

## **Deplorable Living Conditions of Female Workers: A Study in a Tea Garden of Bangladesh**

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The study reveals the living conditions of the female laborers of tea garden in Bangladesh exploring the social and job environment with the inclusion of consciousness level as the deplorable scenario of their life styles. This research has been done in a tea garden of Sylhet district in Bangladesh namely Lackatoorah Tea Estate, as the study area, taken into account at random. It shows that female workers are being oppressed and suppressed in each and every sphere of life as from family residence to job field. It also exhibits very explicitly that 68 percent of female workers have no control over their own income. 94 percent have no hereditary property ownership though they are entitled to get it legally from their family. 92 percent females think that they are being physically tortured and mentally harassed by their husband, male members of family and also by representative of estates manager. 86 percent women want to keep small size of family but cannot play role in the decision making of child issue. The study is fully based on primary level data that followed stratified sampling method with triangulation research design and reviewing some related literatures from past research reports.

*Key Words:* Female laborers, social environment, job nature, consciousness, family planning

### **Introduction**

One of the most striking phenomena in recent times that has been the extent to which women have increased their share in the labour force (Christopher, Pietro, Claudia, Barbara, & Etienne, 2005; European Commission, 2012, pp. 01-09; Female Labour Market Outcomes, 2008; Female Labour Market Factsheet, 2012; International Labour Organization, 2010, pp.02-06). But in the last century, women were mostly relegated to the home, job field and looked down upon as an inferior creature (Female labor market outcomes, 2007; Goldin,1990; Lin Lean Lim , n.d, p.203; “Men and Women do different Jobs for different Pay”, n.d.; Wendy & Smita,1991; Deborah & Sherrie ,1999,pp.3-14). It is also very true in Bangladesh where women are growing up with conservativeness and narrowness of mind. These kinds of characteristics are rooted within females’ mentality because of stereotype of social settings. In such a way, females are financially much more victimized than the males are, though the former are honest, sincere and laborious in their works but living in misery and wants along with discrimination in health facilities (Gita, 2007). All are being happened because of becoming entirely dependent on men and are subjected to the authority of fathers, husbands and sons(Subramanian , 2010). Now-a-days by dint of efforts of the NGOs, some sort of woman empowerment is,however being

established. As in the past era, parents always would try to get their daughter’s marriage at early age because of great affinity between daughters’ age and monetary size of dowry. During the last decade, it shows that girls got marriage at an early age even at the age of fifteen (i.e. Married before 18 years of age, the legal minimum age for girls) by the force of family and for the context of rural area (Barkat et al., 2010). But at present, this scenario is being changed in consequence of non-profit and voluntary organization’s activities, expansion of trade and business sectors, and also initiatives of government in taking some policy regarding the gender issues. Women are highly intended to be engaged in job for ensuring their livelihood collection as well as economical solvency. But it is very much apologetic that females are always being suffered in their job field by surrounding social settings as well as co-workers or colleagues. They are not happy in their working station. Neither they have economic security nor social security.The wages which are paid to them is very low and below standard (Lenin, 1913, pp. 230-231). After all, their human rights as well as citizenship rights are being fully disregarded in terms of negligible payment, unhygienic working environment and behavioral patterns of co-workers.Even they are being thought as irrational and unfit economic agency (Bodkin ,1999, pp. 62-73). This kind of oppression of life is also seen in the life of female workers those are engaged in tea

plantation. Nearly 3, 58,550 workers are employed in tea estates of which over 75 % are women (Chowdhury, Hasan & Karim ,2011). Female workers are engaged verily in collection and all kinds of processing of tea leaves including leaf plucking because they (women) have more “skilled and nimble fingers than men” (“Tea Workers of Bangladesh”, n.d.). The rolling tea estates in Bangladesh employ nearly 1.8 million people, and many are women (Islam,T., 1996). A female worker gathers 50 kg. of leaves each day and is being paid only tk. 2 for each , and repaid as extra tk.0.80 for gathering extra per kg and can earn only tk.100 per day by their labor of whole day that less than one & half US Dollar(Tea Workers of Bangladesh”, n.d.). This is very real scenario that women workers of tea garden do not get actual evaluation in terms of financial and social aspects through giving hard working whole day long as well as deprived of minimum level of facilities, low nutritional status (Morser, 2010) citizenship rights as well. They are also being victimized even in their personal and family life. There is a lot of evidence that the tea workers in Bangladesh especially women live an inferior standard of life compared to that of the major tea producing countries in the world [Tea Workers of Bangladesh”, n.d.]. Most segment of population of Sylhet Region is engaged in tea gardens, so their development can play an important role in the progress of the nation. For that reason, social researchers give attempts to reveal the actual present scenario in terms of economic, social and psychological facts of the female workers engaged in tea garden as the backward group of female workers.

