

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMY OF ORAON FAMILIES LIVING IN A FUNCTIONAL AND IN A CLOSED TEA GARDEN OF KALCHINI BLOCK, ALIPURDUAR, WEST BENGAL

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Abstract—Tea, with which the world cheers, is the result of millions of workers' tears. India is the second largest tea producer in the world after China. Indian tea industry is one of the largest tea industries in the world with more than 13,000 tea gardens and a total labour-force of over 2 million people. The total production of tea in the North Indian tea industry during 2015–16 was 1,008.56 million kg, and the Dooars region alone produced 177.85 million kg of made tea. In West Bengal there are 276 organized tea gardens which employed about 6 lakh workers. Among 276 tea gardens in four districts Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Alipurduar approximately 31 are shut down or are sick or are locked out. This has resulted in deteriorated lifestyle of 4,80,000 families. In open tea garden, the workers' conditions are also miserable. In this ground, the researcher thought of comparing the actual status of present socio-economy of two gardens side by side – one closed Tea Garden and a functional one, by a mixed research approach. Due to lack of time, he studied on a specific community, Oraon tribal group, residing in the tea gardens of Satali Tea Garden – the functional one and the Madhu Tea Garden – the closed one. Through, the asset component of DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, he compared the different asset possession of the 40 Oraon households each from the two tea gardens, by providing equal weightage to each sub-indicators following Cross-Dimensional Cut-off Method. He also tried to focus a while on the provisions of the Plantation Labour Act, 2000 on the Oraon Tea Garden workers of the Satali T.G. (Functional). From the results, it is evident that after the closure of the garden, people went outside the garden, engaging themselves in labour jobs which resulted in higher monthly income of them (Mean monthly income – Rs.10,412.5), bringing to them many sources of information to accomplish a livelihood. Whereas, in the functional tea garden, the condition is pathetic, more than 65% of the permanent tea garden workers are not getting the PLA, 2000 provisions properly. Low wage rate and continuous domination by tea garden management, depending solely on tea gardens to survive, restricted their way of development. Finally, it was established that at present, the socio-economic condition of the Closed Tea Garden is better than that of the Functional Tea Garden.

Introduction

Tea, the most common and popular beverage has spread its flavour of fascination across the world. For most of the Indian people, a day without a cup of tea is beyond imagination. According to the Tea Board of India, 2016, India is the second largest tea producer in the world after China. India is also the world's largest consumer of black tea with the domestic market consuming an amount of 911 million kgs of Tea. Even when considering about exports of Tea, India ranked fourth exporting 220.84 million kgs of tea which then, had a market value of US\$ 641.95 million. While considering the total size of the Indian Tea Industry, it is having 1692 registered tea manufacturers, 2200 registered tea exporters, 5548 registered tea buyers and 9 tea auction centers. While uttering the names of the important tea exporters around the world, the name of India bangs among the topmost sections of list, accounting for around 12-13% of world tea exports. Indian tea industry is one of the largest tea industries in the world with more than 13,000 tea gardens and a total labour-force of over two million people. This industry earns a substantial foreign exchange and thus provides a huge amount of revenue to the country. The turnover in total is of Rs.9000 crore. The Assam Valley, Cachar, Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai comprise as the tea-producing regions in the North Indian tea Industry. Assam Valley and Cachar come under Assam, whereas West Bengal covers Darjeeling, Dooars and Terai regions. The total production of tea in the North Indian tea industry during 2015–16 was 1,008.56 million kg, and the Dooars region alone produced 177.85 million kg of made tea (Tea Board of India). This production rate ranks the first place in production in contrast

to other regions of the country. Thus, a set of 150 tea estates in Dooars, has a vast impact on the economy of this region (Tea Board Annual Report, 2017)

Though the Tea industry in India has earned a lot of fame in the national and international markets, yet there is a major drawback which always curtails the development of this industry. The problems are with the labour and those resulting due to the incidence of closure. According to the Report on Hunger in Tea Plantations in North Bengal, 2004, in the past few years, “the tea industry in West Bengal has been in a state of crisis”. According to the Tea Board of India, 2016-2017 report, in West Bengal there were 276 organized tea gardens which employed about 6 lakh workers and more than 2.5 million people are dependent on the tea industry. But, due to several reasons, 10 tea gardens were closed in west Bengal, which included – Dekhlapara Tea Garden, Bundapani Tea Garden, Dharanipur Tea Garden, Redbank Tea Garden, Surendranagar Tea Garden, Madhu Tea Garden, Panighata Tea Garden, Manabari Tea Garden, Joybirpara Tea Garden and Kumlai Tea Garden. Alipurduar district alone has 61 organized tea gardens but out of those 3 are closed, causing wretchedness to thousands of the tea garden workers and their families. “The socio economic condition of tea workers and their dependents is very pathetic as they lag behind the non tea worker on all socio economic indicators who are residing in the same district”. (Ansari and Sheereen, 2016)

According to a newspaper article from Times of India, after the closure of the three tea gardens in Jalpaiguri (presently Alipurduar), 12 people died of starvation (Bhattacharya, 2013: Times of India). Likewise, more than thousands of deaths due to poverty and starvation have been recorded in the state of West Bengal due to the closure of tea gardens.

Even the conditions of the tea garden workers in the functioning tea gardens are not at all good. They are also facing the same problems and are getting violated and deprived from their basic rights and thus have a marginalized socio-economic condition. Due to low wages the workers are not able to live a standard lifestyle. The workers suffered from the low cost of work, high price of daily necessary goods, scarcity of food, disease for lack of nourishment, death, oppression, exploitation, physical torture etc. There is no good relationship among the workers and the management in the garden which is also a major reason for the problems in Dooars Tea Gardens. (Sarkar, 2013)

“Between 2000 and 2015, Fourteen Hundred (1400) people have died in 17 tea Gardens in the North Bengal. Severe malnutrition has been the main cause of death in these estates” (Chaudhuri, 2015) Evidences are there that, among 276 tea gardens in four districts Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Coochbehar and Alipurduar approximately 31 are shut down or are sick or are locked out. This has resulted in deteriorated lifestyle of 4, 80,000 families who were employed by those gardens, and thus they are suffering from a devastating crisis, women and children being most vulnerable and the worst affected ones. With no alternative jobs or income sources, it has become a daily challenge for them to sustain and they are struggling regularly for their survival (Roy, 2017)

Many research and academic reports have been done in the Tea Garden area which directly dealt with labor issues (wages and health risks), production and marketing of tea, food security, conditions of women and children, education issues, shift in occupation etc. But, according to the consulted reviews of the present researchers, no attempt have been made to integrate all the components of the livelihood together to depict the actual socio-economic conditions of a specific vulnerable tribe, which aimed to cover all the assets encompassing and shaping a livelihood of a community. For the first time, an attempt has been also made so that the livelihood status according to the assets, can be compared both in an functioning tea garden and a closed one for a specific community or group.

Objectives of the Research

The general or broad objective of the present research is to understand the socio-cultural and socio-economic background of the tea garden workers. For the present research a Particularly Vulnerable Group (PVG), the Oraon, is taken into consideration. Oraon is one the tribal groups who migrated as tea garden labourer from Chhotanagpur plateau to Dooars area. The tea gardens selected have Oraon group of people in large number. For comparison two tea gardens are selected,. One that is still functioning and ther is shut down.

Following are the specific objectives of the research:-

1. Compare the socio-economic conditions of Oraon tribes employed in a functional Tea Garden with those living in a Closed Tea Garden.
2. To know about the availability of different Development Projects of the Government to the Oraons living in the two Tea Gardens.
3. To validate whether the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is properly implemented for the Oraon community in the functional Tea Graden.
4. To make suggestion and recommendation for any development measure for the Oraons living in Dooars area either in a functional, operating tea garden or in a shutdown, non-functional tea garden.

The study will reveal whether the conditions of the migrated tribes working in tea plantation in Dooars are same or different on the basis of the status of the tea gardens (Functional and Closed). If it appears that there exists difference in livelihood status, if traced out different livelihood conditions, then by what extent the conditions differ, what are the different ways they are tackling the situation and other issues. This study can be used for further referencing in framing strategies/policies in future for the specific tea tribe studied and endeavor may be made for the upliftment of their livelihood conditions.

