CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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2.1 Introduction

Plenty of studies were undertaken in tea sector by individuals, research organizations, state and central governments. Every effort was made to locate the available literature related to the tea plantations especially the studies focused on the abandonment and/or closure, functions before and after the abandonment and/or closure. An overview of the literature reviewed is given below. The literature reviewed was classified into three part viz., studies at the international level, studies at the national level and studies at the state level.

Part-1

2.2 Studies at the international level

Politico-cultural production relations have dominated labour productivity in tea plantations. This culture of the plantation community operates negatively with respect to the management agenda (Wickramasinghe & Cemeron, 2002). It is also argued that social capital development in tea plantations is important not only for productivity improvement but also for reasons of political and social obligation for the nation, because migrant plantation workers have been working and living in the plantations over 150 years.

Others (Biyanwila & Janaka, 2003) look at the case of a union in the tea plantation and its potential towards developing a social movement unionism
strategic orientation. In particular, the dimension focuses on the deepening of
democratic tendencies within the union which may be capable of reinforcing the
movement dimension of union.

The study conducted elsewhere (Moxham, 2003) focuses on the effect of British tea addiction on British policies in Asia and Africa.

Another approach (Wikramasinghe & Cameron, 2003) explores the issues in the Sri Lankan tea industry, which contrary to conventional thinking on economies of scale, is dominated in production, yield, efficiency and contribution to the national economy by newly emerged small holder sector. The study found that socio cultural and political relations dominate production and as a consequence, the theory of economies of scale has loose interpretation in the context of the Sri Lankan tea industry.

An attempt (Kodithuvakku & Priyanath, 2007) to review the reasons for the improvement of labour productivity after privatization concluded that the labour productivity in tea plantations has improved after privatization due to improvement of labour satisfaction, shift arrangement, and application of new techniques of the private companies.

Uprooting and replanting of degraded old seedling tea plantation with clonal cultivars would be profitable (Kamau, 2008). However, management practices that prevent degradation are most cost effective.
As seen elsewhere (KHRC, 2008) the sexual harassment is prevalent in large scale estates and the formal mechanism to report cases of sexual harassment are either absent or underutilized. The housing condition of the worker is deplorable. The workers living in such condition are not living in a dignified life.

Most of the workers have heard about human rights but have scanty knowledge on what exactly human rights are. As such they do not know what to do when the rights are violated (Malavi Centre for Advice, Research and Education on Rights, 2008). A comprehensive and coordinated civic education campaign in human and labour rights can address the gap and empower the workers in tea estates to start demanding for their rights whenever there are violations.

A different approach examines the current situation and medium term prospects for production, consumption and trade of tea and its impact on the world tea market (Hicks, 2009). Tea is considered as having a share of the global beverage market, a highly competitive field. A wide range of tea products continue to be developed, through product and process development for added value, as market share become more sophisticated and competitive. The tea industry must rise to these challenges, facing the future with confidence.

Another view (Blowfield & Dolan, 2010) explores the complex nature of a beneficial outcome for the poor and marginalized and the gap that can exist
between ethical intention and the experience of their intended beneficiaries. Any commercial initiative that seeks to achieve outcomes beneficial and recognizable to the poor will need to address.

The study (Lincoln, 2010) examines the world production of plantation crops over time to determine the proportions accounted for by labourers in countries that have ratified the plantations convention. The study contributes to an understanding of the complexity of applying labour standards in the parts of global value chains that are located in the global south. It points to the need for revision to better serve the South’s export of agricultural workers.

The focus of the production of tea in Usambara mountains (Campagnola, 2011) shows that how the actual forms of labour organization among the tea peasants in the Usambara mountains have their roots in the colonial past and post – independence Tanzania.

The competence, assessment and development, management by objectives, performance based pay, and employees training were the main factors that had an impact on employee performance in Kenya tea development agency (Messah & Kamencu, 2011).