### **Problem of the Study**

The living conditions of tea garden workers is very miserable and pathetic because of the implications of tea garden management, especially for female workers, those are more vulnerable in terms of economic and social issues than males are. So, they need to be justified. In this study, I would like to explore the actual facts about the female workers of one of the largest tea gardens of Sylhet district north-eastern part of Bangladesh. The facts are examined centering the family environment, role of decision making in various facts of family including reproductive health and family planning affairs, consciousness about their rights of hereditary property, job environment and social status. So, the present study keeps an utmost attempt to reveal important clue about the means of deprivation of tea garden female workers. However, the scope of the research is limited to exhibit the overall living conditions and agoneous treatment to vulnerable

females in collection of their livelihoods in a tea garden of Bangladesh.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main theme of this study is to explore the deplorable living conditions of female labourers of tea garden in which they are forced to live and belong. Along with the main goal, there are two specific objectives have been set for identification of real scenario, as follows-

- To find out the nature and scenario of social environment and job field of female labor force of tea garden in which they are suppressed.
- To assess the female workers’ level of consciousness about their rights and privileges.

### **Significance of the Study**

Tea industry,at present stands as the third largest exporting goods of Bangladesh.It is as such a great source of earning revenues of the country by the way of foreign exchange(“Bangladesh Tea Board”,n.d.; (2012,Chakrabarti.This present position of the tea industry has been acquired by the hard works of laborers those are mostly women but they are as good as captives and live in near servitude (,IFPAAW (1986. Although female workers of tea garden have been discharging their duties by exercising tremendous physical labourers and causing the prosperity of the country.They lead a very miserable condition of life compare to other sectors such as garments factory, ship breaking industry, and even of brick field workers. They do not get full scope to avail all kinds of basic demands in full phase. Neither are they well known about their rights such as hierarchical right of property, suffrage (right of vote), right of taking decision, Mohorana or right of marriage separation, job facilities, nor have any consciousness about the feelings of suppression and oppression or sexually harassment elimination policyand awareness only about sexually transmitted diseases as 11 per cent of women aged 15-49 years in the tea gardens have comprehensive knowledge on HIV and AIDS (Barkat, A., Mahiyuddin, G., Shaheen, N., Poddar, A., Osman, A., Rahman,M., & Ara, R.,2010). It is also true that all of the main functions of Bangladesh Tea Board are related tothe raising of tea cultivation, sustaining quality assurance,and giving license to manufacturers, but only one functionis related to the welfare measures for laborers and employees. It is also the same about the tea research institute where there is no research department centering the social and human policy or implementing demands of laborers. Moreover, there is no statistical data about the number

of laborers in terms of registered, non-registered, age groups, sex, race etc. that are important to take policy about them. Bangladesh can earn lot of foreign currency reservation by exporting tea and this contribution is being possible mostly by the efforts of female workers of tea garden. But it is very pathetic that there is no especial priority in giving facilities to female laborers of tea garden though three quarters of labor forces are women and many of them are victimized both inside and outside of family. As-“Lashmi is only 30, but her weather-beaten face is lined and wrinkled. Long hours, between 10 and 12, spent in the sun, laboring up and down hill slopes plucking tea leaves and sorting them out, have aged her prematurely. She eats poorly too because her husband, though a tea garden worker, squanders all his wages on country liquor and gambling. The family survives on her wages — which has to be stretched to feed and clothe three children and ageing parents-in-law ((Islam,T., 1996. Moreover, present living conditions that are being faced by tea workers especially to females are generally outrageous and clear infringement of the Bangladesh Constitution as well as commitment of SAARC Social Charter sets for the South Asian States is to enable its citizens “satisfy basic human needs and to realize his or her personal dignity, safety and creativity ( Saeed,2008; ;n.d ,”Tea Plantation Workers in Bangladesh” SAARC Social Charter, n.d.

Therefore, it is very significant to extend our substantial knowledge about the nature and conditions regarding the job environment and social environment i.e. how they are being treated by their employers, fathers, husbands, sons or other male persons in the different periods of their life as employee, daughters, wives and mothers. In addition, it is essential to remove the handicaps under which they work, to strengthen their bargaining capacity, to improve their wages, working conditions, to understand their rights as well as advantages, to augment their skills and to open up better employment facilities as a whole.

## Literature Review

Chowdhury, Hasan and Karim, (2011) studied in two tea gardens of Moulvibajar district on the water supply and sanitation conditions of garden’s laborers. They revealed that the WATSAN condition of tea garden area especially for workers is not sound. It has been found that there is very much lacks of tub wells to get drinking water and local government also did not take any initiatives for supplying pure water. About the socio-economic conditions, it has been also found that the monthly income of workers is BDT 3000-4000 only. 80% people were illiterate, 58% people were

getting improper (shared among many workers) latrine facilities. The drinking water was free from faecal coliform and arsenic contamination but the concentration of iron was high. The study reveals on overall that the workers of tea gardens are deprived from proper latrine facility, water supply system, waste management and housing facilities. Sustainability of water supply and sanitation system must be considered for achieving good health for all and keeping the environment healthy for smooth economic development. They conferred that this kind of achievement mostly dependent on women consciousness. Therefore, it is clear that women’s participation in sanitation program and workshop related to raise their awareness is indispensable to promote use of safe latrines which should be initiated seriously.