Research Questions

The main research questions for this study are –

1. Is the socio-economic condition of the Oraon Tribal Workers same in both Functional and Closed Tea Gardens of Alipurduar?
2. Do the Oraon Tribal Workers of the Functional Tea Garden enjoy the provisions as mentioned under Plantation Labour Act, 1951?

Methodology

Sampling

A Multistage Random Sampling has been used for the whole research work, to accomplish the set up research objectives successfully. The state, district, block and the Closed Tea Garden were chosen purposively and the Functional Tea Garden was chosen according to the convenient sampling method of non-probabilistic sampling. The study is focused on the Oraon households, for that reason, only Oraon households are chosen from both the tea gardens – purposively. After that, checklists of Oraon households were prepared from both the gardens and households were selected consulting the three digit Random Number Table.

The total population of Oraon Households in Satali Tea Garden was 142 and that of Madhu Tea Garden was 125, which were distributed in five and four parts (booths) respectively in the two Tea Gardens. From the each five parts of Satali Tea Garden, eight households were chosen comprising the sample size of forty Oraon Households in Satali Tea Garden. Whereas, in Madhu Tea Garden, there are four parts and ten Oraon households were collected from each part, making the sample size for madhu Tea Garden of forty Oraon Households. The researcher has taken equal number of Oraon households from both the Tea Gardens that is forty each for his research objective. Thus, the total sample size for the study is eighty Oraon households.

Measurement of Variables

Relevant variables/ attributes for the study were put under the sections- Demographic information (Name, Age, Family type), Socio-economic status (Income, Education, Occupation, House type). Different variables according to the Millennium Development Goals, UNDP, 2018 as well as from the Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to get results for his main objective. Some of the variables are also modified according to the socio-economic conditions of the village. The variables are classified under the broad concepts of – Human Asset, Physical Asset, Social Asset, Financial Asset and Natural Asset. (DFID Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, 2000) A total of 20 variables were chosen –

Assets /Capital	Variables /Indicators	Description
Physical Asset	Housing	Condition of housing materials, wall, floor and number of rooms
	Sanitation	Availability and use of toilets
	Cooking Fuel	The material which the household use as fuel in cooking purpose
	Asset Ownership	Whether the household possess – transport assets, livestock, TV, Refrigerator and other important assets
Human Asset	Earning Members	Total number of earning members a household have
	Acute Morbidity	If any members of household suffer from major illness or have died in the last 5 years
	Dropouts	Whether any child (below 18 years) left school, before completing a qualification
	Male-Female Literacy Rate	Total percent of male and female population who can read and write
Social Asset	Involvement of Local Leader	If any member in the household is a local leader
	SHG involvement	If any women member in the household engaged in SHG
	Community Relations	If the household helps others and get help from others of community they live in
	Decision-making in society	Whether the household is involved in taking community decisions
	Access to different Govt. schemes and entitlements	If the household members are entitled to different Govt. Schemes and entitlements
Financial Asset	Source of livelihood information	From how many sources, the household is getting different information related to lives and livelihood
	Habit of Saving Money	Whether the household have a habit of savings weekly or monthly or other periodically

	Total Income	Total household income per month per household
	Total Savings	Total household savings per month per household
	Indebtedness	Whether the household have debts to be paid
	Job Security	If the household income sources are secured that is whether they are having proper job security
Natural Asset	Natural Resource Availability	Availability & Access to the benefits of different Natural Resources like river or forest or soil etc.

Data Collection Instrument

After the primary screening of variables through literature survey, two types of instruments were developed for data collection—semi structured interview schedule and checklist for Focus Group Discussion. The items were put into the draft interview schedule and checklist following the selected variables. It was prepared after extensive review, expert consultation and was finalized after pretesting. To collect relevant data both primary and secondary, from different levels of stakeholders, the researcher has obtained different methods, tools and techniques.

A semi-structured interview schedule was formed for collection of data from both the tea gardens. It consisted of sections – General Information, Household Background Information, Assets and Some Other Relevant Information, valid for the research design and objectives.

Household Surveys, Informal Interaction, Focus Group Discussion, PRA methods, Key informant interview and observation were the major methods for the collection of the data.

Data Analysis

Considering about the Quantitative approaches, the collected survey data of socio-economy, demography, livelihood are distributed and analyzed by Conventional Descriptive Statistics – Mean, Frequency, Percentage, Standard Deviation.

For the comparison of the asset ownership of both the two gardens, a standardized method was used named Cross-Dimensional Cut-off Method, which is been used as an important methodology to calculate the Acute Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index.

Under this method the ‘key indicators’ under the specific assets are equally weighed and relevant scores are given. The following table will help to understand the scoring pattern of the different variables/attributes taken in this study, in accordance with the research objectives and situations of the two tea gardens –

Assets /Capital (Weightage)	Variables /Indicators	Conditions	Weightage (1/No. of Sub-indicators)×Total Indicators
Physical Asset (1/4)	Housing		
	- House Type	Pukka, Asbestos Roofed	(1/12×20)
	- Flooring	Cemented Floor	(1/12×20)
	- Number of Rooms	More than 3 rooms	(1/12×20)
	Sanitation	Households having and using toilets	(1/4×20)
	Cooking Fuel	Households using gas as fuel for cooking	(1/4×20)
	Asset Ownership		
- Livestock	Households having cows or/and goats	(1/20×20)	
- Transport	Households possessing bikes or/and cars	(1/20×20)	
-Kitchen Garden	Households having kitchen garden	(1/20×20)	
- Television	Households having TV	(1/20×20)	
-Refrigerator	Households possessing Fridge	(1/20×20)	
Human Asset (1/4)	Earning Members	Number of earning members 2 or more than 2	(1/4×20)
	Acute Morbidity	Household members (both adults and children) not suffered from serious health problems in last 5 years	(1/4×20)
	Dropouts	Children (below 18 years) of households not left school	(1/4×20)
	Literacy Rate		
	Male Literacy Rate	Household Male Literacy Rate more than Mean Male Literacy Rate (71.47%)	(1/8×20)
Female Literacy Rate	Household Female Literacy Rate more than Mean Female Literacy Rate (64.83%)	(1/8×20)	

Social Asset (1/6)	Involvement of Local Leader	Any household member is recognized as local leader	(1/6×20)
	SHG involvement	Any women household member engage in SHG	(1/6×20)
	Community Relations	Gets community support and helps the community in need	(1/6×20)
	Decision-making in society	Household involved in community decision making process	(1/6×20)
	Access to different Govt. schemes and entitlements	Households getting more than 3 Govt. schemes facilities and entitlements	(1/6×20)
	Source of livelihood information	Households getting livelihood information from 3 or more than 3 sources	(1/6×20)
Financial Asset (1/5)	Habit of Saving Money	Household having savings habit	(1/5×20)
	Total Income	Total household income per month per household more than or equal to mean monthly income (Rs.9093.75)	(1/5×20)
	Total Savings	Total household savings per month per household more than or equal to mean household savings (Rs.1296.37)	(1/5×20)
	Indebtedness	Households at the time of survey not under debts	(1/5×20)
	Job Security	Households having secure jobs	(1/5×20)
Natural Asset (1)	Natural Resource Availability	Conveniently and easy availability of available natural resources by the households	(1×20)

Results

Table - Demographic Distribution of sampled Oraon Households obtained from the two Tea Gardens

	Satali Tea Garden (Functional)	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed)
Total Sample Oraon Households Covered	40	40
Total Family Members	208	176
Total Males	95 (45.6)*	84 (47.72)*
Total Females	113 (54.4)*	92 (52.28)*
Total Children (Below 18 years)	47 (22.5)*	44 (25)*
Total Adults (Above 18 years)	161 (77.5)*	131 (75)*

Note – The values denoted by ‘*’ represents Frequency (Percentage)

Source: Field Survey

According to the Table 4.1.1, it can be understood that the total sample covered from both the gardens is of equal size, that is of 40, which is covering the total family members of 208 in Satali Tea Garden – the Functional one and 176 from the closed Madhu Tea Garden. The percentage of females in the Satali Tea Garden (54.4%) and in Madhu Tea Garden (52.28%) reveals the domination of females over their counterparts males (45.6% in Satali T.G. and 47.72% in Madhu T.G.), in terms of population. It is evident that the total percentage of adults over the children in both the Tea Gardens is more or less same. Though for the Satali Tea Garden, percentage of adults are more (77.5%) than Madhu Tea Garden (75%).

