspect of their livelihood and well-being. Tea gardens in North Bengal employ a significant workforce and provide essential food items through a ration system. It is a common practice to support the workers of the tea garden. The ration includes essential food items such as rice, wheat, sugar, pulses, cooking oil, and sometimes even non-food items like kerosene. The quantity and frequency of ration distribution may vary depending on government policies and the specific tea garden's circumstances. Some workers may receive monthly rations, while others may receive them at different intervals. Only 11 respondents out of 200 are not entitled the rice and wheat through the rationing system and it is in Atal tea garden of Hatighisa gram panchayat. Only 8 percent of the total respondents are



receiving sugar. Umbrellas and mosquito nets are provided to the majority of the respondents by the tea garden authorities. However, 91 percent of them did not get raincoats from the garden authorities. Supplying raincoats to tea garden workers in North Bengal is an essential aspect of ensuring their well-being and productivity, as North Bengal experiences significant rainfall during the monsoon season. These raincoats help protect the workers from getting drenched and suffering from health issues related to exposure to rain. More than 50 percent of the respondents receive kerosene oil 1-2 litres. It is interesting to know that almost 50 percent of the respondents are satisfied with the tea garden management.

## VI: Conclusion

The study area chosen for this study was tea gardens namely Fotinga Line, Danga Line, Murgivita and Factory Line in Shikarpur (Jalpaiguri); and Atal and Damdama in Hatighisa gram panchayat (Darjeeling) district respectively. The basic objective of the survey was to probe the socio-economic condition of the workers of the tea garden, to what extent the area has developed or has been developing and also to know the different problems of the people of the study area. The study turned out to be an eye-opener as it helped us to be aware of the different problems that the residents of the study area have been facing not only in the present but also in the past years. The condition of the road, drainage, drinking water, toilets, etc. were in the worst condition and this depicts to what extent the development has reached the corners of the country. The road is the lifeline that connects one region with the other but the road of the study area of Shikarpur was in a most horrible condition. The study area of Hatighisa revealed completely a contradictory scenario in the case of road connectivity as 80% of the roads were in good condition and bicycle was the chief mode of transport transportation of the people of both areas was bicycle. Water, which is the most essential ingredient for the sustenance of human lives, supply and quality were also not in proper condition in Shikarpur. Therefore, it can be opined through the fact that in comparison to Hatighisa of Darjeeling district, the Socio-economic conditions of Shikarpur of Jalpaiguri district were in poor state. Despite of the provision of sanitary latrines to the tea garden workers according to the Plantation Labour Act of 1951, the majority of tea garden workers of the study area of both gram panchayats do not have any proper toilet facility in their respective houses. In Shikarpur 53% of respondents have expressed dissatisfaction answered that they are not satisfied with the management of the tea garden. Similarly, in Hatighisa 46% of respondents were not satisfied with the management of tea garden. Overall, we can say that satisfaction levels among the respondents are more or less the same across the respondents. Though in recent years some facilities are provided by the government in addition to that provided by the tea garden management, this is not enough for the development of society. After the observation that are supposed to be given to every worker or they are not aware of their own rights things can be concluded by saying that the people are deprived of many benefits. Overall, we may conclude that respondents' levels of satisfaction are largely consistent across respondents. Even if the government has recently begun to offer some facilities in addition to the facilities run by the tea garden management, this is insufficient for society to advance. The conclusion that can be drawn that the tea garden workers are unaware of their own rights and that the people are denied many benefits.

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