Hossain (2012) said that a worker of tea industry in Bangladesh gets wage of tk. 45 for a day’s work. This size of payment is very inhuman to the workers of Bangladesh as a democratic country. On the other hand, it is very surprising for an elected government by people for allowing such injustice for years together whereas a day laborer gets tk. 200 to tk. 400 in agriculture sector along with one meal for a day’s work. Moreover, this wage varies from season and off-season time with increasing rate. This indicates that the owners of tea companies have been depriving their workers of minimum reasonable wage whereas they have been making profit of millions of dollars every year. He urged the government to fix the minimum reasonable wage for works in tea gardens in Bangladesh as the protection of basic interest of its citizens.

Saeed (2008) revealed the actual scenario about the relationships of tea workers , where he found that there is a social and economic distance of the tea workers with their Bengali supervisors including the managers is much wider as the tea gardens are managed as an extreme hierarchy, the managers live like gods, distant, unapproachable, and incomprehensible. Some even begin to believe that they are gods, which they can do exactly what they think. Managers have anything up to a dozen laborers as their personal, domestic servants. They are made to tie the managers shoe lace, to remind them that they are under managerial control and that they are bound to do whatever they are asked.

Barakat et al. (2010) launched an assessment for UNICEF, Bangladesh to determine the actual situation of the children and women in the tea garden of Bangladesh in terms of their health, education, social protection and dignity. The study shows that the conditions of children and women are considerably worse in some areas than their peers those are engaged in other sectors of Bangladesh. It finds that the infant

mortality rate is almost twice as high as the national average and those levels of extreme poverty and of poor nutrition exceeds the national norms. About 74 percent of households fall below the absolute poverty, compared to the national average of 38.4 percent and about 50 percent fall below the hardcore poverty line, compared to the national average of 19.5 percent. Gender parity at primary school is 1.0, which means that there is no gender discrimination regarding attendance in primary school between boys and girls. But primary dropout is relatively higher among girls compared to boys (19.4 % Vs 15.7 %). For that reason, womens' literacy is lowest at just 12 percent. 59.8 percent of the women aged 15-49 are victims of child marriage.

Sanne Van Der Wal,(2011 one hundred tea workers were interviewed on a total of eight tea plantation companies, all supplying tea to unilever. It was found that working conditions on tea estates are problematic. As per given report of workers, they are being harassed on the basis of sex, ethnicity and gender. All constituting violation of ILO code of business principles. It is noted that Unilever tea has 16000 permanent workers and near about 4000 temporary workers. Casual workers had worked as temporary workers ranged from 2 to 9 years and was 3.4 years on average. They have no job security. Apart from the lack of job security, conditions for casual workers differ from those with a permanent status in that they have fewer benefits. Casual employees who are not married or living with a partner are required to share estate houses if they are at all available. It shows that five casual workers share a two-room house. No efforts is made to provide single housing unite for casual workers who are living with their children. Due to the sharing of houses, casual workers are infested with bed bugs, permanent workers do not have to share houses. In the FDG, it was said that workers who are members of the union, face harassment from the management when they attempt to push any agenda that the management does not agree with. This harassment is usually in the form of false accusations of impropriety, false duality judgements by the quality inspectors or the reassignment to heavy tea picking duty. All the female respondents who were interviewed noted that before they were employed they were subjected to pregnancy tests. The respondents stated that pragnent women were never employed instead their medical cards would be stamped as unfit. One of the workers stated that sexual harassment is a serious problem because all the supervisors are men, some of them want to go beyond work obligations and satisfy their sexual needs and if anybody don't do that, they fake other charges against women workers give workers to much work or allocate somebody lonely or dangerous plucking zone.

Morser ((2010 exhibits the work of tea laborers is arduous but payment is very low and its job nature is fully insecure. Tea pickers are on their feet all day with heavy baskets on their backs, often on uneven terrain and in harsh weather conditions, injuries are common, as are respiratory and water-born diseases. Family's struggle to find the money for other fundamental expenditures such as clothing, health care and school fees. On such low salaries, savings are non-existent, which increases workers' insecurity and vulnerability. Moreover, payment is determined by management and it is never explained to workers how this is calculated. On the one hand, females are struggling more with present low payment than male workers, on the other hand, they face the burden of responsibility for the housework and child care in addition to their employment. Women laborers note the difficulty of performing cooking, cleaning and child care duties in addition to spending eight or more hours in the fields. Girls are not sent to school at all, which means that most are illiterate, while boys rarely complete their education.