Objective-wise Findings & Discussion:

4.2.1 Objective – 1: To compare the socio-economic conditions of the Oraon tribes living in a Functional Tea Garden with those living in an Open Tea Garden

Table 4.2.1.1 Occupation-wise Distribution of the Oraon Households in the two gardens (N = 80 → n1=40, n2=40)

Variables	Class	Frequency Distribution	
		Satali Tea Garden (Functional) Frequency (Percentage)	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed) Frequency (Percentage)
Primary Occupation	Tea Leaf Plucking	0	8 (20)
	Manual Labour	4 (10)	23 (57.5)
	Migrant Labour	1 (2.5)	4 (10)
	White Collared Job	0	1 (7.5)
	Personal Business	1 (2.5)	3 (2.5)
	Tea Factory workers	3 (7.5)	0
	Driver	0	1 (2.5)
	Permanent Tea Garden Worker	25 (62.5)	0
	Tea Garden Non-worker (Public-Permanent)	6 (15)	0

Secondary Occupation	No Secondary Occupation	6 (15)	10 (25)
	Tea Leaf Plucker	0	13 (32.5)
	Manual Labour	5 (12.5)	2 (5)
	Migrant Labour	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)
	White Collared Job	0	1 (2.5)
	Personal Business	3 (7.5)	7 (17.5)
	Tea Factory workers	1 (2.5)	0
	Driver	1 (2.5)	0
	Permanent Tea Garden Worker	2 (5)	1 (2.5)
	Tea Garden Bigha Worker(Temporary)	17 (42.5)	2 (5)
	Tea Garden Non-worker(Public-Permanent)	3 (7.5)	0
	Private Tuition	1 (2.5)	3 (7.5)

According to the Table - , it is found that the functioning and closed status of the two tea gardens, have changed the occupational pattern of the Oraon families drastically.

It is found that most of the households in the Functioning Satali Tea Garden, are Permanent Tea Garden Workers (62.5%), followed by Tea Garden Non-workers (15%), manual labour (10%) and others. While considering their secondary Occupation, it is found that most of the households as a secondary source of income are engaged in Tea Garden Bigha Worker jobs (42.5%), which is temporary work obtained in the tea gardens at the over-growing season, followed by wage labour works (12.5%) outside the garden in the lean seasons. But their occupational pattern is restricted within the in-garden works, which has become their prime source of income.

At the same time, when we see the Madhu Tea Garden's occupational pattern, it is noticeable that most of the households (57.5%) depend on waged manual labour jobs followed by the Tea leaf plucking (20%) in the closed tea garden and selling them to the middleman. The tea garden being closed, has left the workers with no way-outs but to move outside the garden and earn as labour jobs. Looking at their Secondary occupation, it is observed that most of them (25%) do not have any secondary occupation at all because they get enough money, while doing labour jobs outside garden. The maximum percentage of households (32.5%), are working as Tea leaf pluckers, followed by personal business (17.5%) which included Dairy business, shops in and outside the tea garden and other cottage industries.

Monthly Income-wise Distribution of the Oraon Households in the two gardens (N = 80 → n1=40, n2=40)

Variables	Frequency Distribution		
	Class	Satali Tea Garden (Functional) Frequency (Percentage)	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed) Frequency (Percentage)
Income Ranges	<6000	16 (40)	3 (7.5)
	6000-8000	10 (25)	15 (37.5)
	8001-10000	9 (22.5)	7 (17.5)
	10001-12000	4 (10)	3 (7.5)
	12001-14000	1 (2.5)	6 (15)
	14001-16000	0	3 (7.5)
	16001-18000	0	1 (2.5)
	>18000	0	2 (5)

From the above Table – 4.2.1.3, it is evident that there is a huge income disparity in the two tea gardens. In Satali Tea Garden, most of the households are earning a monthly income below Rs. 6000 (40%), followed by Rs. (6000-8000) (25%), while none of the households there, are having an monthly income ranging from Rs. (14001 to >18000). It is because of the fact, that they are solely dependent on the tea garden works, where they are paid with a less wage of Rs.173/day.

At the other tea garden, Madhu T.G., most of the households (37.5%) are earning a monthly income of Rs.(6000-8000), which is more than that of the Satali T.G. Here it can be seen that some households (5%) are even earning more than Rs.18000/month. It is the result of working outside the Tea garden, where they get better wages for the manual labor or other works.

4.2.1.4 Income Inequality in the two Tea Gardens through Lorenz Curve

The present researcher through the obtained ranges of household incomes has found two Lorenz curves for the two different tea gardens to know and compare their income inequality more intensely. In Lorenz curve, there is a Line of Equality, against which the Lorenz curve is drawn. The Line of Equality serves as a parameter to know the deviation of the results obtained. The more the deviation of the Lorenz curve, from the Line of Equality, the more the distribution is inequal, dynamic.

In the Figures – 4.2.1.4(a) and 4.2.1.4(b), Lorenz curve of Monthly Income of Satali and Madhu Tea Garden are drawn, the X-axis representing the cumulative percentage of Oraon families and the Y-axis, there is Cumulative percentage of monthly Income. The curves are as follows –

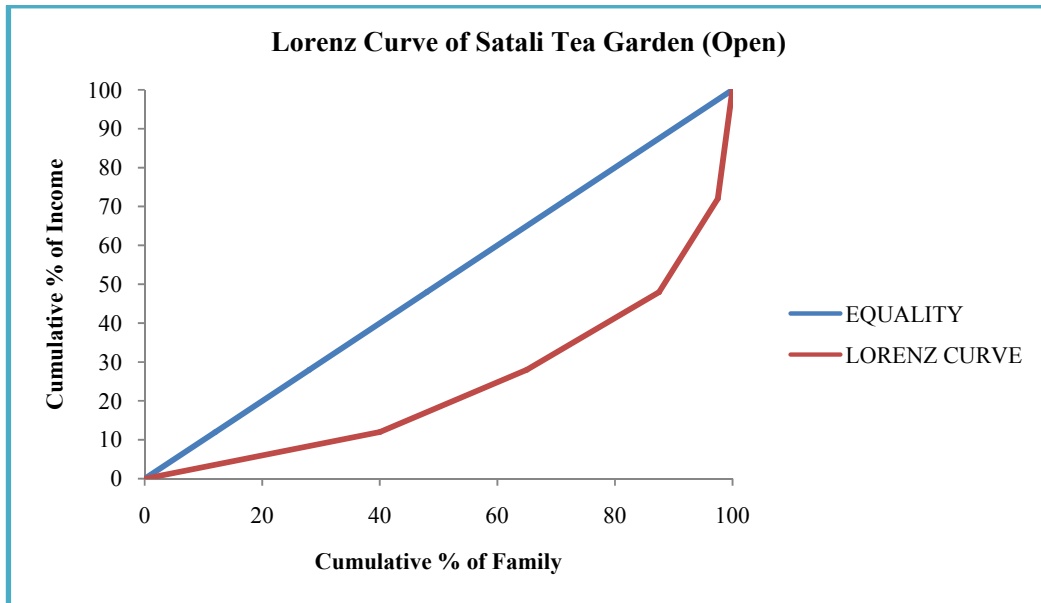


Fig.4.2.1.4(a) Lorenz curve of Satali Tea Garden (Functional)

