CHAPTER XI

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The Labour Welfare measures in tea plantation industry in Assam have been gaining momentum from the Sixth decade of the present century. Prior to Second World War there was no Welfare activities initiated either by employer's or any other voluntary organisations in the country. But, during the Second World War the Central Govt. initiated some welfare measures for the first time in the arms and ammunition industries for war productions on priority basis.

In 1952 the Central Government passed the Plantation Labour Act which was applicable in plantation industries of India (like - Coffee, rubber etc.) but the tea plantation industry of Assam was excluded. In 1955 the Government of Assam passed the Plantation Labour Act 1955 (Assam Act X of 1955) covering a wide range of areas for the welfare and social security measures to be adopted in the tea industry. Thus, in course of time a number of statutory provisions were made and implemented in a phased manner. The Maternity Benefit Act 1961 is also one of the important milestone in this direction. It is one of the well organised industry of the country having a well organised labour force. The Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) is the central mazdoor union organisation which is affiliated to the Indian National Trade
Union Congress (INTUC). The Head quarter of the sangha is situated Jiban Phukan Nagar, Dibrugarh Town in Upper Assam. At the root there is the Primary Committee (Unit) in each garden.

In the first chapter, the historical background of the tea plantation industry in Assam as well as in the rest of the Country and of the world have been covered. In Assam tea was first discovered at Sadiya, Upper Assam by Robert Bruce in 1821. But the aboriginal people of Assam particularly the Singpho and Khamtis were habituated to drinking the brew prior to its discovery. The first Assamese tea Martyr Maniram Dutta Baruah (Dewan) discovered and planted tea plants in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century in undivided Sibsagar district. In spite of so many difficulties like dearth of labour, capital and transport bottleneck, he planted tea plants and established the Cinnamora and Singlo (Selung) tea gardens. But unfortunately he could not enjoy his properties. At the instigations of the British tea planters these two gardens were confiscated on flimsy grounds and sold in an auction by the colonial British Govt. at a very nominal price. These two gardens were tactfully bought by George Williamson but he could not enjoy these ill acquired properties. He became most unpopular and labourers left their jobs in protest against his illegal actions. At last he re-sold these two gardens, one sold to Jorehaut Tea Company, the second joint stock
company of Assam and the other to some other purchaser.

The first commercial cultivation of tea was carried on at Chabua in 1835 and incidentally the name of the place later on known as Chabua that is. 'Cha' means tea and 'bua' means plant.

Charles Alexander Bruce (C.A. Bruce) the younger brother of Robert Bruce first produced tea in 1836 and sent samples to Mr. David Scott, Commissioner of Assam. In 1838 C.A. Bruce was appointed as Superintendent of Tea gardens of Upper Assam.

The tea plantation industry had to face a number of problems in the initial stages e.g. (a) acute shortage of labourers (b) lack of infra-structure facilities (c) clearing of dense forests (d) wrong site selection by Expert Committee (e) unsympathetic attitude and non-recognition of indigenous tea bushes as genuine tea. The indigenous tea bushes and seeds were most useful and successful for the Assam's climatic conditions which is still in existence as a conclusive proof.

The most acute labour problems were sought to be solved through agents and unscrupulous Calcutta Contractors who were made responsible for recruitment and subsequent transmission by country boats or steamers to Assam the only
mode of transport existed at that time.

The Assam Company was formed in 1838 which was the first joint stock company established in India. The East India Company had always preferred Chinese tea and was the monopoly exporter of tea regularly to London. The tea Committee was formed in 1834 with G.J. Gordon as Secretary and Dr. N. Wallich as one of the expert members.

The East India Company as well as the Tea Committee never acknowledged indigenous Assam tea bushes as genuine tea but, instead they had preferred Chinese tea bushes. Both the brothers, Robert Bruce and C.A. Bruce were adventurers and fortune hunters. They extensively visited far off villages located in dense jungles of Assam in search of indigenous tea bushes and was successful in collecting and planting tea bushes.

In course of time Assam was converted into green carpets of tea bushes by energetic and high ambitious tea maniac colonial European people. But tragedy occurred as a bolt from the blue to the tea plantation industry in 1865. As a result many tea gardens were closed, some transferred their landholdings to the Banks who were financiers. Some other tea planters discharged their workers being unable to pay their wages and many even committed suicide. The crisis period had continued up to 1870. During these periods those who could prudently manage survived, others became insolvent.
But from 1870 crisis gradually began to disappear and by 1872 almost all the tea gardens were re-opened.