Sarma ((2007 said that the tea-tribes of Assam are among the backward and most exploited tribes in India, though their newer generation in comparatively educated. The tea tribes, being basically laborers, live in villages, inside tea-estates. These estates are located in interior places and this cointributes to the backwardness and exploitation of them by the tea planters. The tea planters usually exploit the tea-tribes in every possible way. Violence and agitation of laborers against the management is common, where the state machinery normally protects the tea planters. Non-education, poverty, addiction of males to country beer, poor standard of living and health facilities are the problems in their life. There are instances when tea-planters do not even supply the life-saving drugs when workers are dying out of epidemics.

### ***What Makes This Study More Significant than the Related Study?***

A lot of study carried out on the tea garden workers in Bangladesh by various researchers and institutes. But most of these studies reveal the evaluation on laborers commonly of both sexes without exhibiting the affairs of the female workers especially. In this present study, seven previous works have been examined and out of these, three from outside Bangladesh and the rest from inside Bangladesh. But neither such works appear to have considered womens' issues such as nature of job environment, family conditions and level of consciousness about their rights though rest have been on health, education, social protection, water supply and sanitary conditions, mode of payment etc. Most of these studies avoided the inclusion of

women's adverse suppression by way of male domination, domestic violence, marriage system, economical and social status etc. The present study, however tries to fill up these deficits giving special considerations on female laborers of tea estates of Sylhet district, relating their overall social environment, job environment and level of their consciousness about rights, national incidence, law and family planning issues.

## **Materials and Method**

### ***Research Design***

This is a mixed method research design. The findings of study were retrieved using the methodological triangulation for the reason of collecting data from the side of qualitative (case study) and quantitative (survey) analysis at the same time. The study is descriptive as well as interpretative in nature because of describing and explaining data and information highlighting the exploration of deplorable conditions of female workers of tea garden.

### ***Research Area and Location***

A tea garden of Sylhet district in Bangladesh, named Lackatoorah Tea Estate has been selected as the research area. The year of Establishment of this tea garden is 1875 by Octivious Steel & Co. as Lackatoorah Tea Company. From 1934 to 1965, it was managed by M/s McLain & Company, Calcutta. In the year of 1965, it was declared as Vested (Enemy) property. In 1966, it was procured by M/s Pakistan Commodities Limited (Adamjee) Managing agent Duncan brother and In 1972, declared as Abandoned Property and handed over to BTIMC. From 1st July 1978, the garden is under the management of National Tea Company. Its total area is 1293.30 Hectare(National Tea Company Limited , n.d.).

### ***Population and Sampling of the Study***

Female workers of this tea garden (Lackatoorah Tea Garden) of all age groups have been considered as the unit of analysis. By pursuing a pilot study, it has been found that 600 females, maximum of those are within 16-34, working in this tea garden for their livelihoods. Therefore, all of them have been considered population of the study. In this study, probability sampling has been used because the population size of research area is known. So from this population, data

have been collected by using stratified random sampling, where strata are composed on the basis of marital status. Moreover, to select sample from each strata, lottery method of simple random sampling has been used. In such a way, total sample size is 50 (Kothari, 2003, p.).

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

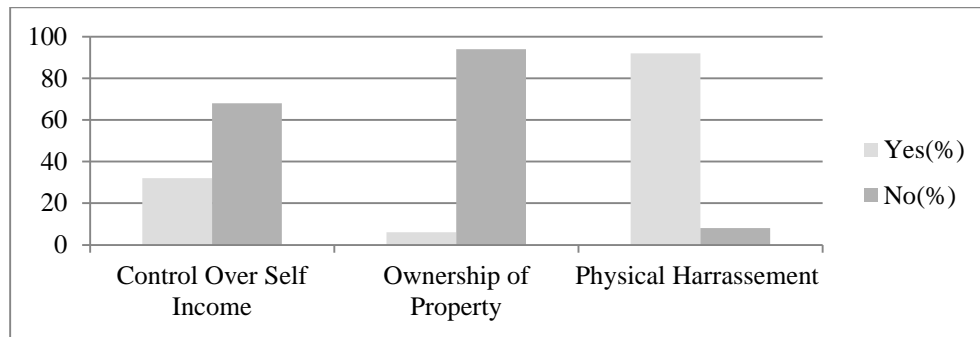
In this study, triangulation method (social survey and case study) has been followed to collect data. As the quantitative data, a questionnaire has been designed as the precondition of social survey. Therefore, the main research instrument of this study is structured questionnaire, and it is divided into two modules. First one is designed for married workers and another is for unmarried. The main focus issues are about their present socio-economic conditions, education level, and consciousness about rights. In each module, required questions have been asked to retrieve the main facts of deprivation of minimum level of living standard, conflict and coercive relationship with gardens' owners, managers and supervisors. In addition, as the qualitative methods, some intrinsic case studies have also been taken into account, in collection of data on the perception of tea gardens' job environment. Moreover, as a source of secondary data, various books, research papers, journals, bulletin, news papers have been reviewed for designing the basis of literatures and its significance. These collected data were analyzed under univariate and bivariate analysis by using different types of statistical tools and techniques along with appropriate applications such as percentage analysis and graphical representations.