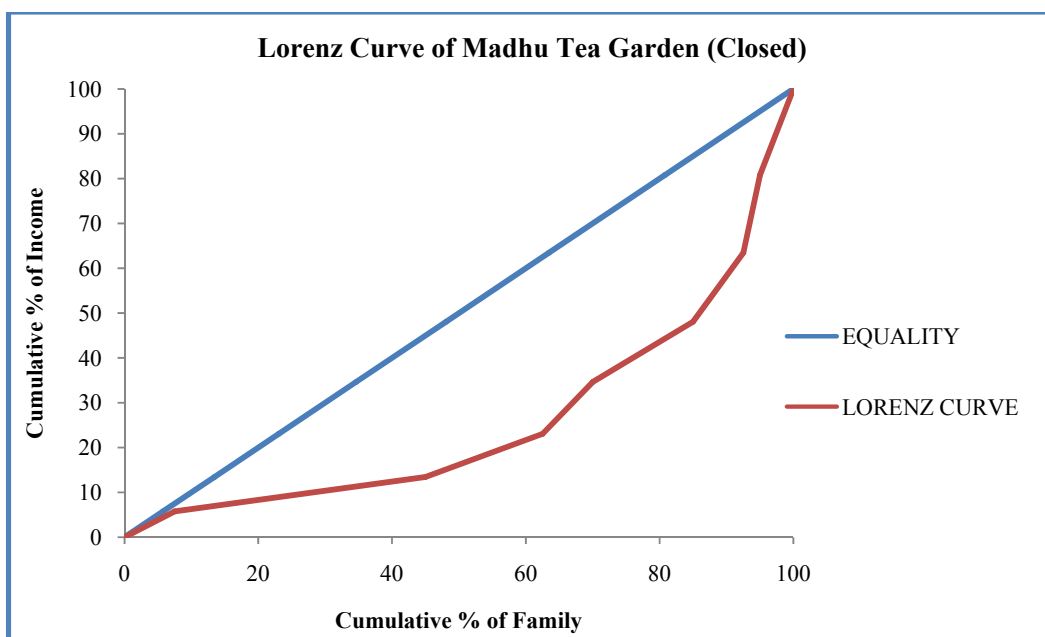


Fig.-4.2.1.4(b) Lorenz Curve of Madhu Tea Garden (Closed)

From the above two Figures-4.2.1.4(a) and 4.2.1.4(b), if properly noticed, it can be assessed that in Madhu Tea Garden, the Lorenz curve is more deviated than that in case of Satali Tea Garden, where it is comparatively less deviated. As a result, the area between the Lorenz curve and the Line of Equality is maximum in case of Madhu Tea Garden and thus it can be said that, the income inequality is more prevalent in the Madhu Tea Garden Oraon households. The income is dynamic in this garden, whereas in the Satali tea garden, the income is more stable,

This may be because of the occupational pattern and varied income of the Madhu Tea Garden workers, where in case of Satali tea garden, the income of most households, as obtained from the inside garden jobs, are stable, consistent.

Physical Asset possession of Oraon Households in the two gardens (N = 80 → n1=40, n2=40)

Variables/Attributes	Frequency Distribution		
	Class	Frequency (%)	
		Satali Tea Garden (Functional)	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed)
House Ownership	Own-made	10 (25)	11 (27.5)
	Free Use (not modified)	8 (20)	3 (7.5)
	Government provided Modified but free use	1 (2.5)	3 (7.5)
		21 (52.5)	23 (57.5)
House Type	Kaccha	11 (27.5)	6 (15)
	Pukka (Asbestos-roofed)	28 (70)	31 (77.5)
	Wood-made	1 (2.5)	3 (7.5)
Floor of House	Mud	12 (30)	6 (15)
	Cemented	28 (70)	34 (85)
Sanitation	Open	19 (47.5)	9 (22.5)
	Public Toilet	2 (5)	3 (7.5)
	Private Toilet	19 (47.5)	28 (70)
Livestock Reared*	Cows	13 (48.1)	13 (68.4)
	Goats	18 (66.7)	9 (47.4)
	Poultry	12 (44.4)	5 (26.3)
	Pigs	4 (14.8)	1 (5.3)
Cooking Fuel*	Gas	26 (65)	26 (66.7)
	Wood	36 (90)	30 (76.9)
Number of Rooms	2	11 (27.5)	9 (22.5)
	3	12 (30)	16 (40)
	4	12 (30)	10 (25)
	5	4 (10)	4 (10)
	6	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)
Transport Assets*	Cycle	15 (83.3)	21 (95.5)
	Bike	5 (27.8)	9 (40.9)
	Car	0	1 (4.5)
	Toto	0	1 (4.5)
Other Important Asset Possession	Television	18 (45)	25 (62.5)
	Refrigerator	6 (15)	13 (32.5)
	Kitchen garden	10 (25)	19 (47.5)
Source of drinking Water	Tube-well	10 (25)	34 (85)
	Tank	0	6 (15)
	Mobile Water Tanks	30 (75)	0
Source of Light in Households *	Electric Tube	40 (100)	40 (100)
	Candle	33 (82.5)	36 (90)
	Kerosene Lamp	18 (45)	14 (35)
	LED	19 (47.5)	18 (45)

* indicates – Multiple Responses recorded

According to the Table & Figure – 4.2.1.5, it can be seen that responses are obtained from the Oraon households of two tea gardens, under 11 variables representing the Physical Asset Possession of them.

In analyzing the House-ownership, the permanent tea garden workers are given with a house to reside in which is of free use. Some modify that houses by their own, even some totally make new houses, again Government provided houses are there under IAY. In both Satali and madhu Tea Garden, the maximum percentage of the households (52.5% for Satali tea garden and 57.5% for Madhu Tea Garden) have modified their freely provided houses. In case of Madhu T.G. it is more. 20% of the households in satali T.G. have not modified their houses, in case of Madhu Tea Garden it is negligible (7.5%). More Government provided houses were received by Madhu T.G.(7.5%) Oraon families than Satali T.G. (2.5%).

While considering the House types, three categories of house types were found in the two gardens – Kuccha, Pukka(Asbestos-roofed) and wood-made. In both the Tea gardens, it is seen that the most of the households (77.5% for Madhu T.G. and 70% for satali T.G.) are having pukka type of houses with Asbestos-roofs. The percentage of Kaccha houses are found more in Satali T.G. (27.5%) than Madhu T.G. (15%), representing the better socio-economic condition of the Oraon families living in closed Madhu T.G.

Looking at the flooring of the houses, more households (85%) are having cemented floors in Madhu T.G. which dominates the percentage of households having cemented floor in Satali T.G.(70%). Though in both the gardens, very less households are still having mud floor (30% for Satali T.G. and 15% for Madhu T.G.).

Considering the sanitation status of the two tea gardens, it is found that more households in Madhu T.G. (70%) are using and maintaining private toilets for their excretion purpose whereas in Satali T.G. the percentage is so less (47.5%). Open defecation is still practiced in both the tea gardens, but in Satali T.G. the percentage is much more (47.5%), in Madhu it is 22.5%. Public toilets are there, but are rarely used by the two tea garden Oraon families (7.5% for Madhu T.G. and 5% for Satali T.G.), due to the ill conditions and unhygienic conditions. Considering these results, it can be said the Madhu Tea Garden Oraon families are much better when their sanitation status is considered. The reason may be due to the continuous awareness camps in the Tea Garden after its losure.

Livestock rearing is also a common practice among the Oraon households of the two families. But, comparatively more percentage of households in cumulative measures of Satali T.G.(174%) are rearing livestock than that of Madhu T.G.(147.4%). While in Madhu T.G. the major livestock that are reared are the cows (68.4%), whereas in Satali it is goats (66.7%). The reason of less cumulative percentage of Madhu T.G. Oraon families is their less time to maintain and rear the ivestock properly and their moving outside the garden. In Satali T.G. the workers, as remaining in the garden only, gets more time to rear the livestock.

For cooking purpose, most Oraon households in the two gardens are using wood (90% for Satali T.G. and 76.9% for MadhuT.G.). Though many households are also using Gas, (65% for SataliT.G. and 66.7% for Madhu T.G.), but, the use of wood is more in Satali T.G. which is the result of the provision of peels of wood to the permanent tea garden workers of that garden, which facility is absent in Madhu T.G. Oraon households.

While focusing on the number of rooms, most of the households (40%) of the Oraon households in Madhu T.G. have three rooms, while in Satali T.G. equal percentage of houses (30%) have three and four rooms, representing more number of rooms in Satali T.G. Oraon households.

Looking at the Transport asset possession, cycle is a common transport asset which is found in most of the households in the two tea gardens (83.3% for Satali T.G. & 95.5% for Madhu T.G.). But in case of Madhu T.G. it is evident that more households (40.9%) are having bikes, even car is found in 4.5% households and toto is also found in 4.5% households, which is not present among the Satali T.G. households. Only 27.8% of the households are having bikes in Satali T.G. Thus, it can be said that in possession of transport assets, the Madu T.G. Oraon households are dominating. The reason is that the Madhu T.G. people generally works outside the Tea garden and so they have to go more outside the garden than that of Satali T.G. people, which instigated their transport asset possession. At the same time, their better financial condition also invigorated the process.