Almost all the tea planters were highly placed civil, military and other British Government higher officials who gave up their jobs to become tea planters. Due to presence of following advantageous positions, the quick expansions of tea plantations in Assam was possible:

1. The East India Company was granted 'Charter' in 1833 and as a result the company could hold land freely for long 99 years,

2. The Land Settlement Act 1838 authorising Europeans to hold vast areas of land at free of cost for 10 years and after expiry of 10 years only ¼th cost at nominal rates,

3. The waste-land Rules 1854 authorising Europeans to acquire vast areas of land on more easy terms for 99 years,

4. Lord Canning framed another waste Land Rules in 1861 through which Europeans could purchase land in auction for the first time on easy terms,

5. The Land Revenue Rules 1839 by which Europeans had to pay a very nominal rate of land revenue of 25 percent of their land holdings but for major portion of 75 percent no land revenue existed for them. (i.e. Discriminatory land revenue policy), and

In 1859 the Tea Planters Association was formed for the purpose of recruitment of labourers from outside Assam. The Association was exclusively depended upon the unscrupulous Calcutta contractors for recruitment of labourers. They were using most unethical brutal means to collect labourers. The labourers were exploited like anything by paying less, feeding less and had to live in unhygienic environment. The mortality rate was the highest due to various reasons like outbreak of epidemics, unhygienic atmosphere, malnutrition and so on. This was the sad and untold story of death and misery of workers in the plantation history of Assam. Frequent resorting to threatening, kidnapping, treachery, fraud, mal-practice was the order of the day that prevailed everywhere.

In 1861 the colonial British Government appointed the first Enquiry Committee to go into details about the whole affairs. In 1865 the Government amended the Act of 1863 providing for fixed wages, fixed hours of work and appointment of Protectors and Inspectors of Labourers.

The Second Enquiry Commission gave an adverse report that the Planters were violating the existing provisions of various Acts in force. The planters inflicted severe punishments to runaway labourers.

The British people were successful in building up
the Indian tea industry by applying their qualifications, knowledge, skill, experiences, ability as well as far-sightedness.

In China tea was first discovered by Emperor Shen Nung in 2732 B.C. In South Western boarders of China wild tea was abundantly available. The tea was limited within the monks, Royal families and aristocratic societies both in China and Japan upto last part of the 18th century. Mr. Lu Yu wrote his book 'Ch'a Ching' in 780 A.D. about tea in details. From the early part of 19th century tea was penetrated among the common people and became most popular drink from the early part of present century.

The tea was known by two names viz., 'Te' (i.e. tay) of Chinese Fukien dialect and 'Ch'a' (i.e. Chah) in Cantonese. The present name of this beverage is derived from these two names with slight modifications in the whole world. Most of the tea plantations were one on small scale basis and almost every family used to cultivate tea since time immemorial.

The Chinese people used to manufacture tea in three forms viz.,

(a) green or unfermented tea
(b) black or fermented tea and
(c) Oolong or semi-fermented tea.
The 'instant tea' is a very recent addition and is becoming popular at the present moment. The tea have been classified into three varieties, viz.,

1. Camellia Sinensis (Lasiocalyx) i.e. China variety,
2. Camellia assamica (Masters) i.e. Assam variety and
3. Camellia Cambodiansis i.e. Cambod variety.

In Sri Lanka, the Assam tea seeds and plants were first planted in 1839 in Peradeniya but the commercial cultivations started in 1867. Rapid expansions took place between 1875 and 1900 A.D. and there were 2,21,682 ha of land under tea plantations and have production capacity upto 2,06,988 tonnes of tea in 1988. Sri Lanka is the second largest producer of tea in the world and a keen competitor of Indian tea in the international markets. It is a nationalised industry in Sri Lanka.

In Japan, tea was first planted in 593 A.D. and it was imported from China. The Japanese Emperor Shomu gave tea plants to one hundred Buddhist Priests at his palace at Nara in 729 A.D. All priests planted tea plants in their temple lands after returning from Nara. Eisai brought tea seeds from China and had planted at Reinsen-ji temple at Seburiyama in Hizen province. The tea seeds of this temple
garden was the main source of most of the tea plantations in Japan.

In Japan, two islands of Kyushu and Shikoku and Southern parts of Honshu are under tea cultivations. There were three forms of tea in Japan viz. (1) brick or cake tea of the Jang (2) powdered tea of the Sung and (3) leaf tea of the Ming.

Similarly, in other countries of the world like Indonesia, Indo-China Mynmar (Burma), Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysiya, South Africa, Malawi, Iran (Persia) Uganda, Mazambique, Tanzania, Zaire, Rowanda, Cameroon, Argentina, Equador, Etheopia, Paraguay, Mexico, Columbia, Fiji, New-Zealand, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Turkey and Papua-New Guina are in the tea map of the world having various production capacities of their own.