## **Results and Discussions**

### ***Living in agonized socio-economic environment***

To reveal the deplorable living conditions of female workers, some socio-economic conditions should be taken into account in terms of self control over their income, degrees of ownership on land property and physical harassment. Actually control over their self income has been measured in this way that whether they can spend money by their own will or not. It has been found that major portion of them can not spend money by their own interest and will; even sometimes they are compelled to give full amount of salary to their husband. Otherwise, maximum of them are being beaten and mentally harassed. As shown in table-01 and Fig.-01.

Figure 1: Scenario of Domestic Violence



Name of Issues	Yes (%)	No (%)
Control Over Self Income	32	68
Ownership of Property	6	94
Physical Harassment	92	8

Table 1: Scenario of domestic violence

On the basis of this indication of economical status, it has been found in Sylhet Malnichora and Lakkatura Tea Garden that only 32% of female workers think that they have self control over their income. The rest 68% is not enjoying any kind of freedom to spend this money. Sometimes they are giving money to their husband for many kinds of unnecessary purpose and even for their (husbands) collection of drug, alcohol, canavas and so on. It is very much regret to say that this pathetic scenario is very common to all the tea gardens of Sylhet.

Another thing of measuring economical conditions is the ownership of property. It is shown that only 6% of women workers enjoy ownership of property of husband’s property and father’s property whereas 94% of workers do not enjoy this kind of rights. Physical harassment is another very typical indication to evaluate the social status of the female workers of tea garden. Mostly, it is seen that married or unmarried women, child or adolescent are being very much victimized physically by the male members of family especially by husband or eldest one. This harassment is being occurred beating by husband, father and even by eldest brother. They emphasis on works against their willingness as doing work overtime though its payment is very low. If they do not agreed to do work then faces various kinds of torturing. Physical harassment is also being occurred in terms of abnormal sexuality. Husband is very much inclined to do intercourse with their wife with full of abnormality of sex, that is anal sexuality, though most of female workers do not want to do sex in such a way.

This kind of sex is very much health hazard such as cancer, AIDS, or any kinds of STDs and so on. It has been noted in this study that 92% female workers are victimized with physical and sexual harassment by their husband, whereas only 8% not treated in such a way.

**Willingness of keeping small size of Family:**

It has been shown that 86% female workers want to keep family in small size, whereas 8% of them do not want to keep this. However, willingness is large than unwillingness. It has been said that this is the result of consciousness and awareness program, run by our national NGOs. As per expression of this study population, there are many local non-government organizations those are implementing awareness related programs on this community, especially to public health, water and sanitation, and to raise awareness relating birth control issues i.e. family planning and reproductive health. But this is regret that though female workers want to keep small size of family, their husbands want this very rarely at a large extent. Most of them expressed that for keeping small size of family, it is necessary to use contraception such as usage of condom in the duration of intercourse by husband, setting copper T used by wife and taking birth control peel. In above three kinds of usage as the mechanism of birth control, condom is very safety rather than others. But maximum married males of tea garden do not want to use this because of reducing pleasure and sensation. For that reason, it is very

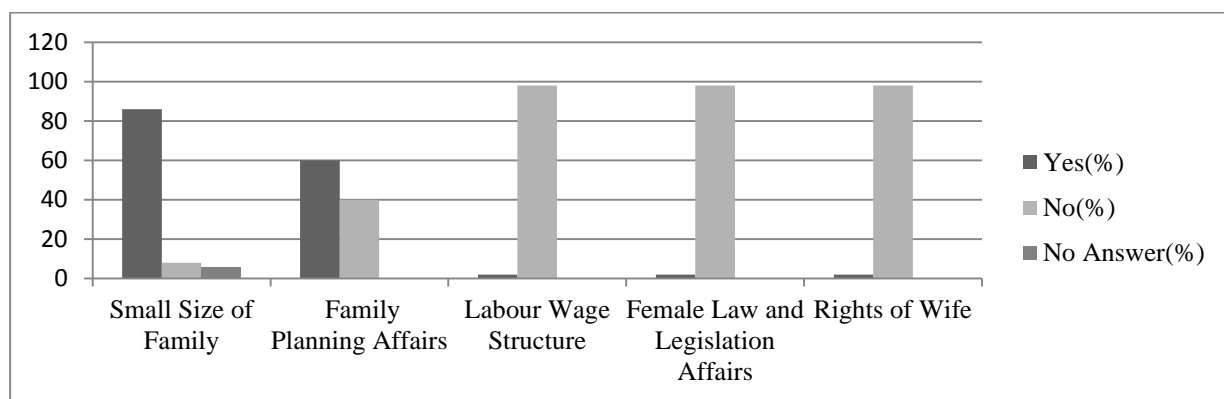
rare to male those want to keep family in small size. It has been studied that 60% of female workers are keeping knowledge on family planning and reproductive health procedures whereas 40% of them do not keep this knowledge because they are not get free time to listen or participate when NGOs health workers come to them community.