Among the other important asset possession, more households in Madhu T.G.(62.5%) are having television than Satali T.G.(45%). Again more households (32.5%) are possessing refrigerators in Madhu T.G. Even kitchen garden possession are also dominating in Madhu T.G.(47.5%) than Satali T.G.(25%)

The main source of drinking water in the Satali T.G. is the mobile water tanks, on which most of the households (75%) are depending. In Madhu T.G. as the tea garden is closed there is no provision of mobile water tanks, most of the households (85%) are using tube-wells for drinking water purpose.

While considering the source of the light in both the gardens, as electricity distribution is well prevailing, electric bulbs/tubes, LED are used in abundance. All the households (100%) in both the tea gardens have access to electric tubes.

Thus, it can be said when considered the multiple physical assets, the Madhu T.G. Oraon households are dominating the Satali T.G. in terms of Physical asset possession.

Human Asset possession of Oraon Households in the two gardens (N = 80 → n1=40, n2=40)

Variables/Attributes	Class	Frequency Distribution	
		Frequency (%)	
		Satali Tea Garden (Functional)	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed)
Total Earning Members	1	7 (17.5)	14 (35)
	2	23 (57.5)	22 (55)
	3	10 (25)	4 (10)
Female earning Members	0	5 (12.5)	14 (35)
	1	24 (60)	22 (55)
	2	11 (27.5)	4 (10)
Dropout Status	Present	6 (15)	14 (35)
	Absent	32 (85)	26 (65)
Acute Morbidity	Present	22 (55)	25 (62.5)
	Absent	18 (45)	15 (37.5)

According to the Table & Figure 4.2.1.6.1, it can be found that total earning members, female earning members, dropout status, acute morbidity are some of the major human asset variables. When focusing on the total earning members, it can be found that in Satali T.G. in most of the households (57.5%), there are two working members, the same case is true for the Madhu T.G. (55%). Whereas the households having earning members of three are more (25%) in Satali T.G. than Madhu T.G.(10%).

Again the number of female earning members is comparatively more in Satali T.G. than Madhu T.G. In Madhu T.G. major number of households (35%) have no female earning members, whereas it is hard to find (12.5%) in Satali T.G. 60% of the households in Satali T.G. have one female earning member followed by two earning members (27.5%). In Madhu T.G. the percentage of female earning members of one are much less (55%), and only 10% households have two female earning members. The major reason for this is that, in Madhu T.G. the Oraon households per capita income is much more which results less engagement of female members in earning, thus curtailing their human asset possession.

Looking into the dropout status, it is evident that in Madhu T.G. more households there is the occurrence of dropouts (35%), which is much less in Satali T.G. (15%). This is because of the fact, that the male children in Madhu T.G. are having a dire to earn more for his family by going outside the garden, which is less in case of Satali T.G.

While considering the acute morbidity status, in both the tea gardens, it is present. But, in Madhu T.G., after closure there occurred much incidents of acute morbidity resulting in more households to have acute morbidity (62.5%) than Satali T.G.(55%).

It was found that the mean literacy rate of Satali T.G. is much more (68.35%) than that of Madhu T.G.(62.95%). The mean male Literacy rate in MadhuT.G. is very poor (56.5%), in which the Satali T.G. scores 67.5%. In mean female Literacy Rate, the Madhu T.G. & Satali T.G. almost have equal rates (69.2% for Satali T.G. and 69.4% for Madhu T.G.).

Thus, considering the results from the Table – 4.2.1.6.1 and Table 4.2.1.6.2 it can be said that in Human Asset possession, the Satali T.G. Oraon Households are dominating the Madhu T.G. Oraon households.

Social Asset Possession of Oraon Households in the two gardens (N = 80 → n1=40, n2=40)

Variables/Attributes	Class	Frequency Distribution	
		Frequency (%)	
		Satali Tea Garden (Functional)	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed)
Participation in Community Decisions	Never	8 (20)	1 (2.5)
	Sometimes	28 (70)	27 (67.5)
	Often	4 (10)	12 (30)
Household Women member engaged in SHG	Yes	20 (50)	29 (72.5)
	No	20 (50)	11 (27.5)

Source of Livelihood Information *	TV	9 (22.5)	14 (35)
	Community	23 (57.5)	26 (65)
	Political Leaders	5 (12.5)	7 (17.5)
	GP	8 (20)	13 (32.5)
	SHG	10 (25)	21 (52.5)
	Internet Newspaper	4 (10)	12 (30)
	Tea Garden Management	1 (2.5)	8 (20)
		20 (50)	0

From the Table , it is seen that in taking community-level decisions, most of the Madhu T.G. Oraon families take it quite often (30%) whereas it is much less (10%) among Satali T.G. Oraon households. At the same time, the participation of women in SHG is much more among the Oraon families of Madhu T.G.(72.5%), which is much less in Satali T.G. Oraon households (50%). Besides, the Madhu T.G. SHG are efficiently performing which increases their collective bargaining power leading a step towards women empowerment, whereas in Satali T.G. the SHGs are just by names, they are not performing the SHG functions properly, curtailing the women empowerment process there. Again when considered the source of livelihood related information, the Madhu T.G. Oraon families are having more sources to gain information than that of the Satali T.G. 30% and 20% of the Oraon households in Madhu T.G. are gaining information from Internet and newspaper respectively, which is a sign of their development. Moreover the main source of information in Satali T.G. is restricted to the Tea Garden Management (50%), whereas in Madhu T.G. the main source of information dissemination is the community (65%), followed by the SHGs (52.5%), which reflects their group integrity and cohesiveness, resulted after the closure of tea garden.

Thus, it can be said that in Social Asset possession, the Madhu T.G. Oraon families are dominating the Satali T.G. Oraon households. The interventions of Government NRLM, NGOs and CBOs have resulted this effect in Madhu T.G.

Financial Asset Possession of Oraon Households in the two gardens (N=80 -> n1=40, n2=40)

Variables/Attributes	Frequency Distribution		
	Class	Frequency (%)	
		Satali Tea Garden (Functional)	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed)
Habit of Saving Money	Yes	23 (57.5)	34 (85)
	No	17 (42.5)	6 (15)
Habit of Borrowing of Money	Yes	13 (32.5)	29 (72.5)
	No	27 (67.5)	11 (27.5)
Source of Borrowing Money	Do not Borrow Money	29 (72.5)	7 (17.5)
	SHG		
	Bandhan Bank	7 (17.5)	16 (40)
	Bharat Company	4 (10)	10 (25)
	ASA Company		1 (2.5)
	SBI		4 (10)
	Relative		1 (2.5)
Suffering from Indebtedness	Yes	8 (20)	20 (50)
	No	32 (80)	20 (50)
Job Security	Yes	26 (65)	11 (27.5)
	No	14 (35)	29 (72.5)

From the above Table and Figure – 4.2.1.8.1, the financial asset conditions of the two tea gardens can be vividly understood. In one of the major financial asset – habit of saving money, the Madhu T.G. Oraon families are dominating (85%) the Satali tea garden Oraon households (57.5%). It is because of the fact that the Oraon families of Madhu T.G. on moving outside the garden got more conscious and aware of the importance of saving money. At the same time, they are earning a handsome monthly income out of which they can easily save some money for their future.

At the same time, habit of borrowing money is also more in Madhu T.G.(72.5%) than Satali T.G.(32.5%). It is also because of the moving of the Oraon T.G. Oraon families outside the tea gardens. They have a dire to develop and thus know better of borrowing money and repaying it. In Satali T.G. the Oraon community fear of taking and using loans because they think that they will not be able to repay the loans.