The Second Chapter deals with tea industry and its place in Assam's economy. The tea industry is the nerve centre of Assam's economy as it employs 6 lakh workers directly and another 25 lakh workers indirectly through anciliary industries. Apart from employment of large number of workers, the industry enriches the granary of the nation. The tea industry of N.E. India i.e. Assam, West Bengal and Tripura is contributing Rs. 1400 crores towards Gross
National Product (GNP) of the country. Moreover the country have been fetching precious foreign exchange to the extent of Rs. 1039.89 crores and Rs. 963.55 crores in 1994 and 1995 respectively. The tea industry has been contributing Rs. 100 crores to the State Exchequer every year by way of sales tax, agricultural income tax, customs duties, cess on green leaf and land revenue.

The infra-structure facilities have been created mainly due to tea industry. Assam was connected with rest of British India by Railway network in the first decade of the present century for carrying tea and other goods as well as passenger from Assam to Calcutta and onwards and for carrying other goods, machinaries, food items, passengers to Assam. Assam has been producing more than 50 percent of India's total productions. The tea industry has been contributing Rs. 70 crores to the central Government Exchequer in the form of central excise, customs duties and surcharge.

The Planning Commission has been giving more emphasis on increasing the production of tea and other food items and as such provisions have been made on priority basis.

The tea industry has been facing four burning problems viz., (a) no suitable land for extension of
planning (b) Cachar, Tripura and Darjeeling have been producing very low per capita production (c) the cost of production is rising rapidly and (d) Indian tea have been facing keen competitions in the international markets.

The Tea Board have introduced several schemes like re-plantation and interest subsidy schemes. The re-plantation Scheme is again divided into two groups viz., (a) a sum of Rs. 69000 per hectare has been granted for 5 years including 3 years maintenance and (b) a sum of Rs. 56000 per hectare for 3 years including one year maintenance is provided.

The interest subsidy scheme for drainage and irrigation again divided into two groups i.e. first group at the rate of 3 percent and the second group at the rate of 4 percent which are financed by the National Agricultural Bank for Rural Development (NABARD). These are rehabilitation schemes provided by the Tea Board.

Again for increasing productivity the Tocklai Experimental Station has estimated that 54000 hectares of land is to rejuvenate. pruning, medium pruning and infilling operation has already implemented. The second scheme is scientific drainage and irrigation system has to cover 97000 hectares of land (i.e. water management scheme).
The third major essential operation is adoption of suitable cultural practices. About 70 percent improved clones, bio-clonal and polo-clonal seeds as devised and invented by Tocklai Experimental Station are adopted and used for extension planting, re-planting and infilling in various gardens of Assam.

Mention may be made that the small tea growers have been producing 10 lakh kg. tea per annum by planting 16,933 hectares of land so far and employed about 1 lakh workers directly.

In the third chapter the present position of the tea industry have been included. There are 13,873 tea gardens in India of which 1012 tea gardens are located in Assam. In Dibrugarh district (i.e. undivided including Tinsukia) there are 319 tea gardens at present excluding small tea gardens. The average daily number of labourers employed in tea plantation industry during 1995 in Assam as well as in Dibrugarh district were 5,59,801 and 1,93,104 respectively.

It is found that 9 sample tea gardens of private company have been employing 3602 males, 3891 females, 288 adolescent male and 370 adolescent female workers. On the other hand, 19 Joint Stock Company Sample tea gardens have been employing 16515 males, 17449 females, 425 adolescent
male and 787 adolescent female workers. The total number of workers in 28 sample tea gardens are 41457.

In 1989 the total productions of tea in India was 6,84,136 tonnes of which Assam's total was 3,78,726 tonnes (i.e. 55.4 percent). The Dibrugarh district happens to be at the top of the list of producers in the whole country and have been maintaining the trend till today.

It is observed that in 9 private company sample gardens 1955.61 hectares of land are under tea cultivations. The total production of tea is 47.83 lakh kg. and the average production per hectare is 2036.3 kg. Out of 9 tea gardens production per hectares of Code No. 10 is the highest i.e. 2498 kg. and is above average and the lowest production is 1628 kg. in Code No. 2 garden which is far below the average. Again in 19 Joint Stock Company sample gardens. 8534.03 hectares of land are under tea cultivation. The annual production of tea in the year ending 31st March. 1996 is 179.4 lakh kg. and the average production per hectare is 2116.7 kg. The highest production per hectare is 2622 kg. in Code No. 28 garden, which is much higher than the average and the lowest is 1038 kg. in Code No. 4 garden which is much below the average production. Both these averages i.e. 2036.3 kg. and 2116.7 kg. are much higher than the all Assam average i.e. 1700 kg.
Further it is observed that the efficiency of workers both in private and Joint Stock Company gardens which were taken as sample is much higher and as such the productive capacity which is very encouraging seems to be the effect of welfare activities.