An attempt (Islam, 2012) to assess measuring impact of Kazi and Kazi tea estate limited, an organic garden in Bangladesh, observes that if the perceived problem could be solved by setting up of more tea processing
industries, competitive markets at the grass roots for tea leaves, supply of natural gas and resolving problems like power crisis could accelerate the production of tea. Kazi and Kazi tea estate needs to initiate more social activities in the wider scale in the diverse field for the well-being of the community people.

Others (Kagira, Kimani, & Githii, 2012) address the challenges facing the small holder tea sector in Kenya. Supplier and customer relationship, value addition, information technology, information sharing, flexibility in internal operations, upgrading of tea seedlings, proper coordination, institutionalization, policy reforms, training, monitoring marketing environment, strategic decisions, irrigation, venturing into new market through partnership and civil society involvement as competitive supply chain strategies in the face of declining and shifting competitiveness of the small holder sector in Kenya.

The study conducted elsewhere (Kipkorir, Feng, Li, Wang, & Kipsat, 2012) estimates how socio economic factors influence small holder farmers decision to adopt the available tea farming technologies. The study concludes that the management skills seem to be lacking among the tea farmers in Nandi hills and calls for its inclusion in the training package. An organization to specifically represent the interests of estate small holders would also be welcomed and useful.
Tea in Sri Lanka is one of the country’s biggest cash crops. But families working on tea estates are among the nation’s poorest in terms of earnings as well as nutrition. One in every five children below the age of five years is malnourished nationwide and one in six newborn has a low birth weight (Tea estate worker families are Sri Lanka's poorest in earnings and nutrition, 2012).

Part -2

2.3 Studies at the national level

If the tea industry is to develop, it is of fundamental importance that public policy should be such that to create confidence among producers. The central and state government should follow an integrated and coordinated policy towards the tea industry. An attempt (Halayya, 1972) to point out the defect in public policy, suggests that quality seeds must be made available in adequate quantities and at reasonable price to make re-plantation at an extensive scale possible so that India can regain its place as the world’s largest exporter of tea.

The low price of land and labour in India played a pivot role in the growth of Indian tea industry. An analysis (Chaudari, 1978) of the growth of tea industry with special reference to price of land and labour in India points out that the land for plantation crop is available at cheap price and so extensive cultivation is to be resorted to instead of intensive cultivation.
The urban cup of tea at present in India is an entirely different beverage compared to the rural sauces of tea. Due to increased exposure and higher literacy rates the knowledge and awareness of urban consumers in respect of beverage market is higher than rural areas (Shahani, 1982).

The Indian tea industry in general and the South Indian tea industry in particular are passing through a serious crisis due to cost escalation and declining or stagnant prices. The attempt of the industrial producer to improve his output levels to keep up with the cost increase has been aborted by the declining or stagnant prices and further increasing costs (Tharian, 1982).

To retain our position as the large exporter of tea, it is most important to maintain a consistently high quality, in view of new competition emerging in the international tea scene (Turbo, 1986). It is important to maintain a certain level of equilibrium in production, domestic consumption, export and prices to the continued growth in Indian tea industry.

Majority of tea estates in Coimbatore started production 50 years back and therefore it needs developmental activities to improve the health of the tea bushes. Planting could not be undertaken by the planters due to restrictive land legislation and state enactment in conversion of forests (Banerjee, 1990). A joint strategy is to be formulated by the government so that a portion of the available land vested with the government may be released for tea cultivation.
The Indian tea industry has always been shy and is not taking available development loans from various financial institutions due to the fact that it cannot even service such loans \((\text{Kankani, 1990})\). Re-planting of the area, yielding less than the average yield of the particular gardens as well as less than the district average yield, must be ordered and to be uprooted and replanted with best available clone material. The expense in this activity should be given 200% deduction in taxable income for central and state taxation.