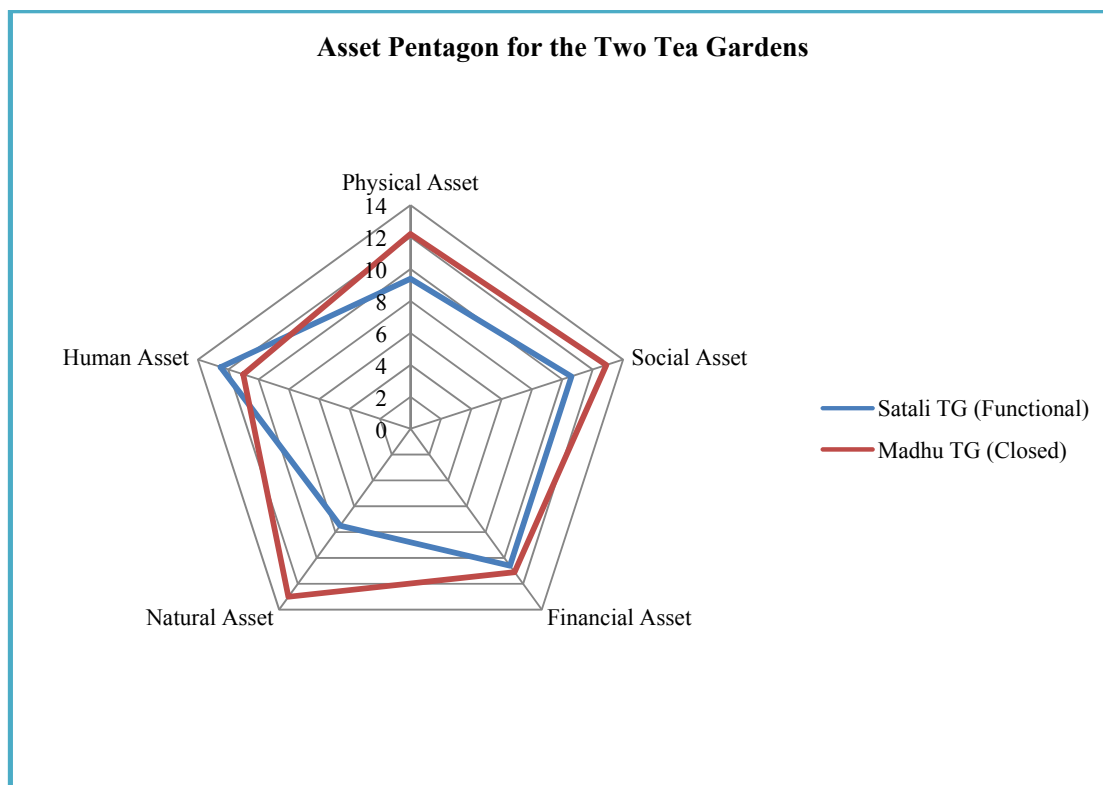
But, on speaking about the Job security of the Oraon households in the two tea gardens, it is visible that most of the Oraon families are lacking job security (72.5%), which in Satali T.G. is only 35%. The Madhu T.G. Oraon people always fear in losing a job. As the manual labour jobs are very irregular and they faces nightmare to get a job the next day. In Satali T.G. as most of them depend on inside garden works and as the tea garden is functioning well and many of them are permanent workers there, they have much less fear of job security.

Concerning about the matter of indebtedness, it is found that during the study 50% of the Oraon families of Madhu T.G. was plunged in debts, whereas only 20% of Satali Oraon families were under debts. Most of the Oraon households of Satali T.G.(80%) were not suffering from debts. It is because of the fact that they fear to take loans and thus not access the facility of loans at all, thus remaining free from debts. But, the researcher also found that though plunged in debts, the Madhu T.G. Oraon families have very less track records of failure in repaying the loans.

Again from the Table 4.2.1.8.1, it is also seen that the Oraon of Madhu T.G. have access to more financial institutions starting from SHG (40%), Bandhan Bank (25%), Bharat company (2.5%), ASA Company (10%), SBI 92.5%) and relatives (2.5%). Whereas among the Satali garden Oraon, 72.5% did not took loans in the last year, 17.5% accessed loans from SHG and 10% from the Bandhan Bank. The reason behind this situation is that after the closure, when the Madhu Oraon people went out of the garden, they were aware of these institutions and the facilities they provide. At the same time, after the closure of the tea garden, many microfinance institutions rushed into the Madhu T.G. and provided them with loans at minimum interest, which also made the people aware of it.

Table showing Findings from the Cross-Dimensional Cut-off Method of Scoring the Assets of the Oraon families of the two tea gardens

Assets / Capital	Mean Weighted Score of Assets (out of 20)	
	Madhu Tea Garden (Closed)	Satali Tea Garden (Functional)
Physical Asset	12.8	9.44
Human Asset	11.01	12.5
Social Asset	12.9	10.6
Financial Asset	11.1	10.6
Natural Asset	13	7.5



According to the Table-3.7.2.1, in the Methodology section of this study, the scoring conditions and patterns for the indicators under the different assets are provided, following which equal weightage is given to those indicators, fulfilling the conditions. For each household, under their 5 Asset possession, 20 indicators were scored and a sum of the total asset scores is calculated. From 80 such households, 40 each from the two tea gardens, a mean score is taken under each of the five assets and thus a combined mean score is obtained from both the gardens, which is a score obtained out of 20, for each variable.

The Table-4.2.1.10, shows the scores obtained by the Oraon families of two tea gardens under the five assets. It can be clearly traced that under Physical Asset, the Madhu Tea Garden has obtained more score (12.8 out of 20) than that of Satali Tea Garden (9.44 out of 20) because of their better physical asset possession.

The next is the Human Asset, where the score of Satali Tea Garden is more (12.5 out of 20) than that of Madhu T.G. (11.01 out of 20). The higher literacy rate in the Satali T.G. and more number of female earning members among Oraon households has uplifted the score of Satali T.G.

While considering the Social Asset scores, it is seen that in this asset possession also the Madhu T.G. Oraon families have achieved higher score (12.9) than that of the Satali T.G. Oraon households (10.6). This is the result of the increased group cohesiveness among the Oraon community in their garden, after the garden being closed. The Government initiatives of arranging and forming SHG and engaging them in financial management have strengthened the process. At the same time, the Oraon people of Madhu T.G. are going outside the gardens, making new communications and networks, thus increasing their source of livelihood information.

In Financial Asset possession, the Madhu T.G. Oraon households are getting more score (11.1) than that of the Satali T.G. Oraon households (10.6). Initially, though it was thought that there will be a huge difference in the scores in Financial Asset Possession among the Oraon families of the two tea gardens, concerning the higher monthly income ranges of the Madhu T.G. and their monthly savings habit, but actually the job insecurity prevailing within the Oraon people of this Tea garden and their indebtedness, restricted the huge score and thus they are dominating the Satali T.G. Oraon families only a little score difference.

Next it is the Natural asset possession, where the Madhu T.G. Oraon families are gaining a huge profit of the natural pool of resources, which helped them to make a huge score difference with that of the Satali T.G. Oraon families (13 out of 20 for Madhu T.G. and 7.5 out of 20 for Satali T.G.). According to the responses and interaction with the villagers, it is known that the Satali people have to go to the Madhu forest only to collect timber and other permissible products from there. The positive responses about the helpfulness of the river, soil and the responses from the local NGO about the productivity and fertility of the soil of Madhu has given them this position in the Natural Asset possession.

Objective – 2: To know about the availability of different Welfare schemes of the Government for the Oraon community living in both the Functional and Closed Tea Garden

The researcher have interacted with the Block Development Office, Kalchini and came to know that there are many schemes from all aspects focusing on the welfare of the ST community living in the tea gardens, not specifically for the Oraon communities. It is found that the following schemes are common for both the tea gardens –

1. MGNREGA
2. Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan
3. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana
4. Nirmal Bangla Mission/Swacch Bharat Mission
5. NRLM
6. Shikshyasree
7. Kanyashree
8. Shishu Shikshya Kendra(SSK)
9. Free Ration
10. Special Education & Scholarship Schemes for Tribal Boys and Girls - OASIS
11. Old-age Pension Scheme – Both Central & State Govt.
12. Widow Pension Scheme – Both Central & State Govt.
13. ICDS
14. Mid-Day Meal Scheme

There are many other welfare schemes too but the major are listed above. But, it is also known that they are taking special emphasis on the closed tea garden – Madhu T.G. than the other tea garden workers. As Madhu is locked out, rigorous awareness programs, literacy campaigns, vocational trainings, financial inclusions and other benefits are given to them directly. It is also found that because of the presence of the Tea Garden owner and the management, some of the Government schemes are reaching to the beneficiaries not directly, which can also be a reason for the curtailment of their access to Government supports.