The Tocklai Experimental Station was established in 1900 and since then the centre has been carrying on research specially in areas like equipment, product, product chemistry and genetics and has achieved considerable success in all these spheres.

India exports about one third of the total tea production per annum, out of which major portion of export happens to be from Assam. The London Tea Auction market was established in 1844. In 1861 the first auction of tea in India was held at Calcutta Tea Auction Centre. The Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) was established in 1970 and it sold 149.21 million kg. tea in 1989-90 which increased to 151.33 million kg. in 1993 and it has emerged as the highest seller of CTC tea in the Country.

The tea is the most common popular health drink in the whole country. Maharashtra consumes 72 million kg. tea per annum and is at the top of the list of consumers. Assam's total consumption is 19 million kg. per annum. The
total consumption of tea in the whole country is about two thirds of the total productions.

The estimated export through Guwahati Tea Auction Centre is Rs. 150 crores and it is estimated that the State Government earned Rs. 15 crores as sales tax on sells and exports.

In order to encourage the tea industry to achieve its targetted productions of 530 million kg, the State Government has reduced the agricultural income tax from 75 percent to 60 percent (on February 2, 1994). The constitution of Assam Tea Plantation Security Force (ATPSF) formally sanctioned and approved by the Central Government, is for the security and maintenance of peace in the tea gardens in the State. The Government further initiated a bill under the title 'Assam Industrial Establishment (Conferment of Permanent Status to workers) Bill 1985 for granting permanent status to workers of industrial organisation including tea industry of Assam, who completes 480 days out of 24 months of employment in the tea garden.

In order to increase export of tea, Indian tea industry has changed the present pattern of export to 'value added form' that is packet tea and instant tea. In the meantime all big concerns have already initiated effective
measures for such switch over.

The Central Government has abolished the Licensing system under the open Economic System of our country. Last year the investors got higher returns on their investment in tea and as such it is a clear encouragement in this direction.

Unfortunately in 1995 Germany one of the importers of Indian tea returned their consignments on the plea that 10 PPM (parts per million) of pesticides and insecticides were found in black tea which is above permissible limit and is injurious for human health.

In the meantime remedial measures have already been initiated to check and minimise the contents of pesticides in (black) tea in future.

The fourth chapter mainly concentrated on Economic profile of the Dibrugarh district. There are 695 registered factories in the district out of which the tea factories are also included.

At present Assam has 78438 sq.km. area, divided into 23 districts and 46 sub-divisions. The Dibrugarh district has 3545 sq.km. area, 24 sq.km. within
municipal areas and 3521 sq.km. in rural areas. The total population in the district is 10,38090 out of which, males and females are 5,44141 and 4,93949 respectively. The literacy rate is 53.42 percent but the rate of male alone is 62.34 percent and female is 43.7 percent. There is an acute unemployment problem in the district both educated and uneducated.

In the fifth chapter, the labour welfare measures in India and in Assam are included. The Welfare activities which are undertaken within the factory viz. latrines and urinals, washing facilities, creche, rest shelter, canteens, health services, uniform and protective clothings are called intra-mural activities.

The welfare activities which are provided outside the factory are called extra-mural activities like maternity benefits, social insurance measures including pension, gratuity and so on.

It is observed that 9 private company sample gardens have implemented in full all statutory welfare measures under the Assam Act X of 1955, payment of wages Act 1936, Assam Plantation Labour Rules 1956, Factories Act 1948, Payment of Bonus Act 1965, Maternity Benefit Act 1961, Payment of Gratuity Act 1972, the Industrial Disputes Act
1947, the Trade Unions Act 1926 and Pension including Family Pension Act. Similarly in 19 Joint Stock Company sample gardens, all statutory Welfare measures have been implemented in full for all round development and welfare of the toiling masses.

The industrial relations between employers and employees largely depend to a great extent on the labour welfare activities. The industrial workers are very frequently frustrated and overburdened with family worries and health hazards for which necessary welfare measures needs to be taken to overcome or fulfil the requirements.

Moreover, in order to reduce absenteeism and labour turnover in industries welfare measures are very much important.

In order to improve the health of the workers, cheap, clean and balanced food are provided in canteens. Adequate provisions of medical aid, maternity and child welfare reduce the mortality of infants and educational facilities increase the mental efficiency and economic productivity.

It is further observed that other welfare activities like games and sports, inter-garden competitions,
compition within the garden are held regularly every year in 9 private company as well as 19 joint stock company sample gardens. In factories safety measures are taken for the protection and safety of workers' health. Peace and harmony has been maintained for more than last two decades in all gardens.