The total planted area in a garden is not proportionate to the total area of the garden and area available for new extension. It varies from 14.5 percent to 46 percent of the total area and 58 percent of the area actually under tea \((\text{Misra, 1990})\). The availability of virgin land, its soil, climate, rainfall and irrigational facilities are the factors that grow the possibility for further extension, apart from the financial resources required to carry out this operation.

The plantations have to increase the area under cultivation and improve their productivity if they want to maintain the current level of exports and to meet the growing domestic demand. A study \((\text{Xaviour, 1992})\) examined the marketing strategies of the Indian tea industry and highlighted the problems currently experienced by the tea industry in India due to the collapse of Soviet Union.

The techno economic survey \((\text{TBI, 1994})\) reveals that the estates under public sector undertaking may lay greater stress on the essential field operations
and in order to make use available resources and optimum capacity utilization, work study personnel may study the existing methods and to formulate ways and means for improving efficiency in the factory level.

On a long term perspective, the need for accelerating the production growth has, no doubt, been felt and an ambitious target of one million tonnes by the turn of the century has been set (Thomas, 1994).

The main problem with the tea industry is the relationship between the employers and the workers are feudal in nature and under these conditions the employer by and large refuse to recognize the worker as an asset (Bhowmik S. K., 1996). This is perhaps why these people are denied their basic needs.

According to a study (Damodaran, 1996) though a large volume of data of costs of production, yields and productivity are available in regard to plantation sector, these need to be put into proper shape through a comprehensive methodology which enumerates the cost and benefits, both in their static and dynamic senses. Such an analysis will be of great significance both to planters, their industries and the government which sets policies.

The general picture of the position of the tea garden labourers in the state of Assam (Xaxa, 1996) shows that the living conditions of the labourers are inadequate and the trade unions are there but the extent of awareness about
their right was very poor. They do not know that the welfare measures are a part of their legal entitlements.

Despite forming half the labour force in plantation, women workers have remained marginalized in trade union of plantation workers (Bhowmik & Sarkar, 1998).

Though India is still the largest producer of tea in the world, increasing domestic intake entails that production must increase if exports are to remain unaffected (Aruja, 1999).

Another view (Chatterjee, 2001) points out how the female tea-pluckers seen in advertisements picturesque women in mist shrouded fields - came to symbolize the heart of colonialism in India. The study exposes how this image has distracted from terrible working condition, low wages and coercive labour practices enforced by the patronage system.

An approach (Krishnan, 2001) indicates that today the industries concerns revolve around prices and costs. It has performed badly yet again and is facing its worst crisis ever in consumption, export and quality terms. If the price uptrend currently being witnessed is sustained there may yet be some spirit left in the industry.

Reorientation of some of the cultural practices especially the policies on plucking and pruning will aid in improving the quality (Muraleedaran
The incidence of pests and diseases affects various quality parameters. Adequate and timely control measures must be taken not only to prevent crop loss but also to maintain quality.

The studies on the blister blight diseases of tea in south India (Premkumar, 2001) reveals that the drastic fluctuation in the weather pattern during monsoon results in an increase or decrease in the disease incidence. When the weather is conducive the disease incidence increases which results in massive crop loss.

The challenge before the tea industry is to increase price, improve quality and ensure that tea is available at a price remunerative to the producers and affordable to the domestic consumers and have sufficient surplus to meet the export requirement (Dalnya, 2002).

The decline in production could be due to weather factors which were less favorable than the normal conditions in certain districts and reduction in inputs in some garden. Obviously the approach should be to maintain if not increase the productivity levels, contain the cost of production and make concerted efforts for better price realization by way of quality improvement and by adopting appropriate marketing strategies (Hudson & Muraleedaran, 2002).
Concentration of quality is a must and it is to be intensified by the quality upgradation scheme with innovative strategies. Apart from assisting the plantations to upgrade their machinery some sort of regulation is also to be undertaken. Problem of exports especially with regard to delays and procedures for excise duty refund or drawback need to be addressed (Kapur, 2002).

