



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT OF TEA INDUSTRY IN NORTH EASTERN REGION

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Abstract: Sustainable human development refers to the system to meet up human goals at the same time sustaining the eco-system, natural system etc. There are various applications of sustainability but most significant applications are Triple Bottom-Line Approach. It emphasises on three principles such as:

- Economic Activities
- Environmental Activities
- Social Activities

Tea Industry is eco-friendly industry which protects the environment, protect the erosion of soil, waste management etc. Tea is an agriculture-based industry which has been recognised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Tea companies are trying to meet the human goals at the same time sustain environmental activities. More than 50% workers are women in this industry. In this paper we are trying to analyse the role of tea industry in India and how they fulfil their tasks towards their workers (called daily rated workers at the tea garden in North East India) at the same time sustaining the environmental activities in the tea growing areas. In this paper we have highlighted two major tea companies in the North Eastern region in India. Secondary data have been collected from public domains. Primary data have been collected through interviews.

Key Words: - *Eco-friendly industry, Sustainable human development, agricultural base industry*

JEL Classification: G34, G21, D71.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is the ability to live in world with all the resources without affecting the environmental activities. It includes-

1. Infrastructure Development,
2. Monetary Transactions,
3. Social Development &
4. Natural Resources.

Sustainable business refers to the system to balance between sociological, economical & ecological values. So, the businesses essentially require strong sustainability.

In case of any organisation their primary objective is to maximise their profit. While maximising their profit, social activities may be hampered. In that case Sustainability is needed to balance between Economical, Environmental & Social activities.

Sustainable human development refers to the system to meet up human goals at the same time sustaining the eco-system, natural system etc. There are various applications of sustainability but most significant applications are Triple Bottom-Line Approach. It emphasises on three principles such as-

1. Economic Activities
2. Environmental Activities
3. Social Activities

FEATURES OF SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE BUSINESS

1. **Erase Unemployment-** Every business organisation needs to provide employment for the local people & they should create an opportunity for women empowerment. Organisation should make an initial funding for providing training for the local people so that they can make them efficient for employment. It helps them to create better opportunity for employments and standard of living.
2. **Environmental Approach-** At Present the Global Warming in the main issue in the world. So, the organisation needs to think about their responsibility towards environment & its impact on the society. They can plant more trees, protect soil erosion & they must find "Waste" & eliminate it accordingly to protect environment.
3. **Provide Education for Poor People-** Every organization should focus on holistic development of the society. So, the companies must emphasise on providing education to the local people as well as their workers. Good education helps to create better opportunity for employments & it helps to improve standard of living.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. In this study we are trying to analyse the role of tea industry in India and how they fulfil their tasks towards their workers (called daily rated workers at the tea gardens in North East India).
2. In this paper we are trying to identify how tea industry fulfil their task on Society without affecting the natural resources.

SCENARIO OF TEA INDUSTRY IN THE NORTH EASTERN REGION IN INDIA

All India Tea Area as on 31.12.2015

State Name	Area (in Hector)
Assam	307.08
West Bengal	140.44
Other NI States (Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Sikkim)	12.29
Total North India	459.81
Tamil Nadu	69.62
Kerala	35.01
Karnataka	2.22
Total South India	106.85
All India	566.66

(Source: Tea Board of India)

1. All are aware that the Indian tea is globally preferred and its huge consumption places it significantly amongst other plantation crops in India. Therefore, India is the fourth largest tea exporter and second largest tea manufacturer in the World.
2. Significant amount of foreign exchange is earned by tea industry in India and it helps the Union Government to generate sizable revenue from tea exports.
3. Primarily Tea industry found in India is in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala which produced for 96% of total tea production in India.
4. Tea plantation not only produces an economic unit but also makes formation of socio-economic units. In 1951, Indian Government introduced 'The Plantation Labour Act'. The tea estates in various States have formed Trade Unions looking for improving the workers' economic conditions. Reasons for that being the tea estates in developing and less developing countries used to deploy the workers from the backward sections of the society in the said countries.
5. Tea Industry is an eco-friendly industry. Tea companies are trying to meet the human goals at the same time sustaining environmental activities. Indian Tea industry provides direct employment to more than one million people and indirectly to another two million as and when is required for producing seasonal crops every year. It is also recognized that more than 50% workers are women in this industry.

Now various tea companies have already taken various steps towards their sustainability such as: -

1. Using Solar Energy
2. Other eco-friendly Plantation & Irrigation
3. Waste management
4. Protection of Soil Erosion
5. Water Management
6. Protection from Deforestation
7. Eco Tourism
8. Erase Unemployment etc.

SCENARIO OF LIVELIHOOD OF TEA PLANTATION WORKERS

1. It is well documented that the structure of labour wages in tea gardens/ estates in North East India is framed by the State Governments under its Labour Board where the respective tea gardens/ estates are situated. Therefore, periodically the wage settlements take place through Tripartite Agreements.
2. The tea industry is covered under Tea Plantation Labour Act (1951). Under the Act it is said, the employees in plantation sectors are to be covered by wages, free housing, sanitation, drinking water, medical facility, light, fuel, primary education of the workers' children, crèches and subsidised cereals for self and family.
3. Since the tea estates / gardens are situated in isolation compared to other industries in India, the labours are economically disadvantaged due to procurement of other commodities from the markets which are very far flung from the estates/ gardens. Moreover, the grown-up children of the labours are facing problem to get higher education due to non-availability of proper infrastructure and communication to reach the institutions of higher education. Therefore, the workers are used to spending more money beyond their capacity to get their children higher education.
4. Decline in the living conditions of tea workers in recent years in North East India has been documented and it has depicted livelihood challenges for those who are dependent on it. Since 90s under the liberalised economic condition, tea prices are declining in the international markets which leads to closure of many organized small and medium size tea gardens / estates in North East India.
5. It has been observed that the tea estates/ gardens could not maintain standard housing due to non-availability of subsidies by the respective States as per Plantation Labour Act 1951 & Rules.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on Primary Data & Secondary Data. Secondary Data has been collected from public Domain & Primary Data has been collected through interviews.