After India attained independence in 1947 labour welfare activities were introduced and expanded in more and more industries. To speed up labour welfare activities in various industries of the country including the plantation industry, the Central Government enacted a number of Acts covering Mica Mines, coal mines and Iron Ore, Bonus, Minimum Wages Acts, Employees provident Fund Act, Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund, Pension Fund and Insurance Fund Scheme Acts were passed from time to time.

The Railway Board and Major Ports of India have separate administrative set ups for their own employees' Welfare funds. The Indian Constitution has safeguarded the fundamental rights and interests of our citizens. All inequalities were to be removed from the society affording equal opportunity to all citizens in social affairs and economic activities. Therefore, the state has to secure social order for the promotion of welfare of the tea plantation workers.
The labour welfare schemes introduced so far in the tea plantation industry in Assam are - Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund and Pension fund Scheme, Life Insurance Scheme (Optional) Family pension, gratuity, Invalid Pension Scheme, Bonus Scheme, maternity benefit scheme and so on.

The State Government has constituted the 'Assam Tea Employees Welfare Board' as per the provisions of the 'Assam Tea Plantation Employees Welfare Fund Act 1959'. The Board has performed various welfare activities for the exclusive benefits of the tea plantation workers and their dependants. 18 community centres, socio-cultural schemes, socio-economic schemes and Mezenga Female Labour Welfare Scheme, rest houses in Dibrugarh and Silchar, free hostel, accomodations for college students in district headquarters are some of the specific welfare activities carried on by the board.

Another five highly ambitious schemes for the tea garden employees are going to be implemented in a phased manner viz.

(a) build your own house
(b) permanent hostels for the tea garden employee's children in all major towns of the state.
(c) augmentation of community centres.
(d) additional scheme for Mezenga Female labour welfare training centre and
(e) holiday home facilities.

In Sixth Chapter (A) discusses in detail statutory labour welfare measures with its objectives, organisational set-up, administrative structure and different benefits provided under various Acts. The benefits are extended to the tea plantation workers and various pros and cons of the ideas have been discussed in details in this chapter.

It is observed that there are 4696 number of Provident Fund accounts in 9 private company sample tea gardens in the study district. A sum of Rs. 9,78,184/- were paid to 277 workers as Pension and Rs. 16,24,236/- paid to 572 workers as Gratuity. Again there are 19761 Provident fund accounts in 19 joint stock company sample gardens. A sum of Rs. 18,13,912/- was paid to 535 workers as pension and Rs. 33,51891 was paid to 349 workers as gratuity during the same period. Thus, there were 24457 number of provident fund accounts in 28 sample tea gardens as on that date. In total a sum of Rs. 27,92096 was paid to 812 workers as pension and Rs. 49,76127 was paid to 921 workers as gratuity during the same period.
Moreover it is observed that a sum of Rs. 52,01046 was paid as bonus by 6 private company sample gardens, out of 9 (as code nos. 3, 13 and 21 did not furnish their bonus figures in Schedule II) as on that date. A sum of Rs. 30,07776 was spent on supplying ration by 4 sample gardens out of 9, as code Nos. 2,3,5,17 and 21 gardens did not furnish their respective ration figures during the same period. A total of 2093 quarters were provided by 9 sample gardens against a total requirement of 2194. Thus there is a deficit of 101 quarters (housing accommodations) in 9 private company gardens.

In 19 Joint Stock Company sample gardens a sum of Rs. 3,58,79497/- were paid as bonus in 1996 and a sum of Rs. 1,76,20655/- were spent for supplying ration to workers during the same period. A total of 12,505 number of quarters have been provided against a total requirement of 13,375 quarters leaving a deficit of 870 quarters.

Thus as a whole Rs. 4,10,80543/- were paid as bonus to workers by 28 sample tea gardens and a sum of Rs. 2,06,28431/- were spent for supplying ration during the year. Again a total of 14,598 number of quarters were provided against a total requirement of 15,569 number of quarters leaving a total deficit of 971 number of quarters.

It is further observed that hygiene and sanitation
facilities are being provided in all 28 sample gardens. For providing drinking water facilities, one tubewell point having drainage is installed for every 4 families and one common bathroom near the tubewell point. In Code No. 21, one tubewell point is provided for every 2 families which is significant.

Again it is observed that 2440 female workers were provided with maternity benefits and 2269 workers with sickness benefits in 9 sample gardens. Similarly all workers are provided with black tea, aprons, footwear, umbrella, raincoat, blankets and so on. In 19 joint stock company sample gardens a total of 8734 women workers are provided with maternity benefits and 8734 workers with sickness benefits. The Code 22 garden have provided essential articles like handglove, gamboat and mask to their workers which happens to be an exception.