The south Indian tea industry has been highlighting the worst plight plaguing the tea industry in various reports to the government. Tea price in the auction centers at Kochi, Coonoor, and Coimbatore all collapsed in 1999 (Srinivasan, 2002).

To really enhance the image of Indian tea and be a value exporter, India has to upgrade content, keen to play in the high value markets in Germany, the U.S, Japan and others (Bose, 2003). The reorientation of the primary market is a must so that trade margins can be reduced and producers get a premium sufficient to maintain quality. Drastic reduction in wage costs is imperative not only to perform better in the export but also to avoid sickness.

The need for a convergence of different aspect of toxicological and residual attributes of pesticides based on tea is not only essential but is also an imperative. The agricultural practice can reduce the hazards of pesticides use on tea but diverse data especially on eco-toxicological aspect have to be generated over a period of time before consensus could emerge (Chaudari T., 2003).
The phenomenon of falling prices is far worse in India than in competing countries, indicating distortions brought on by manipulations at the auctions (Devaraj, 2003). When the prices of Indian tea fell by 18.73 percent in 2000, the prices of Indonesian tea actually rose by 13.55 percent, Kenya tea prices rose by 13.48 percent and Sri Lankan tea by 7.86 percent.

Export incentive has become imperative to gear up promotional activities in a more systematic manner for which substantial investment needs to be made. Some generic promotion campaigns are to be adopted in the selected markets based on the market research surveys so that India can meet up the requirements of product and packaging standard in the international markets (Chandani, 2004).

Indian states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, North Bengal and Sikkim contribute significantly to the overall tea production in the country. Another study (Ghosh & Roy, 2004) suggested a package for decision support system with the help of which the management can take proper decisions at the right time.

Around 800 tea garden workers have died of starvation, with several surviving on wild roots and rats in the Indian state of west Bengal where closure of uneconomic plantation has rendered million labourers jobless (Hasan, 2004). The cut in prices is largely attributed to the inferior quality tea being produced by various Indian gardens.
India plays a significant role in world tea trade being the world’s largest producer, consumer and exporter. Hence fluctuation in India’s tea production, consumption and exports are enough to disturb the international tea trade (Paul, 2004). To improve the Indian economic position, the government should take appropriate steps to increase the export of tea and develop the industry as well.

Tea taste needs to be promoted amidst the non-users too to increase the demand and to solve the problem of excess production (Rao & Selvarasu, 2004). The central government needs to fix an appropriate minimum floor price and minimum support price to protect the interest of the producers and planters.

The production of tea in North Indian garden was affected by floods and the production in South India suffered due to severe drought (Singh, 2004). He concluded that the total production of Indian tea by the end of the year will be down by 10 million Kilograms.

Another study (Kokila, 2005) enquired into the marketing strategies of the tea factories in Nilgiris district. Efforts should be taken by all factories to adopt strong marketing strategy to improve sales. Competition is identified as the major problem of most of the tea factories and hence they should strive hard in the marketing area to compete globally.

In the long term the labour intensive characteristic has to be changed into capital intensive nature. For this capital assets of very high production
potential should be created by investing a much larger capital. The worker should be provided with far better and modern tools, implements and machines and by this process the worker will become skilled or semi-skilled operative (Menon, 2005). In this process his output or productivity will automatically increase by leaps and bounds and the gross realization per employee will also rise.

The ongoing negative socio economic impact of the tea industry, increasing population and other factors have meant that the tea plantations are unable to provide sustainable livelihood to the plantations community. Another study (Tirkey, 2005) describes the impact of tea plantations on the geo-ecological and socio economic conditions of communities in the Darjeeling district in India.

Nilgiris is the home to 65000 small growers and all belonging to Badaga Community which is the single largest indigenous group in the district. The Nilgiris district tea growers pleaded for promotion of their tea in the domestic market as a way out of the crisis (Venugopal, 2005).

