

# **Chapter- VII**

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

## 7.1: Conclusions

Tea is the means of existence of people in northern division of Bengal where the outside of teagardens is located on the foothill areas of Terai, Darjeeling, and Dooars. The tea industry of Bengal has a history of more than 160 years. It has outspread the entire socio-economic and socio-cultural features of all classes of people of this part of Bengal.

North Bengal occupies the second leading tea producing province in India next merely to Assam. North Bengal holds 276 tea estates in aggregate. Among 276 tea estates in North Bengal, nearly 150 tea estates are located in the Dooars which is one of the principal tea producing regions in India. In Darjeeling, 81 tea estates are located and this tea growing region is renowned all over the world for its unique Darjeeling superiority of tea. The rest of 45 tea estates are located across the Terai area of Darjeeling district.

We have performed a methodical study to investigate onto the 'Management of Human Resources in Indian Tea Industry: With Special Reference to North Bengal Region.' Every functional aspect of human resource management viz. procurement, training and development, compensation, integration, and maintenance has been discussed in the purview of tea industry. Our study considers only the labour components of human resources in tea plantation industry of Bengal, since labour is the heart and soul of tea industry. Our study has found that each and every functional aspect of the human resource management in tea plantation industry of North Bengal is not up to the standard. Being with the recruitment and selection, the traditional and conventional system of labour recruitment and selection has been experiential. Training is offered only by 36 per cent sample tea estates. There are no formal ways of appraising the performances of workers. The amount of wage is paid to workers is abysmally low and is not

justifiable. Even, the amount of wage is not as per the prescribed minimum rate of wage for agricultural workers in the state. Rate of wage is determined through tripartite agreement where employers' role is influential. Working conditions in terms of working hours and overtime hours are entirely worse in accordance with the standard which has been paved by the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. Various statutory and non-statutory benefits for labour have been studied unavailable since long. Finally, considerable disparities have also been studied among various types of tea plantation companies on health, safety, and welfare facilities.

However, all these issues have been emerged in the tea plantation industry of North Bengal only due to the ill effect of Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization (LPG) which was initiated in India in the year 1991. However, the factual effect of it on tea industry was started from year of 1998 onwards. Indian tea industry has confronted stiff competition in the global market due to lessening of import tariff barrier and withdrawn of the quantity ceiling on import. Thus, to remain competitive in the economy, tea producing companies of the North Bengal have been enforced on sinking the various costs, specially the labour cost. Due to the cost diminution policy, tea producing companies in this province are not in a position to execute their responsibilities viz. health, welfare, safety, working conditions, etc. to the workers in conformity with the Plantation Labour Act (PLA), 1951. Besides these, inappropriate staffing, passive attitudes of planters on providing proper training, abnormality in payment of wages, bonus, gratuity, provident fund, etc. have been enlarged significantly. Further, other non-statutory benefits for workers like fuels, umbrella, slippers, tarpaulin, etc. have been fully eroded.

Thus, the study concludes that the labour forces, i.e. human resources are not properly managed in the tea plantation industry of North Bengal. As a result, workers who are engaged with the tea industry for the survival of themselves and their families have been unfavourably affected. As a

consequence, workers backed by the trade union, call strike, create stress on the management to execute their demands. Hence, labour conflict has become a usual phenomenon in this region. Finally, all these issues lead to the labour turbulence in the forms of strikes, gheraos, etc. and thus the industry has become vulnerable.

## **7.2: Recommendations**

For the purpose of managing human resources in an effective way in the tea plantation industry, some suggestions are furnished hereunder:

- 1.** Study established that the actual scenario of span of control in tea plantations of North Bengal region is poor. It is suggested that span of control should be as per the prescribed standard of Das Gupta which is 1:7.
- 2.** In the study, it was found that no permanent recruitment took place in tea plantations of the study region except on account of death of permanent workers, permanently left out the jobs, etc. cases. It is highly recommended that instead of recruitment of casual (Bigha) worker, permanent worker should be recruited since job accountability is more of the permanent worker. As we know, for proper nurturing of tea plant and for the other related activities, responsible workforce is required. So, recruitment of permanent worker is the best suitable means.
- 3.** Traditional and conventional system of labour recruitment should be avoided. Further, family based recruitment is also to be avoided.
- 4.** In the study, we have found that 64 per cent sample tea plantations has no scope of training for their workers. It is highly recommended that tea planters should immediately take necessary actions to organize training.

5. Study has found that for the case of Public Limited Tea Company, training program was not effective i.e. the performance of worker remained the same before and after attaining training. It is suggested that while designing the training program, due concentration should be given. The training module should be designed keeping in view the capacity of the learners.
6. Priority should be given on on-the-job training methods for worker. Hence, learning while doing would be the best training procedure for tea plantation workers since they are not educated adequately.
7. Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP) is now the emerging issue in the global tea market. To capture the global market, membership of ETP is highly recommended. Tea workers being the heart and soul of the tea industry, employer needs to aware them about codes of ETP. Training is the only weapon in the hand of planters to make it possible.
8. Wage determination should not be left through negotiation process. Rather, like in South Indian tea plantations, wages should be declared by the Government and should be revised time to time as per the changes in the index number through notifications under Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Minimum wage, however at least ensures survival at the subsistence level.
9. During the wage rate determination negotiation courses, those who represent the labours' unions, they do not actually belong to the labour fraternity. They basically are the so called 'Neta' (leader) and in most of the case they have some unseen relationships with the tea planters' associations. So, it is robustly recommended that such people should not be permissible during the negotiation phase. The genuine representatives should be permitted to participate.

**10.** In the study, it has been found that the determination of wage to large extent is influenced by political issues. Political issues should be kept aside while determining the rate of daily wages of tea workers.

**11.** The amount of wage should be paid on time so that the plantation workers can use the amount for their daily needs. Cash mode of payment for wage should be preferred since banking infrastructure is too poor in the adjoining areas where tea gardens are located.

**12.** Working conditions for workers in terms of working hours and overtime hours should be justified. Extra work hours should be calculated based on the standard measures i.e. as per the Plantation Labour Act, for extra payment.

**13.** Parity should be maintained among all types of tea companies regarding the rate of payment on extra work performed by the workers.

**14.** Inequalities in welfare, health, and safety benefits of tea workers have been found among different categories of tea companies in the study. It is suggested that such discriminations should not be there in the same industry and in the similar region.

**15.** In lion's portion of tea plantations, it has been found that non-statutory benefits like fuels, umbrella, slippers, tarpaulin, etc. have been totally eroded. This is suggested that tea planters should supply these protective equipments on a regular basis so that the workers can be protected bodily during work.

**16.** Efforts to provide secondary schools at every estate should be set as an immediate goal. Centre of Vocational training should also be set up. They are highly required for the future generations of the labour community.

**17.** Appropriate execution of Plantation Labour Act, 1951 in all aspects for the tea plantation workers is instantly necessary.

**18.** Owner of tea plantations should be awakened by the Tea Board of India about their importance and existence in terms of job creator, pioneer of economic development, sustainability of the industry, environment and ecology so that effective entrepreneurial values may be emerged in themselves.

**19.** The quality of tea bush impacts on the market price of tea. Quality of tea bush depends on proper nurturing and care. Labour of tea plantations is responsible for caring and nurturing tea bush. Hence, the plantation management should pay adequate attention to its labour.

**20.** It is highly recommended that restrictions should be made by the appropriate authority on frequent change of ownership of tea estates of this region since frequent change of ownership results less responsibilities and obligations on labour by the owners.

**21.** Lastly, the roles of Tea Board of India (TBI) and the State Government should be more active on the performance of tea plantations.