Some special schemes which are running in the Madhu Tea Garden, after being locked out, accessed equally by the Oraon community of that region are as follows –

- **Financial Assistance to the Workers in the Locked-out Industrial Units (FAWLOI)** – Under this scheme, the workers registered as permanent tea garden workers are provided with a financial assistance of Rs. 1500/month.
- **Sahay Scheme** – This scheme focuses on the health and nutrition of the elderly people and the disabled people living in the Madhu Tea Garden. Regular nutritous food is being supplied from the ICDS center to them.
- **Manabik Scheme** – This is also a financial aid, an extra financial assistance (Rs. 750/month) which is given to the people above 60 years at the same time Disabled.
- **Vocational Training Centers** – Two vocational training ceneters are being opened and are running under the Grant of the Government, maintained by a local NGO – Rural Aid which provides free beautician, stitching, jewellery designing training to the local ST girls, enriching their skills.

Thus, it can be seen that after the tea garden being locked out, the Government intervene a lot and ina an integrated and effective approach is trying to provide welfare to the community, Though the problem of job insecurity and sustainability is not concerned in an intensive manner by them.

Objective – 3: To validate whether the Plantation Labour Act, 2000 is properly implemented for the Oraon community in the functional Tea Garden

According to the Plantation Labour Act, 2000, the permanent workers of the tea garden must get enough facilities from the tea garden they are working for. The researcher to find out and validate the provisions of the facilities available to the Oraon tea garden workers in the Satali Tea Garden, the functional tea garden, has done a survey with the permanent tea garden workers of that garden, among his pre-selected 40 sample households. The responses were collected on some of the major provisionary facilities obtained from the Plantation Labour Act, 2000, and represented as follows –

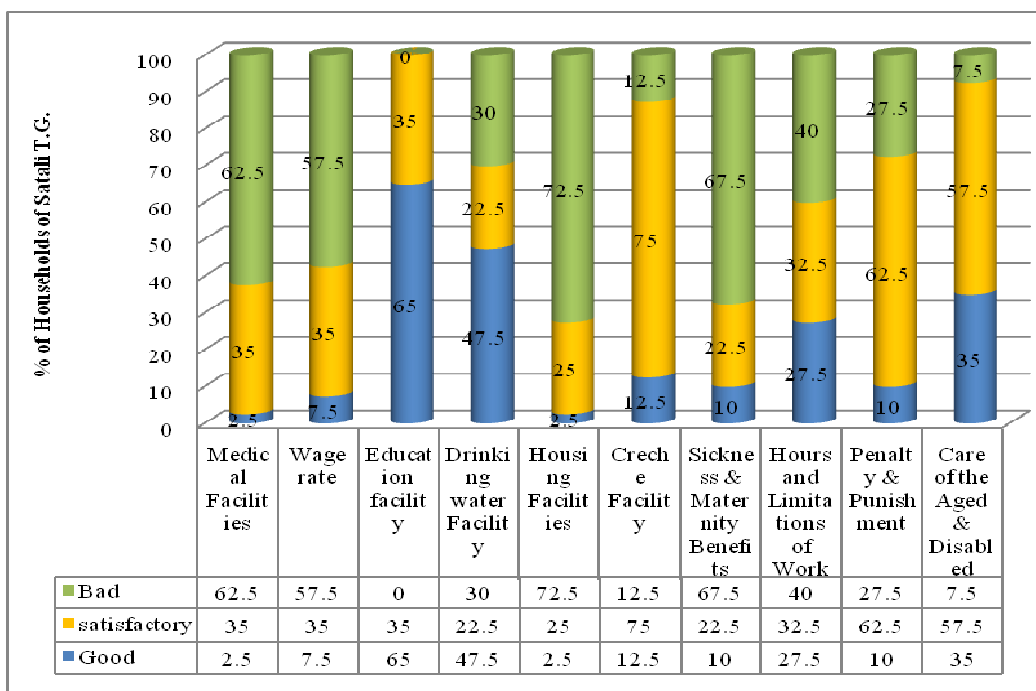


Fig: 4.2.3.1 Distribution of Responses obtained from the Oraon Tea Garden Permanent Workers of Satali T.G. on Plantation Labour Act, 2000(n=40)

From the Figure: 4.2.3.1, it is evident that responses are collected on the following facilities –

1. Medical Facilities – includes hospital facilities, medicine availability
2. Wage Rate – the daily wage aa permanent tea garden worker usually gets in the garden, whether it is sufficient
3. Education Facility – The facilities the children of the Satali tea garden workers upto 16 years age, get
4. Drinking Water Facility – The conditions, availability of the drinking water available in the tea garden
5. Housing Facility – The maintenance of the households of the permanent tea garden workers, whether properly done
6. Creche Facility – The availability and conditions of the crèches (if any) in which the permanent workers can keep their young safely and do work
7. Sickness and Maternity Benefits – includes the facilities and care of the sick women of the tea garden and the maternity benefits
8. Hours and Limitations of work – To know whether the environment of work for the workers are suitable enough or exploitative
9. Penalty & Punishment – The provisions of penalty and punishments in the garden by the management to the workers
10. Care of the Aged and Disabled – To know the care of the elderly people and the disabled in the tea gardens

The researcher on this aspects, asked the 40 households to respond in – Bad, Satisfactory and Good conditions and the responses obtained reveals that –

Most of the households (62.5%) said that the conditions of the medical facility are not upto the mark, that is bad; only 2.5% of households told its condition as good. The hospital, present in the garden has no emergency benefits, no doctors, no proper medicines, unhygienic conditions etc.

Most of the households (57.5%) also responded that the wage rate given in this garden is less, poor. Only 7.5 % of the households found it good.

While considering the Education facility for the children in the garden, most of the Oraon families (65%) found it to be good enough. No such concerns are there in education purpose. School vans are obtained properly.

Again in drinking water facility, as the garden authority provide mobile water van services in each lane, so most of the households (47.5%) found it to be good. At the same time due to poor quality of water, some of them also responded as bad (30%).

When focused on the Housing facilities, 72.5% of the households said that no proper mending of the households are done, if broken or if any issue related to house occurs, thus they responded this facility to be Bad.

Regarding the Cresche facility in the tea garden, it is found that though there are crèches but most of the Oraon households (72.5%) have regarded it as satisfactory, which implies some of its modifications.

Again when concerned at the sickness of the garden workers and the maternal benefits of the female workers, it is found that most of the households of Satali T.G. (67.5%) responded it as Bad, because they get those facilities by name only no proper implementation are made and even in most precious times, the women workers are pressurized for work. But, maternity leave during pregnancy is provided to them.

If the hours and limitations of the works are kept into concern, it can be found that most of the households (40%) told it as Bad, because of the work overload. Though many households (32.5%) referred it satisfactory followed by 27.5% households who referred it as Good. So overall the facility is Satisfactory.

Regarding Penalties and punishments, this Tea Garden management shows little bit of mercy and thus most of the Oraon households (62.5%) responded it as Satisfactory.

When seen about the care of the aged and disabled tea garden workers or their family members, they were provided with proper care and assistance and thus, 57.5% of the households found it to be satisfactory.

Objective – 3: To provide suggestions and recommendations for any development measures for the Oraons living in tea gardens of Dooars area

The probable suggestions and the recommendations for the development of the Oraon living in Functional and closed tea gardens of Kalchini, will be discussed in detail in Chapter – V. But, in this section, the researcher want to focus an interesting case study, obtained from the closed Madhu T.G., which according to him is one of the best suggestions to improve the tea garden workers' conditions.

4.2.3.1 Case Study:

Narrator – Binay Kerkatha (a young lad of Madhu T.G.)