At the end of colonial rule the Assam valley tea plantation employed nearly half a million labourers out of a labour population of more than three quarters of a million and more than 3,00,000 lac acres were under tea cultivation out of a total area of a million acres controlled by the tea companies (Behal, 2006).
Another study (Ghosal, 2006) reveals that foreign buyers who used to source both Kenyan as well as Indian teas place more shipment orders with Indian tea producers in anticipation that drought affected Kenya might not able to supply enough tea in that period.

Indian productivity in tea in kilogram per hectare has increased from around 1070 kilograms in 1961 to 1584 kilograms in financial year 2005. However, yields per hectare declined in recent years because of the increased age of Indian tea bushes. Tea yields are highly sensitive to temperature, drought, and heavy rainfall. An increase in the frequency of droughts and extreme rainfall events can result in a decline in tea yield, which are greatest in low country regions (ICRA, 2006).

There is scarcity of reliable information on health and nutritional status among tea garden population of Assam to enable initiating public health response to their health needs (Medhi G., 2006). The health status of the population can be ameliorated through better awareness, nutritional intervention and overall improvement of socio economic conditions of the population.

The earnings of the workers and the employees involved in the industry have to improve along with time. But it has to be in tune with the growth of the industry and the long time sustenance. Wages should be linked to productivity, efficiency and the capacity of the industry to bear it in the long run, especially
because in the existing system, a decision taken on wage cannot be reversed (Nambi, 2006).

Outsourcing plantation operations could be seriously considered only if plantation get exemption from the application of the contract labour (rules and conversion) Act in respect of those activities which are of seasonal and intermitted nature of support service. Alternatively central government should be approached for making suitable amendments to the act exempting seasonal intermitted activities from the scope of the act (Sankaranarayanan, 2006). It would appear that since plantation are controlled by industries; the central government will be the appropriate government for plantation for the enforcement of the act.

Around 15 tea factories in the private small scale sector called bought leaf factories have closed their operations in the Nilgiris (Sundar, 2006). They are closed because they are unable to run any more with the coarse green leaf which they had been using as the raw material.

Being a perennial crop, the future of the industry is cyclical in nature with periodic boom and depression. Another study (Boriah, 2007) opines that with the world supply position steadily increasing, the main thrust or approach will be to improve productivity of existing garden rather than establish new plantation at huge investment, value addition and marketability.
The government should not give financial assistance to owners directly to make estates reopen. If this is done, the estates might re-open and again divert funds and equipments for their own purposes (Bose J., 2007). The tea board and other government agencies supposed to support and promote the tea plantations must take appropriate measures to shift the teas into organic tea. Such tea commands higher prices in the national and international market.

The existing Labour Act has to incorporate a social security net that will include multi-skill training, job counseling and retraining social security payments. These additions to the Labour Act will stimulate a multi-skill environment in the resident garden society and prevent the occurrence of famine when the plantations close down (Chetri, 2007).

Development of irrigation facilities, promotion of water and harvesting methods for assured water supply can increase crop productivity by reducing pest attack, improving bush health and producing quality leaf fetches a good price in the market (Hanan, 2007).

To increase productivity certain short term measures like improved cultivation practices, optimization of inputs and irrigation during drought months are suggested. However the present old seeding population has its own limitations. Therefore it may not respond fully to all these measures (Ilango & Mohankumar, 2007).
Improved cultivation practices, optimization of inputs and irrigation are some of the short term measures that will assist in increasing the vertical growth of south Indian tea in a sustainable manner. Integration of these measures with long term policy comprising of infilling and replanting with high yielding quality clones is essential to meet the demand for good quality tea and to retain India’s share in the export. Moreover it will help the growers to generate more income from per unit area besides creating more employment opportunities for dependent workers (Ilango R. V., 2007).