For the maintenance of health and necessary treatment of ailing workers medical facilities are provided in all 28 sample gardens in the district. For this purpose there is one hospital for each of 9 private company sample gardens and there is one medical doctor and other medical personnels for treatment of workers in each garden. There are 162 beds for indoor patients in these gardens. In all 346 outdoor and 56 indoor patients were given treatments in these gardens.
Similarly in 19 joint stock company sample gardens there are 19 hospitals i.e. one each in every garden, a total of 751 beds are there in those hospitals. There are 23 professional doctors and other personnels to assist the doctors in connection with treatment and they gave medical treatments to 955 outdoor and 274 indoor patients during the same period.

It is observed that the medical facilities available for every 1000 workers in 9 private company sample gardens 1.20 doctors and 1.34 nurses are rendering their services. The number of beds per 1000 workers is 21.62. In 19 joint stock company sample gardens there are 33,964 workers against which there are 23 doctors, for every 1000 workers - only 0.68 doctor and 1.77 nurses are rendering medical services. Again for indoor patients' treatment for every 1000 workers, there are 22.11 beds. Thus, the average number of doctor for both kinds of companies i.e. 28 sample gardens is $\frac{1.68}{2} = 0.94$ for every 1000 workers and average number of nurse is (i.e. $\frac{3.11}{2} = 1.55$) = 1.55. In other words there are 32 doctors against 41,457 workers.

In case of 9 private company sample gardens, the number of doctor is higher than the average by 0.26 (i.e. 1.20 - 0.94 = 0.26) and lower by 0.26 (i.e. 0.94 - 0.68 =
0.26), in case of 19 joint stock company sample gardens. The average number of nurse is higher by 0.21 (i.e. 1.55 - 1.34 = 0.21) in the 9 private company sample gardens and lower by 0.22 (i.e. 1.77 - 1.55 = 0.22) in the 19 joint stock company sample gardens.

The medical facilities provided to workers has got direct relations with the physical standard and maintenance of health and family welfare of workers. Again maintenance of physical standard and health and family welfare has got direct relations with efficiency of workers which in turn has got link with productivity.

It is observed that the task of plucking green leaves by workers and adolescents are 21 kg. and 11 kg. respectively. If any worker or workers pluck more than the task then an extra remuneration at the rate of 0.27p. per kg. is paid on excess plucking. Again the rate of sickness allowances to adult and adolescent workers are Rs. 15.73 p. and Rs. 7.88p. respectively. The sickness benefits are admissible at the rate of two third of concerned worker's current wage rate subject to a maximum of 14 days during the last 300 working days.

There is an alternative method known as 'Ticca Plucking' and under this method the present additive rates
for adult and adolescent workers are Rs.17/93p. and Rs.8/98p. respectively.

All these are incentives to workers which motivate them in increasing their efficiency which has got direct link with productivity. Again welfare activities are related to efficiency of workers and as such it is very much essential for the increase of the productivity which has got direct link with welfare.

The Sixth Chapter (B) discusses in details voluntary labour welfare measures undertaken by employers for the benefit of their workers. According to the ILO all extra-mural activities like maternity benefits, social insurance measures including gratuity, pension, provident fund, medical facilities etc. are included under voluntary labour welfare activities.

The following advantages are derived from the implementation of the above welfare schemes:

(a) Making the services in industries attractive to workers,
(b) Creating a permanent labour force
(c) Reducing labour turnover and absenteeism
(d) Improving the efficiency of workers and
(e) Improving the relation between employers and employees.
Thus, the industrial relation between employers and employees makes the atmosphere in the tea industry peaceful and harmonious leading to increase in the efficiency of workers. The workers are attracted towards the industry by favourable welfare activities provided to them and turnover and absenteeism are reduced to minimum which otherwise cause anxiety to employers. The State Government may apply the constitutional measures and direct the tea plantation employers to implement various welfare schemes to ameliorate the sufferings of the workers. The charitable institutions and trusts which provide welfare activities to workers are voluntary in nature. The tea plantation employers of Assam are providing all admissible welfare activities to their workers.

In Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh facilities of latrines have been provided for each householder separately.

Almost all tea gardens of Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and West Bengal have hospitals equipped with modern necessary instruments and qualified doctors.

The Seventh Chapter discusses in details the implementation of various welfare schemes introduced in various industries including tea plantations in the country undertaken by various agencies or authorities like Central
Governments, employers, the trade Unions, the municipalities and other social agencies for greater interests of the workers on the one hand and of the employers on the other. The State Government has realised the important of social security and labour welfare measures in the changing situations and have made various provisions in a wide range of subjects both statutory and non-statutory. In 1959 the State Government passed the 'Assam Plantation Employees Welfare Fund Act 1959' and created a 'Fund' for such purpose. This is one of the important milestones in this regard. The fund has been utilised in financing various welfare activities for socio-economic development of the tea plantation workers.