#### **Level of consciousness about socio-economic status**

As we know that well-being mostly depends on level of consciousness. In this study area, level of

consciousness of female laborers about their wage structure is so low. They only know how much amount is being paid. Whether it is equal to the national or international wage structure, they do not know. It has been seen that 98% of study population do not keep knowledge about the absolute poverty line (2100 kilocalorie or 1.65 us dollar). They also do not know what is declaration of ILO or UNICEF about the wage structure. Only 2% keep this consciousness that the present amount of payment is very less than their needs according to the market price or even in the line of absolute poverty. As shown in following figure-02.

Figure 2 : Scenario of Social Determinants



To ensure the female rights, Bangladesh govt. initiated Nari o Shishu Nirjaton Aine / Druto Bichar Aine, but more than 98% of female laborers do not know what these are. Majority keeps in mind that male person should be considered as strong as lord. Their words of mouth are as like as law. So, their order or command never unavoidable. It is very regret that just 2% know that some sort of act passed to protect their economic and social security though these acts are regarded verbally not virtually at all. Yet they think that all acts go against suppressed not suppressors. Moreover, suppressors enjoy this act, rules or regulations. Sometimes, this kind of acts does work in favor of wealthy and rich person rather than poor and pauper along with unequal as well as unusual justice. Female laborers of tea garden are not properly conscious as wife. A woman gets some right of property (especially land, gold, or mohorana) on the basis of respective religion as wife or daughter. But they can not avail this type of rights properly because of their lack of

consciousness about their rights. For this reason, it has been observed that only 2% of population keeps some consciousness about their household rights such as decision making, rear and care of siblings, or some sort of property rights of father and husband. But a large portion of them i.e. 98% female do not keep this information that what facilities they should get from father hereditary or what should get from husband because of marital relationships or adoption.

#### **Voting Behaviour**

It shows that there is a drastic change in participation of voting between pre and post engagement period of works. The table-02 and figure -03 reveal that before coming in tea garden only 30 percent women would participate in voting whereas 70 percent of them deny to vote, because of lack of consciousness about their suffrage.

Figure 3: Scenario of Voting Behaviour in Graphical Representation

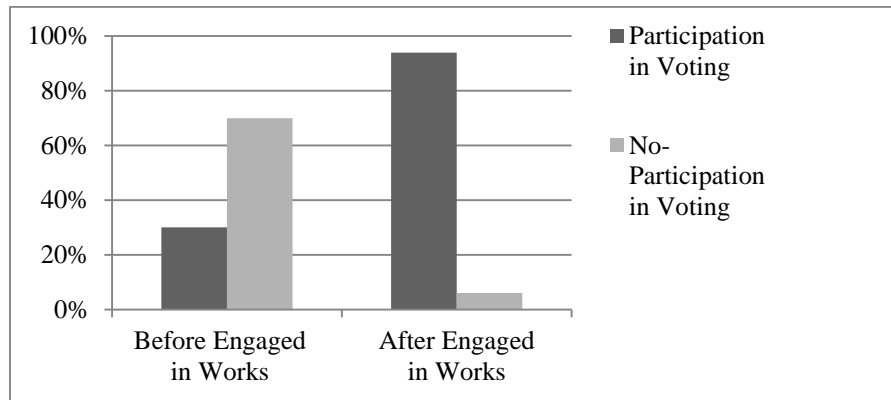


Table 2: Scenario of voting behaviour

Voting Behavior	Before Engaged in Works	After Engaged in Works
Participation in Voting	15(30 %)	47(94%)
No-Participation in Voting	35(70%)	03(6%)

This situation has been dramatically changed after engagement in works of tea garden. 94 percent of women laborers give vote both in local and national election. The value of Rank Correlation Coefficient is -1, indicates that there is complete agreement in the order of the ranks between pre and post duration of engagement in works and they are in opposite directions, in other words, there is a high degree of negative correlation between these two times (Table - Calculation of Rank Correlation Coefficient, see in Appendix), but it has been seen as fully patriarchal in giving preference to candidates. About 80 percent females prefer as per preference of their fathers before marriage. The same condition is also happened after

marriage, as more than 60 percent female workers give preference to candidates as per their husbands' direction or by their pressure (Table - Influential Person in Giving Preference to Candidates in Votes See in Appendix).