Plantation owners will have no other alternative but to cut wages, reduce spending on estates, and finally, strip the estates of all assets and transfer the money to more profitable ventures. At prevailing prices no plantation will be able to pay workers the wages and benefits prescribed by law (John & Mani, 2007). Many estates have resorted to selling standing trees as timber, taking huge loans, diverting money to other business and even illegally transferring part of their properties to other activities. The large number of abandoned plantations stands testimony to this situation.

Labourers working in the closed tea estates of Gudalur are living on the edge of extreme poverty. They have an uncertain future. Their plight is same even in other big estates (Kumar, 2007). Even in working estates, workers are suffering badly and have not been paid wages for months.
Another study (Mathew, 2007) enquired into the impact of closure on the workers families and women in particular. The present abandoned plantation situation has adversely affected the families with greatest burden resting on the women who were to feed the family.

Tea drinkers stand to have their immune system primed to fight infection and chronic diseases because its antioxidants content help the body destroy free radicals (Oguntola, 2007). Water is essentially replaces fluid but tea replaces fluid and certain antioxidants, those who are taking six small cup of tea daily for two weeks were better able to fight off bacterial infection.

South Indian tea had a secure market until the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. In order to bring back the glory, the industry needs to focus on quality improvement, reduction of overheads cost, adoption of new technology wherever possible and large scale promotion campaigns overseas as well as in domestic market (Ramkumar, 2007).

It is up to the state to decide the size of land for tea cultivation, resumed land and utilization of the resumed and khet land. The state government should take a final decision on the state of closed and abandoned tea estates, especially for those gardens that are closed for a continuous period of more than five years (Rasaily, 2007).
The labourers and other cash benefits like bonus are to be linked with the labour productivity for reducing the production cost. The cost of production has to be fine-tuned and the quality of the bought leaf to be monitored closely (Shanmughan, 2007). The plantation should go for mechanization in planting and leaf handling stages and improve the productivity.

The area, production and productivity of Indian tea recorded a consistent rate of growth between the years 1950 and 2000 after which there was a slowdown. Tea production is 5% more than the consumption. As a direct result of this supply demand imbalance, the global tea prices are depressed by 25% which is reflected in Indian tea revenue (Jain, 2008). A four pronged approach to scientific management of the economic crisis which comprises of cost reduction, improving realization, value addition and information sharing is essential to address this.

Another view (Kumar P., 2008) suggests that concrete efforts have to be made by different stakeholders to increase the productivity of tea plantations and new type of production organization and ownership structure may be promoted to look after the multi-pronged problems of production, marketing and supporting survives for the small holder tea production.

In today’s inflationary conditions, a minimum wage of over Rs100 per day cannot be said to be high particularly looked at with the urban looking glasses and without the knowledge of the additional social security benefits,
annual bonus and statutory welfare amenities provided to the employees (Sankaranaarayanan, 2008).

An examination of the wage difference between male and female agricultural labourers observed that the conditions of female labourers are better in irrigated area and their conditions in non-irrigated area are miserable (Vithob, 2008). There is a need for comprehensive policy and minimum wage to promote welfare of the rural female labour class in the study region.

Due to lack of consciousness of the management and vision of the new group of plantation owners, many plantations were closed or remained abandoned for years after years (Chatterjee & Banerjee, 2009). If at all we want to survive one of the most important pillars of the North-East economy, we have to take bold, courageous steps and have to make innovative management policies instead of giving mere excuses about crisis in the world tea market.

In India, tea estates in both the north and the south improved their qualities. This is evident in the higher realizations that have come during the year (Dutta, 2009).

The prominence of coolie workers has obscured the significance of various local groups as well as the tea industry’s importance in the local migration (Sharma, 2009). Despite the gradual development of nationalist
antagonism towards the white planter’s raj, tea enterprise retained a hallowed place for the Assamese middle classes as tea workers continued as a radicalized laboring class.