As discussed earlier, the Madhu T.G. was locked out finally in the year 2014. After that, tea leaf Plucking and selling to middleman started the main source of income to them. This business was mainly implemented by the local leaders. Labour plucked tea leaves at Rs. 1/kg, which was given to them by the leaders after the selling of the tea leaves. They handled the management and distribution of the money, This continued for 4 years. But serious labour problems still arose. Labours were exploited, the leaders enjoyed maximum profit without work. In 2017, a social activist, named Anuradha Talwar came in the closed tea garden and she motivated the exploited women tea garden workers. She found some educated, energetic boys of the society and told them to continuously motivate the women to get free from this exploitation. On 23rd January, women under the group of a local leader, Parbat Chhetri, revolted against this ill practice. 15 women started tea leaf plucking by own at one part of Tea Garden. Gradually more women joined them, increasing their collective bargaining power. One of the a young, educated well-wisher of that Oraon community - Binay Kerkatha — made a committee of 30 women. He through his own initiatives connected the group of women with Madarihat FPO. As a result, Rs. 17/ kg is proposed as a price for the tea leaves to them. For 1 day 25,000 kgs production from 1 Choupal is obtained. At present 3 weeks of work has been done where women workers takes Rs.10/kg. Minimum 25 kgs of tea leaves are plucked by each women worker per day. Presently, 85 women joined the group and Rs. 2.8 lakhs is saved as extra profit by that group.

Interpretation: Thus, it can be said that the formation of women groups as cooperative and direct selling of tea leaves to any FPO, will give a promising monthly income to that community, living in the closed tea gardens, which ultimately can raise the socio-economic conditions of their households.

Life of the tea garden workers in the Dooars region of West Bengal faces some of the harsh reality. The workers, especially the tribal sections, covering the major sections of the tea garden laborers, suffer the most. In closed Tea Gardens, the situation is more pathetic resulting in starvation and deaths of the tea garden workers. Even in the functional tea gardens, the tea garden workers are not getting their proper rights and are exploited at every step by the tea garden management. The low wage rate has been a common issue in the functional tea gardens, resulting in periodic lock-outs of the tea garden, enhancing the distress of the workers and their families. Unable to thrive these situations, the workers are forced to move out of the garden, where they get manual labour jobs to earn for. Migration and shift in alternative livelihood means has been a common issue in these tea gardens. The present study, followed a mixed method approach, purposively selecting two tea gardens of Kalchini block of Alipurduar district – one is Functional Satali T.G. another one is closed Madhu T.G. and specifying his objectives with the comparison of the socio-economic conditions of the Oraon community inhabiting the both the gardens, on which the following conclusion can be obtained –

1. The predominant primary occupation of the Functional Satali T.G. Oraon families is permanent tea garden worker jobs (62.5%), whereas in the closed tea garden, as there are no in-garden jobs left, and the Oraon families have to depend on the manual labour jobs (57.5%) to sustain their family.
2. While considering the income ranges, the mean monthly income of the Oraon families of closed Madhu T.G. is much higher than that of the Oraon households of Satali T.G.
3. While concerning the overall physical asset possession, it is found that the Oraon families of the closed tea garden, due to their higher ranges of income have more physical assets than the Satali T.G.
4. In case of Social Asset, Natural Asset & Financial asset possession, the conditions of the Oraon in the Madhu T.G. is higher than that of the Oraon of Satali T.G.
5. But, because of the higher literacy rate and more number of female earning members, in Human Asset possession, the Madhu T.G. Oraon families are lagging behind.
6. At the same time, the Oraon families of the functional Satali T.G. are not getting the proper provisions under the PLA, 2000 and thus are neglected, deprived, behaved as slaves.

7. There is a low wage rate prevailing in the functional tea garden and due to their less mobility outside the tea garden, they are lagging behind the Madhu Oraon tea garden workers who now have well accessibility to the outside world, outside garden, availing to them a diverse source of livelihood options, along with higher income and modern mentality.
8. The Madhu Tea Garden, though after its closure several challenges were faced by the then community, but rapidly due to the strong mentality of the people and due to extensive Government and NGO interventions, the tea garden recovered the pathetic phase quickly and are now running towards the gradual development. They have become more aware of the realities of nature, community and have well adapted in the harsh situations. After closure of Tea Garden, the Oraon workers moved outside the Tea Garden in search of other jobs, where they got more wages, got more aware, adopted the modernity more rapidly with a development mindset.
9. More Income in the initial stage surged the overall socio-economy of the Closed Tea Garden. But, at the same time, Literacy Rates have decreased, as children having the dire to earn and they fear regularly to lose their jobs.

As it is found that the Oraon community of both the tea gardens are somewhat in distress conditions, the functional tea garden suffering the most, so according to the fourth objective of the researcher, some of the probable suggestions or recommendations to ameliorate the conditions of Oraon community in both the studied tea gardens – Madhu T.G. (Closed) and Satali T.G. (Functional) are mentioned as follows –

1. Specifically in the closed tea gardens, women tea garden workers can form cooperatives and sell the products directly to any FPO, to get maximum profit, at the same time, increasing their collective bargaining power and decision making power resulting in women empowerment and better socio-economic condition of their families. Even male and female tea garden workers can work hands in hands. But, a strong team is to be formed, without biasness and the member of those cooperative should be given priority, freeing from all sorts of exploitation.
2. For the better implementation of the Plantation Labour Act, 2000 in the functional tea gardens, with the initiatives of Block Development Officer a local level Surveillance Committee may be created, who will be responsible to look after the provision of the facilities provided under PLA, 2000 by the tea garden management. They should be given the power with which if any abnormal situation occur, they can complaint to the BDO, and accordingly the BDO can intervene.
3. As the conditions of the worker, living in the functional tea garden are more vulnerable, as fouled by this research study, so more interventions should be taken there. The first of which must be rigorous awareness and capacity building of those tribal tea garden workers, who living in in-situ conditions, do not much about their rights, do not have the decision-making power, and thus making them know properly about their rights, so that they can protest together against this injustice.
4. The tea garden owner should delegate the authorities of management and maintainance to the tea garden workers of that garden. It will result in cost saving as less number of managers are to be recruited and at the same time, the tea garden workers feel that it is for them.
5. As hospital and medical facilities are very poor in the Satali T.G. (functional), it is recommended that on behalf of the Government or any charitable institutions, mobile healthy-check camps can be arranged, which will be periodically done in a week. It can partially bring welfare to the people of that tea garden.
6. At the same time, on behalf of the tea garden management, incentive-based work in the tea garden should be introduced, which will instigate the workers' vigour to work more. This will be a mutually beneficial option.
7. Another important thing that can be introduced to modify the present situation of the tea garden workers of both closed and open tea garden is the introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in those gardens. Actually, the tea rates always varies, but accordingly the workers are not paid wages. As a result, the workers lag in their bargaining power at this phase only. Thus, if ICT can be introduced to disseminate the information related to tea and tea markets, then they can be more informative at the same time with increased coasian bargaining for better wages.
8. As the Government programmes are introduced appropriately in the closed tea gardens, at the same time, the Govt. must also be aware of the situations of the functional tea gardens' workers and thus more vigorously try to implement the schemes with consultation with the tea garden owners. The first focus in our study area of Satali T.G. is the formation of more SHGs and engaging them in the works performed in SHG, which they already have done in the Madhu Tea Garden.
9. Last but not the least, what is needed is the advocacy with the tea garden management and owner. There should be proper awareness about these facts at the same time they should get learning of the collaborative problem solving method, through workshop.

Thus, extreme sufferings prevail in both type of the tea gardens – functional and closed, the nature of problems being the different. The community by their most common rule has accepted both the situations and find out several way-outs to adapt in these situations. The tribal community faced several challenges to accept the conditions and the nature of exploitation to them continued. In Dooars region, there are many such tea gardens which are closed but not under proper supervision of the Government. Madhu Tea Garden is the lucky tea garden because of its well connectivity, natural diversity, Government interventions and of course the developed mindset of the people over there. In functional tea gardens, the above mentioned recommendations can be introduced which will gradually help to overcome the present situation. Even in the Madhu Tea Garden, as the study of the children is hampered, it should be kept in mind on behalf of the Government, which though the welfare is prevailing but in long run it would not be sustainable. Land rights are another major problem for the tea garden workers, which should from the policy level be thought of.

Lastly, it can be said that Tea Garden industry is a promising industry and can be a good source of income to the Oraon Tea Garden workers, if managed properly. The Government, NGOs, Social scientists, development professionals should think in an invigorated way to uplift the conditions of the Tea Garden workers in Open Tea Garden at the same time try to find way-outs to give sustainable rehabilitation measures to the workers of the Closed Tea Gardens.

At this instance, every one of the stakeholders should keep in their mind about one of the quotes of Swami Vivekananda as follows –

“Arise! Awake! and stop not until the goal is reached”

---- Swami Vivekananda

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