The amounts spent on labour welfare activities are wise investments and they definitely contribute to increase in efficiency and productivity. Every employer of industries including tea plantation industry has to realise this universal truth and implement all welfare measures initiated by the State Government.

However since the fifth decade of the present century social security and welfare activities have been provided by almost all employers of industries including tea plantation industry.

The Indian Tea Planter's Association (ITPA), the
United Planter's Association of Southern India (UPSAI) and Tea Board India are providing welfare amenities to workers of tea plantations in various manners and fields.

The trade union organisation have been working for various welfare activities like security in services, rules and regulations, working conditions, wages and co-operation between workers and management. The trade unions play a vital and important role in providing welfare activities. The Textile Labour Association (TLA) of Ahmedabad one of the unique trade union organisations in the country is rendering welfare service in a wide range of activities including cleaning of slum areas with a trained volunteers' force. Similarly the Mill Mazdoor Union of Indore - a workers' union, Indian Railways Mazdoor Union etc. are providing welfare activities in their respective jurisdictions.

The Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha (ACMS) an affiliate of the INTUC, is one of the sole trade union organisations of Assam Tea Plantation industry. It has initiated all labour welfare activities in the State since its inception in a wide range of subjects. It is the mouth piece of the workers of the tea plantation industry of Assam and believes in peaceful solution of all problems and industrial disputes and maintaining cordial industrial relations. The ACMS is trying its best to maintain industrial peace and harmony in the whole tea plantation industry of the state, settling
all industrial disputes amicably by means of a 'Grievance Settlement machinery' - through bilateral agreements. The Assam tea Employees' Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd (ATEICOL), a co-operative organisation was established by the ACMS exclusively for the benefit of the tea workers. The 'WOKA' a sick tea garden is run by workers themselves on co-operative basis which is the first of its kind in the tea plantation history. Moreover the ACMS has rendered various other welfare activities including payment of scholarships for pursuing higher studies in the state, imparting vocational training in various training centres located at Dibrugarh, Mezenga, Tinsukia and so on. These directly benefit the workers and their children.

Thus, the workers union are discharging their duties and responsibilities and maintaining unity and discipline as a harmonious whole in the tea plantation industry for the greater interest of the State.

The labour welfare activities has been carried on by municipal corporations of Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, Ajmer, Kanpur and some other municipalities of the country in various areas and fields for the benefits of the down trodden workers.

The voluntary organisations like Hindustan Mozdoor Sevak Sangha, Assam Seva Samiti, Bombay Social Service
League, Y.C. M.A., Bombay Presidency workers council, Maternity and Infant Welfare Association and Depressed Classes Mission society are rendering and providing specific welfare activities for the welfare and upliftment of industrial workers in the country.

The Eighth chapter deals with financing of various welfare activities. The successful implementation of those welfare activities mainly depends upon proper financing. The finance play a vital role and all expenses incurred on welfare activities are deemed to be wise investments. They increase the efficiency and raise the standard of living of the workers. All statutory provisions made in various Acts have to be provided to tea plantation workers and financing has to be done by respective employers.

The welfare activities like housing accommodation provided to 98 percent workers of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Educational facilities, medical care drinking water, protective clothing and recreational facilities are provided to all workers of tea gardens affiliated to the United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI).

The social security measures are classified into three major groups viz. (a) Social assistance, (b) Social insurance and (c) Public service. The social assistance schemes are financed from the 'General Revenue' of the Government and paid to persons or citizens of small means in
the form of unemployment assistance, old age and national assistance to the down trodden people.

The Social Insurance Scheme is a contributory scheme contributed to by the workers, employers and the State. The benefits are granted or paid to those workers who contribute according to their capacity. The contribution of workers are very nominal, but the share from the employers and the State form the major portion of the premium. The insured workers are paid in the event of contingencies like unemployment, sickness, old age or any other unforeseen contingency.

The Public Service Scheme provides for the social security measures to certain specific category of persons and is financed by the State Government from the 'General Revenue' of the state. The other usual social security measures provided are provident fund pension fund including family pension and gratuity.

The objectives of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) are to promote social justice and improving the living and working conditions of workers in the whole globe. Under this scheme, old age unemployment, protection of children, accident benefits and temporary disablement benefits are included for the security and welfare of all workers including tea plantation employees of Assam.
The retiring workers are entitled to a lump sum amount equal to 52.5 percent at the credit of retiring workers P.F. account. This scheme gives relief to poor tea workers at the time of retirement. The family pension scheme Act 1972 was implemented and the legal representative of the deceased worker is entitled to such family pension which varies from Rs. 125 to Rs. 400 per month depending upon the P.F. balance at the credit of the deceased worker.

The Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme 1984 implemented in 1984 in the tea plantation industry of Assam has got linked with the P.F. accounts average balance of all workers. The deceased worker's successor is entitled to a 'lump sum' amount equal to P.F. account balance but subject to a maximum limit of Rs. 10,000. The premium has to be paid by employers and the Central Government contribute towards the fund for administration expenses.

The Ninth chapter deals with labour welfare and workers efficiency which is a relative term to labour welfare. The standard of living of the workers mainly depends upon the Welfare activities provided by employers, the State and Central Governments in various forms.

The workers should feel themselves secure and stable in the tenure of their services through extra-statutory measures which are already implemented. The
welfare and social security measures provided to tea workers have got direct relation with efficiency which means productivity of workers and they play a vital role in maintaining and increasing their efficiency. Again, the increase in efficiency or workers leads to the increase in productions which directly benefit both the employers and employees (Workers).

The Planning Commission has given proper stresses on increasing the production of tea in the country during 8th Five Year Plan. By the turn of the century the estimated production of tea would be 1000 million kg. The commission has provided some specific welfare measures to motivate the workers to achieve the targetted productions.

The Tea Board also provided some effective measures towards increasing the efficiency of the workers leading to increase in productions with the financial assistance from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

In order to maintain the standard of health of the tea workers, the supply of standard and quality food stuffs like rice and atta is very much essential. The workers are supplied with such ration at a subsidised rate of Re.0.53 per kg. of both rice and atta every fortnight. The Indian Tea Association (ITA) has formed a consortium known as
'Assam Bengal Cereals Ltd' (ABCL) which supply ration to workers and their families regularly.

Due to increase in the efficiency of workers, Dibrugarh district of Assam stood at top of the list of tea producing districts of India by producing 142.4 million kg. in 1994-95. Apart from the efficiency of workers other favourable factors leading to such high production are favourable climatic condition fertile soil, application of modern machines, methods and tools for production and manufacture of tea.

The tea gardens of Assam viz. Jutulibari, Dikom and Maduri produce special quality tea which fetches highest prestigious international award as well as highest record price of Rs. 3000 per kg. This has become possible due to efficient and active co-operation of workers in productive activities. Above all efficient management is the most significant contributing factor towards all these better developments which deserves recognitions through proper award or prizes from competent authority.

According to recent experiments conducted in a few selected tea gardens of Assam and West Bengal, it has become possible to achieve a record production upto 3028 kg. tea per hectare.
The Tenth chapter deals with labour welfare and industrial peace in the state. The industrial peace in tea plantation industry is a relative term with labour welfare activities including social security measures implemented. In order to keep and maintain sound health, vital foodstuffs and canteen facilities to provide balanced food and tea are very much essential.

Again a temporary worker never feels secure without security of service and life. In order to become a member of P.F., the probationary period has been reduced to three months of continuous satisfactory completion of service. This is a statutory provision which provides job security to workers. The job satisfaction comes from job security through application and proper implementation of all statutory schemes by tea plantation employers.

Moreover for the existence and survival of the tea industry a healthy and efficient work force (i.e. army of efficient workers) is highly essential. The healthy industrial relations between management and employees mainly depends upon the fulfilment of minimum needs of the workers as well as some other welfare activities as provided under various legislations of the state and Central Governments and they should be implemented in full by the tea industry.

The per capita production of tea went up to 740 kg.
in 1986 against 405 kg. in 1961 and the present production rate per hectare is 1700 kg while it was only 287 kg. in 1951. Recent experiments has proved that production rate of tea can be raised upto 3025 kg. per hectare by applying certain modern methods, clones and technique particularly in some selected tea gardens of Assam and West Bengal. Other series of experiments have also proved that production rate can be raised by applying proper methods from 2,100 kg. to 2,700 kg. per hectare.

In order to meet the challenge of the present day, the tea industry of Assam should produce standard and quality tea. At the same time the industry should switch over to modern production technique and produce customer oriented (i.e. preferred) instant tea, ready to drink tea (RTD) and green tea which have got growing demand in the international markets.

The economic and social justice is to be provided to the weaker section of the society, particularly to the tea plantation workers and thus to assure them of the equal opportunity. The goal of economic justice is to provide happiness of life and pleasure to the tea workers. The International Social Security Association (ISSA) has rightly stressed the need of social justice in order to have peace and harmony in the industry including tea industry of Assam.
All tea plantation workers must feel that socially they are not neglected and economically they are not exploited.

In this context the ISSA's Slogan is appropriate at the present juncture 'no peace without social justice and no justice without social security'. The overall situation in the tea plantation industry of Assam is peaceful except some stray incidents that took place from time to time. The situation in the study district is by and large peaceful. Productions have been going on in full swing throughout the district since last few decades barring few tea gardens, where strike, lock-out and litigations took place from time to time.