Another study (S.K Dey, 2010) proposes a relatively simple productivity measurement model suited to the tea industry. It reveals that the model is comprehensive and identifies the six criterion of measurement theory such as validity, comparability, completeness, timelines, inclusiveness and cost effectiveness. The proposed model identifies the areas of poor resource utilization responsible for measured total productivity decline in the tea industry.

The incidence of injuries was greater among male workers, those working both in the field and factory and those handling multiple tasks. The most common morbidities suffered were small cuts and abrasion in about 53 percent of the workers (Joseph & Minj, 2010). Continuous monitoring of the risk assessment by the workers could help in a planned reduction of commonly occurring injuries by agreeing on a specified risk limit.

Important tradeoffs between the business level strategy adopted and the performance objective may help the firms in this industry more ahead in a more focused manner. High level of efficiency and a lower level of asset parsimony too seem to favor higher profitability (Ramakrishnan, 2010).
Another view (Hazarika, 2012) highlights how tea tribes or tea workers are far away from the fruits of urbanization and living in vulnerable conditions reveals that tea garden labourers are still in very deprive condition and are far away from the urbanized society and living an isolated life.

An approach (Makita, 2012) analyses the impact of fair trade certification by focusing on its interactions with the patron-client relation traditionally established between management and workers in tea plantation in India. The study argues that the invisibility of fair trade among workers inversely hides the patronage of the management and the workers are empowered when a premium is invested in a community development project held by an independent third party organization.

Although small tea growers have developed in the Udalguri district of Assam, yet efforts are to be made to change the socio economic condition of the district (Nath & Sen, 2012). The roles that can be played by the small tea growers to minimize the socio economic problem have been highlighted in the article.

Others (Sumitha, 2012) review the studies on labour market issues in the Indian plantation sector like the challenges faced by plantation labourers by focusing on the role of labour market institutions in plantations, nature of industrial relations prevailing in the sector and most importantly, the impact of production organizational innovation in this sector.
As found elsewhere (Borgohain, 2013) tea garden workers are educationally lagging behind, health facilities are not adequate and safety measures are lacking. This has resulted in a number of work related accidents and the workers are found to suffer from a number of health problems.

An essential contribution of any business enterprise in the evolution to a market economy is to improve its own business performance. For all business enterprises, business ethics is the first step towards this. Performance can be improved by not only doing justice to the stakeholders but also engaging them to the maximum extend. But there are still blocks in the minds of a few manufacturers, which need to be cleared to ensure ethical practices (Pai, 2013).

Women comprise a large segment of the working class in the tea sector and are visible only when organized but are not organized or encouraged to take up union leadership. In the absence of such an approach, they are compelled to create their social support system or mechanism to cater to their needs, which continue to remain unaddressed within the trade union movement lead to having no voice in trade union (Rasaily, 2013). In the context of changing production and labour market relation, the role of trade union has been weakened. Making women central to trade union organizing may help to reinvigorate the trade union movement.

The tea community is highly deprived in all respects of socio economic and political aspects (Sharma G., 2013) and therefore it is a high time for the
government as well as the owners and management to come forward and uplift this particular society. Otherwise this section of society will remain static.

The small tea growers are losing their identity and individual culture because of continuous fall in green tea leave price in Nilgiris. It is not an encouraging sign. With the help of government schemes, efforts need to be made to revive small growers of Nilgiri’s by NGOs and leaders of Badaga community (Sivaraman & Bindhu, 2013).

Part- 3

2.4 Studies in Kerala

Most of the tea bushes in Kottayam and Idukki district are less than 30 years of age (Namboothiri, 1978) so that the adoption of improved cultivation practices and adoption of necessary inputs can improve the condition of the bushes. The procedure for registration in respect of small garden may be simplified.