**Role of Female Laborers in Taking Decision of Family Affairs**

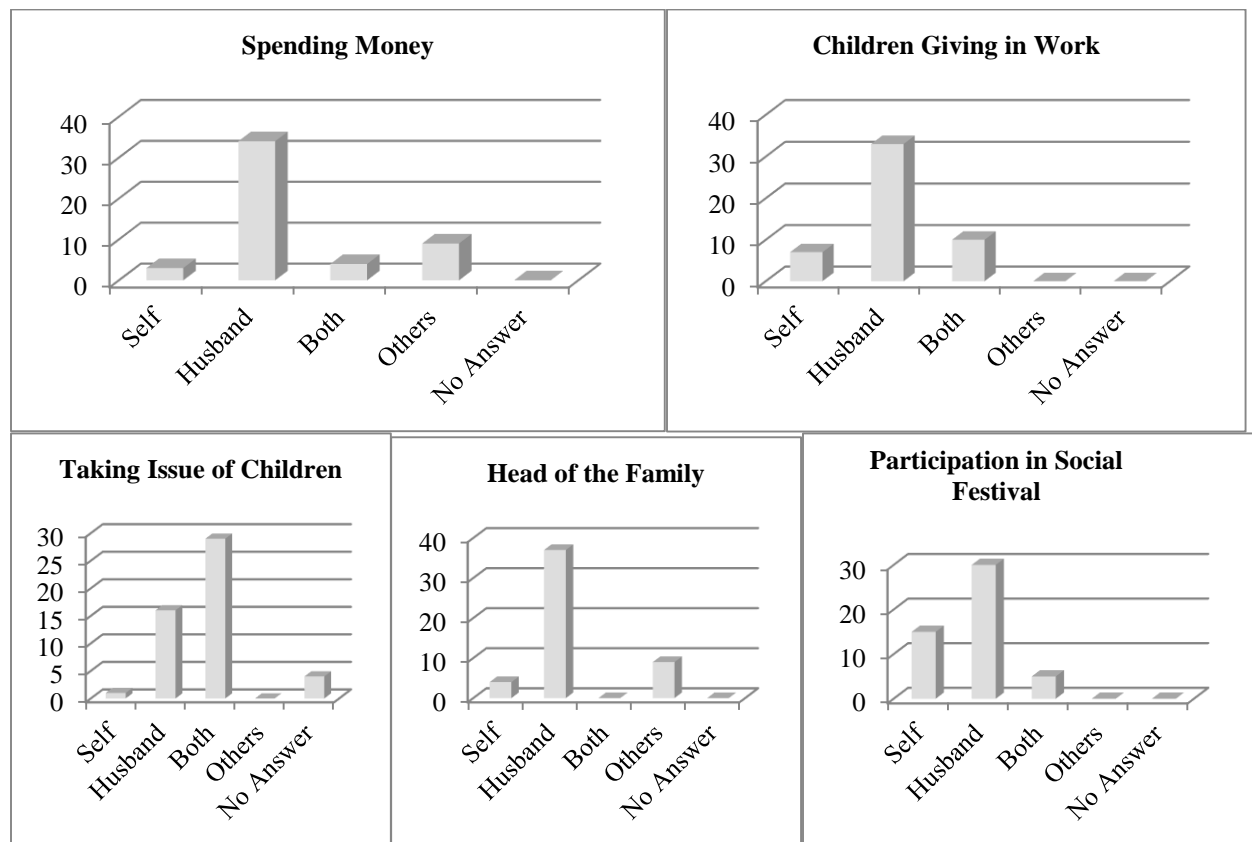
In the tea gardens of Sylhet, it is shown that female laborers can not play influential role in taking decision of family affairs too. It has been classified in five kinds of role taking as shown in table-03.

Table 3: Role of respondents in taking decision

Particulars	Self	Husband	Both	Others	No Answer
Spending Money	3(6%)	34(68%)	4(8%)	9(18)	0(00)
Taking Issue of Children	1(2%)	16(32%)	29(58)	0(00)	4(8)
Children Giving in Work	7(14%)	33(66%)	10(20)	0(00)	0(00)
Head of the Family	4(8%)	37(74%)	0(00)	9(18)	0(00)
Participation in Social Festival	15(30%)	30(60%)	5(10)	0(00)	0(00)



Figure 4: Role of respondents in family affairs



As the above table, decision in spending money earned by wife or both, in this case only 6 percent wife or female laborers can take decision in spending money whereas 68 percent husband take decision merely. Only 8 percent husband and wife jointly take decision in spending money. There are some sorts of progression in taking issue of children or in reproduction, 58 percent couple jointly take decision when they will take child or what numbers of child they keep. But 32 percent husbands take decision solely in this case. 66 percent husbands solely take decision where they will give their children to work. Same situation is shown in the head of the family, 74 percent male is the head of the family and maximum of them either divorced or separated. Decision about the participation in social festival is also dominated by husband where 60 percent family members or wives are fully dependent on husbands' decision and only 10 percent family wherein both husband and wife take decision jointly (Table -03 and Figure -04).