SAMPLE SIZE

In this paper I have chosen two well organised companies which are Qualitative Tea Plantation (Kurti Tea Estate) & Amalgamated Plantation Limited. These Companies are the gamut players in West Bengal as well as India.

DATA SOURCE

Primary information has been collected through personal interviews from the management. Secondary information is collected from the newspaper, Journal & Public domain.

SURVEY PERIOD

Information has been collected from recently published data in public domain as well as personal interview during end of October, 2018.

A. QUALITATIVE TEA PLANTATION (KURTI TEA ESTATE)A geographical Overview of kurti Tea Estate

Particulars	Name
Block:	Nagrakata
District:	Jalpaiguri
Area:	790.7 hectares
Households:	913
Nearest Town:	Malbazar (32 km)

According to the management of Kurti Tea Estate, most of the workers are tribal.

The following **Environmental Activities** are done by them:

1. **Rain Water Harvesting**- According to the manager rain water harvesting is done in the factory not in the tea estate. They are also doing water recycling.
2. **Waste management**- Waste management is done by Biogen Organisation in Siliguri.
3. **Disposal of cotton Waste & plastic Material**- They are scientifically disposed from the factory.
4. **No Chemical is Used Around 15 Metres from Tea Estate**- They are not using any chemicals around 15 metres from the Tea Estate. This helps the locals & the tea estate worker to remain protected from any non-curable diseases.

Social & Economic Activities

1. **Medical Facility**-According to the manager of the Tea Estate, the following facilities are in the hospital of the Tea Estate

Particulars	Facility
Doctor	1
Pharmacists	1
Midwives	2

Earlier the delivery cases were treated in the hospital of the Tea Estate But now these cases are referred to the Block Hospital. The delivery treatment is sponsored by Government but ambulance facility is provided by company.

2. **Human Trafficking**- Management has alerted the workers with the help of the Union about human trafficking.
3. **Social Awareness Programme**- The management organise a camp for Social Awareness Programme. They invite people from the Tea Research Association to teach the workers about social awareness.
4. **Housing for the worker**- The management has done wiring for the electricity.
5. **Firewood**- The Company provide firewood for the workers but not the gas for cooking.
6. **Nutrition Awareness Programme**- The company organise nutrition awareness programme for the workers.

Personal Observation

1. **Security**- When I entered in the Tea Estate, I filled up a form then the security guard checked me & then they allowed me to enter the tea estate.
2. **Life of workers**- Most of the workers are illiterate. They are living below the poverty line. So, the management teach all the instruction graphically and systematically.

B. DAM DIM TEA ESTATE (AMALGAMATED PLANTATION LIMITED)A short Geographical scenario of Dam Dim Tea Estate

Particulars	Name
Gram panchayet	Dam Dim
Block	Mal bazar
District	Jalpaiguri
State	West Bengal
Nearest Town	Mal bazar

According to the management, the Tea Estate has already done the following **Environmental Activities**-

1. **Using Fertilizer**- The company uses fertilizer as per statutory rules mentioned by the Union Government.
2. **Festival Sirish**- It is a periodical programme organised by the company for promotion of Adivasi Workers.

Social & Economic Activities

1. **Project Unnati**- It is a project of 200 crores. It is basically for the livelihood of the workers. As per Plantation Labour Act they are bound to provide these facilities for the workers.
2. **Crèche & school facility**- The teachers of the schools recognise the children name wise. The strength of the schools is mentioned below:

Children (Tea Estate)	2016-17	2017-18
Total Children	481	492
School going	60	89

3. **Medical Hospital**- According to the GMO Of the hospital, the following diseases are treated there-

Disease	Number of patients	
	2016-17	2017-18
Diarrhoea	1443	2381
Hypertension	2023	276
Anaemia	21	15
TB	24	25
Malignancy	21	Nil
Childbirth	98	92
Sick	3363	5971
No of visits (including other minor health issues)	98311	109203

Personal Observations

1. **Crèche Facility**- I talked with the teachers of two crèches they said that the age group of the children of the crèches is 1-6 years. They also said that they periodically organise various programmes such as-
 - a. **Baby Shows**
 - b. **Annual Sports**
 - c. **World Toilet Day**
 - d. **Arranging Plays**
2. **Medical Hospital**- When I visited the medical hospital, I saw the Operation Theatre, X-Ray Machines, Blood Pressure measuring machines etc. The Medical hospital has well-organised infrastructure.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

1. As most of the tea estates are situated at remote corners of the country, tea industry is always trying to fulfil its tasks towards their holistic development for the workers employed in the tea estates. The tea industry also tries to develop the infrastructure in the remote corners where the tea estates are situated in India.
2. Tea is an Eco-friendly industry which protects the environment, protect the erosion of soil, helps in waste management etc.
3. Tea is an agro-based industry which has been recognised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
4. Though The Plantation Labour Act was introduced, few tea estates in North Eastern Region does not provide the basic facilities to the workers which are mentioned in the above Act.

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