To sustain the economic health of the tea industry, various agencies like financial institutions, state government, central government and tea industries should work on a cohesive manner. The tea management should ensure internal generation of more funds for plough back out of profits earned and scientific appropriation should be developed to manufacturing and management process with a view to reducing cost of production (Banerjee, 1990).
Another study (Nair, 1990) examines the problems and prospects of the tea industry in Kerala by ascertaining the problems in the cultivation of plantation crops and studying the cost of production.

Plantation crops in general are either export oriented or import substituting and therefore assume special significance from the national point of view. The four major crops, rubber, coffee, tea and cardamom together occupy 6.35 hectare accounting for 28% of the net cropped area in the state. All acts and rules regulating and enforcing the rights and welfare of workers in the tea plantations, matters relating to excise duty, marketing and export of tea are also administered by the Government of India (Divakaran, 2002). Hence the state has many constraints in solving the various problems that has led to the present crisis.

Another view (George, 2002) aims to understand the development of tea plantation management system in Kerala from a Gandhian perspective and enquire into the theory and practice of human resource management in the present industrial world.

The tea plantation industry in Kerala has been encouraged for its contribution to economic growth, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings. Tea plantation in Kerala seems to have failed to plough back the short term profits for capital investments (Merlin, 2002). The contribution of tea to the economic growth in Kerala is remarkable in terms of its backward and
forward linkages. At the macro level the plantation industry has been facing adverse impacts of globalization and trade liberalization. The price has declined sharply and the industry is facing a crisis.

At present no systematic training is available in all the plantations except some training in rubber plantations by rubber board (Namboothiri K., 2003). In order to increase production and efficiency of employees, some training facilities are to be arranged for the employees and supervising staff by the government and the commodity board.

Another study (Raman, 2003) analyses the tea commodity chain in Kerala by highlighting the predicament of the labour force working in the sector. They are trying to bring into light the struggles and resistance of the labouring poor against the ruthless and brutish attack of the forces of global capital in a commodity chain framework.

The main relevance of the tea industry in Kerala is that it is cultivated in areas with least possibility of other crops. If tea cultivation had not been introduced in Kerala such land would have remained barren and supports provide by various boards to the farmers with respect to the processing and marketing is not up to the mark and there are imperfections in agriculture marketing in Kerala (Kurian, 2004). Kerala should take lead on major challenge of globalization and we shouldn’t miss the opportunities that the
global system is offering. We have to blend our strengths in the agriculture, manufacturing and service sector for global competitiveness.

We have made spectacular progress in agricultural development in spite of many vagaries. Kerala has got tremendous potential to promote its agricultural production in the world scenario in the present context of globalization and liberalization. We have to equip our farming community in all ways to reach that level (Ajithkumar & Anitha, 2006). Government machinery has already prioritized agricultural sector and formulated various project that are underway to solve the problem and to protect the interests of the farming community.

The prices of tea fluctuate based on sentiments of the market players and on economic forces like supply and demand. Major consumers of Tea used to wait to make their purchase till the prices come down to their favor. The scrapping of port restrictions followed by the slashing of export subsidy by 50 percent, dispensing of Tea Board’s inspection of imported tea, abolition of purchase tax on imports and the like attract the importers to import more tea in recent years (Anil, 2013).

2.5 The Research Gap

A detailed examination of the earlier studies, particularly in Kerala has revealed that most of studies were conducted to look into the contribution of the tea industry to the economic growth, development of plantation management
system, condition of tea bushes, problems in cultivation of plantation crops, manufacturing and management practices, tea commodity chain and cultivation practices. But no specific study has been conducted to find out the real causes and consequences of abandonment and/or closure, the functions of the tea plantations before and after the abandonment and/or closure, the efficacy of SPTF as a scheme of re-plantation and rejuvenation and the socio economic position of tea labourers before and after the abandonment and/or closure. The present study is directed towards this end.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has brought out a detailed review of the earlier studies under three headings. The next chapter will give in detail a theoretical overview of the tea industry in terms of the tea industry at the international scenario, Indian scenario and in the state scenario.