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In the exploration of living condition of female workers of tea garden, it is seen that the sketch of their social life is very different, unorganized and unusual rather than the normal and usual life of Bangladeshi's inhabitants those are engaged in various sectors of economical activities. They are also different in their social structure than the traditional social structure of this sub-continent. Their present scenario of social life is very pathetic and miserable because of having been deprived from education, employment and other basic facilities of human life and as a result they are being regarded as a backward community. They are far from touch of modernization, fully separated and alienated from the mainstream of culture. They are fully failed to get rights in all sphere of life from the national life and even from the family life too. Another thing is that female workers of tea garden are not fully conscious about their rights in compare to male workers, though females earn money as equal to male coworkers and in the equal length of time. In this case, though male and female workers are same but in other sphere of life,

there is seen a great disparity between male and female workers, wife and husband, son and daughter and so on. Male's opinion is being fully prioritized or husband's willingness is final decision in taking decision about the various matters of family. Nowhere female get domination like man. Moreover, there is no application of law for female laborers as sexually harassment policy, maternity leave, working hour, salary structure etc. Most of female workers are living in their family with no degrees of freedom both in a joint family and even in a nuclear family. There is domination of male in everywhere but the matter of regret is that there is no vocal or sound of consciousness of female workers against the over domination of male on females. Though female laborers are being victimized of various kinds of harassment but they do not regard this as harassment on them. As they can not keep their income within themselves. Even some of female laborers do not know about their daily or weekly wage they are just giving their physical labor in tea plantation and their husband or other male members of their family receive their wage. Actually they are being dominated easily because there is no alternative scope of works or employment of female workers. This is their great weakness and estate's authority takes the opportunity of this weakness by the support of some estate's manager or other peers. Their level of consciousness is so low because they do not know whether there is any support of legal codes about what they raise to authority as their demands or claims. On the other hand, authority and government are also very inattentive to fulfill basic demands of female workers. We can say that to explore the level of consciousness about rights and nature of present living condition of female labor force engaged in tea plantation. It has been taken into account about domination, harassment, and miserable condition of life which are led by female workers. They adorn the tea garden with increasing production and collection of leafs but their own life is in fully empty of adornment, dark and full of sobs, wants and malnutrition. So, it is crying need of actions taken by government and people of all stages to develop, and progress of female worker's life. It should be ensured the dignity of life along with minimum level of wage structure as international standard and other facilities too. But to achieve these, they themselves should take initiatives first. We, as a conscious citizen, should make them understood about their rights with the national plan and policy of action with the help of GO and NGOs, they will be more conscious to get all their necessary things. As a result, a large part of backward people would be progress and practice the mainstream of culture overcoming their lacks and disabilities.

### Suggestion for Future research

Further research needs to be carried out on a larger population and sample size to increase the generalization of the findings. Because, other than Sylhet region, a great part of Bangladesh such as Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and Northern areas are being used for tea plantation, wherein numerous female workers are engaged those are mostly unregistered. So, this study can be extended over these areas such as Moulvibazar of Sylhet region, Rangamati, Khagrachori and Bandarban of CHT and Dinajpur of Northern area of Bangladesh to assess the present scenario of their socio-economic conditions, nature of livelihoods and other implications related to level of consciousness at a large extent. The study also can be further explored to include the other fields of employment such as road and building construction, brick field or even household servants where a large portion of female labor force are being engaged with increasing rate of growth day by day in Bangladesh and other countries of third world as well.

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**Appendix**

Table- Calculation of Rank Correlation Coefficient

Before Engaged in Works (X)	R <sub>1</sub>	After Engaged in Works (Y)	R <sub>2</sub>	(R <sub>1</sub> - R <sub>2</sub> ) D <sup>2</sup>
15	1	47	2	1
35	2	3	1	1
N= 2				$\sum D^2 = 2$

Using formula-

$$R = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{N^3 - N}$$

Table - Influential Person in Giving Preference to Candidates in Votes

	Self	Parents	Husband	Others
Before Marriage	0(0.00)	12(80.00%)	0(0.00)	3(20.00%)
After Marriage	3(6.40%)	5(10.64%)	35(74.43)	4(8.53%)

Determination of Sample Size:

$$n = \frac{z^2 PQN}{e^2(N - 1) + (z^2 PQ)}$$

here,

n= Sample size

z = Confidence level of 95% (1.96 area under normal curve)

P= Probability of success (0.5 for 50%)

Q= Probability of Failure (0.5 for 1-P)

N= Population size (600)

e = Acceptable error (0.133 for 13.3 % of true value)